

Is this

THE END

of the world?

THE
MARRIAGE
ADVENTURE

There is no denying that we are living in unprecedented days. When we turned the calendar over to a New Year, who would have imagined we would have spent much of 2020 in quarantine? We have become accustomed to a new way of life almost overnight. Home-schooling, wearing face-masks in public, social distancing, and rioting in major cities, leave us wondering, "what's next?"

In small groups and counseling situations, we have been asked questions surrounding the uncertainties we face as a nation. This has changed the dialogue in our home. So, we wonder how many others are intrigued by current events. On our most recent podcast, we tried to provide Bible-based answers to the question, "are we living in the prophetic end-times of Revelation?" You may be wondering what this post could possibly have to do with the Marriage Adventure. More than you think.

First of all, we want to be clear about a few things.

First, we are NOT prophets, nor theologians. We have both placed our faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of King Jesus to save us, and we study what we believe is the inerrant word of God that was given to His followers. Secondly, we are NOT predicting a date or time that these things will happen. Jesus told his disciples that he didn't even know that (Matthew 24:36). And finally, we are NOT telling you to move off the grid or stand on street corners with signs saying, "turn or burn!" We have a mission (Matthew 28:16-20) and can't afford to be sidelined or viewed as lunatics.

This is not a new question or concern.

In Matthew 24 and Luke 21, Jesus' disciples asked him, "what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" He replied with some unsettling information. Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against Nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:10-11).

What did all of that mean? We find it interesting that the Greek word for "nation" in this passage is "ethnos," from which we translate our English word ethnic. In other words, ethnic group will rise against ethnic group. Ethnic unrest and wars have been happening both here and in other parts of the world for centuries. And Kingdoms, or individual countries, have always vied for control of land, economic superiority, and political power.

As far as the natural disasters Jesus foretold, on the day of this writing, there have been 91 M1.5 earthquakes recorded world-wide in the past 24 hours, 881 in the past seven days, and 5931 in the past month (www.earthquaketrack.com). That has more than tripled over the past decade.

Though America has one of the lowest hunger rates globally, in April, the United Nations warned that the Coronavirus pandemic will push an additional 130 million people to the brink of starvation (<https://www.foxnews.com/world/un-coronavirus-fallout-pandemic-global-starvation>).

In light of the recent Covid-19 world-wide crisis, something else recently caught our attention. In the last days, there will be "pestilence." That's not a word we use every day, so we looked it up. Dictionary.com says a pestilence is "a deadly or virulent epidemic disease." "Virulent" also made us scratch our heads. It means "intensely noxious, causing clinical symptoms, highly infective, malignant or deadly." Hello! So, what does all this mean?



Before we go much deeper, we need to catch you up to speed.

They are inseparable. It's tough to nutshell it, but here are some significant points of Israel's backstory.

- In the Old Testament, God chose Abraham and made him a promise that He would make a great nation of him and his descendant (Genesis 13:14-16). Then, he re-established his covenant with Abraham's son, Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5), and his great-grandson, Jacob. God changed Jacob's name to Israel, and the Jewish Nation was born (Genesis 35:1-15).
- Through hundreds of years of a tumultuous relationship, God sent Israel prophets to warn them that their beloved Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed and they would be taken into 70-year captivity (Jeremiah 25:11-12; Daniel 9:1,2; 2 Kings 24:1-4), then return and rebuild (Isaiah 44:24-45:4; Ezra 1:2,3; 2 Chronicles 36:19-21), and that He would send them a Messiah whom they would not receive (Isaiah 2:2-4; Galatians 4:4,5). All of this happened exactly as predicted by the Old Testament prophets.
- Jesus, the Son of God, Israel's promised Messiah, came and lived a perfect life on earth, teaching, healing, and performing miracles (John 1:14; John 3:16), was crucified to pay for our sins and was buried (Matthew 27:32-66; Luke 23:26-56; John 19:1-42). Three days later He was resurrected (Matthew 28:1-15; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-10) and spent forty days with his disciples speaking about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:11-21:25), then ascended back into heaven (Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:14-20).
- While Jesus was on earth, he told his disciples a lot about what would happen in the days to come, many of which have already happened. He explained that their Temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed again (Matthew 24:1-2; Luke 19:43,44; 21:20,21). Jesus also predicted that Jerusalem would be under Gentile domination, and the people would be sent into another exile (Luke 21:24; Luke 19:41-44). In AD 70, led by Titus, Romans sieged Jerusalem, burning their Temple to the ground. Most Jews fled in fear, which dispersed them from their homeland again, beginning the second exile as predicted (Daniel 9:26; Deuteronomy 28:64-66). The Jewish people were scattered throughout the earth for the next 1900 years.
- Though Israel's dispersion was foretold, something even more improbable was written for them. God promised they would be brought back again (Deuteronomy 30:1-3; Ezekiel 36:17-36). It's noteworthy that no people group in history has been removed from their homeland and actually returned to occupy it (Lance Lambert, *Israel*, Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale, 1981, pp. 55,56). Following the Nazi holocaust of World War II, on May 14th, 1948, President Harry S. Truman formally recognized Israel as a State and they became a member of the United Nations on May 11th, 1949.

That backstory is crucial in understanding what comes next!

When Jesus answered his disciples about signs of his coming again and of the end of the age, he gave them specific things to look for. In Matthew 24:8,12, Jesus said, "when you see all these things, it's just the beginning of birth pains." All of the difficult things we are seeing happen, both here and around the world, are just minuscule compared to the days that will one day unfold. HOWEVER, we believe world events are perfectly falling into place to set the stage for all of the prophecies made by Jesus and the Old Testament prophets, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, and John (author of Revelation) to be fulfilled. Nothing happens overnight. These birth pains have to start somewhere.

As believers, we are living in both dangerous and exciting days. We know there is quite a bit left on God's timetable before the "end of the age." Where we are at this point is waiting for Jesus' gathering of his church. (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Luke 17:20-37; Matthew 24:36-44). There is nothing left to happen before Jesus calls those who have put our faith in Him for salvation to meet him in the sky. This event is referred to as the "rapture" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). It literally means "to be caught up" or "to be carried away." No one knows the day or hour, but Jesus will rapture His followers and take us from this earth to spare us what comes next (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9, Revelation 6:16,17, Revelation 3:10). This is understood to be a separate event from the Second Coming of Christ. The church's rapture will mark the end of God's work with the non-Jewish people (Gentiles) and resume His plans for the Nation of Israel.



What's left on the prophetic timeline for Israel and the things that will take place at the end of the age?

- **Israel will be attacked from the North by collaborating nations that are actually named in the Bible, and no superpower will come to their aid** (Ezekiel 38 & 39). Instead, God will supernaturally defeat Israel's attackers. For the first time in human history, the countries named in Scripture are now in alliance and have troops within a mile of Israel's northern border. If you correlate the ancient names at the time of the prophecy with the modern territories these nations are as follows: Rosh (Russia); Magog (Russia, Turkey, Central Asia Republics); Meshech & Tubal (Turkey); Persia (Iran); Cush (Northern Sudan); Put (Lybia); Gomer, Beth-togarmah Tubal (Turkey).
- **A group of 10 nations will work to create a world-wide government and economic system.** One man, referred to as the Antichrist, will emerge from that group as the world leader. He will be loved worldwide. (Daniel 7-8; 9:20-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; 1 John 2:18).
- **The Antichrist will make a seven-year peace treaty with Israel, which will mark the beginning of the Tribulation** (Daniel 9:27). After three and a half years, he will break this treaty and desecrate the Jewish holy Temple, claiming he is God (Daniel 9:27, Daniel 12:11, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, Revelation 11:2). By the way, that means the Jewish Temple will have to be rebuilt and actively used by this point of the tribulation. But this temple site is currently home to the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim mosque. This event, known as the "abomination that causes desolation," will be in the midpoint of the tribulation, which will begin the Great Tribulation Period. The Antichrist will persecute the Jews, and Christians and anyone who doesn't follow him. Only those who take his mark and worship him will be allowed to buy and sell (Revelation 13).
- **The 7-year tribulation will be a literal hell on earth, as judgments are poured out from heaven.** It will get worse when the Great Tribulation begins midway through.
- **At some point, the Antichrist will receive what appears to be a fatal head wound and then be resurrected, causing the world to marvel.** Then he will be controlled by Satan and will curse the Living God (Revelation 13; Daniel 7:25).
- **The Tribulation saints, or those who receive Jesus during these 7 years, will be persecuted and executed** (Revelation 14:12,13 6:9).
- **At the end of the Great Tribulation, armies will gather against Jerusalem and God. Israel will seem to have lost, but then everyone will see Jesus return with His saints for this final battle of Armageddon** (Revelation 1:7; Revelation 16:13-16; Revelation 19:11-16,19; Zechariah 12; 14:1-3,14; Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 24:29-30).

- ***The Antichrist will be thrown into a lake of sulfur for torment*** (Revelation 19:19-20), and Satan will be bound up for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-4). During this time, Jesus will reign as King on earth (Revelation 20:4; Isaiah 2:1-5; Zechariah 14:16-19; Daniel 7:13-15).
- ***After 1000 years Satan will be released and will attempt to wage war again on God and his people.*** After this final battle, he will be thrown into the lake of fire for eternity (Revelation 20:7-10; Ezekiel 28:16-19).
- ***God will establish a new heaven and new earth, with Jesus on the throne, and dwell with man forever in peace*** (Revelation 21-22).



If coming prophecies about the end of the world are focused on Israel, what about the United States?

With all of these prophetic teachings, there seems to be absolutely no reference in Scripture to indicate that America will play a role in end-time events. Because these events are so catastrophic, we will absolutely be aware of what is going on in the middle east. Why wouldn't we get involved to protect our ally and friend, Israel?

The short answer is, we don't know. It's baffling. There are a few scenarios that could be in play, but they are simply speculations. 1. We could be so involved with our own national health, political, racial, and economic crises that we are unable to assist. 2. Our country and President withdraws our support from Israel. 3. We are wiped off the map by another military power. 4. The rapture occurs, taking a large portion of our population, and we are too busy. Who knows? It's difficult for us to imagine that we won't be a world power playing a significant role in something that has world-wide implications. But there is no evidence to support the United States taking part in final events.

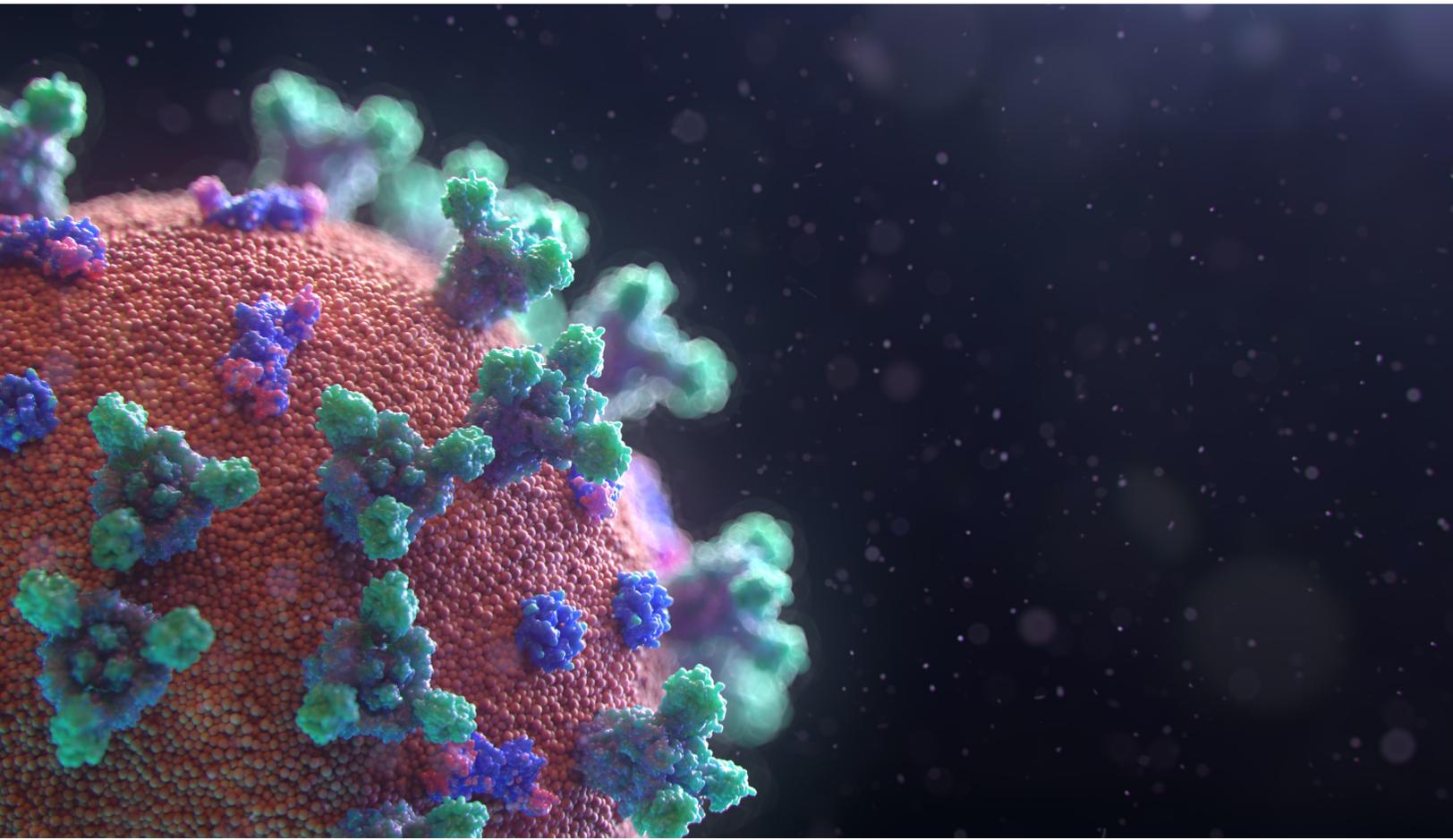


Finally, to answer the initial question that we posed, "what about the coronavirus and current events?"

Do these things point to the end of the world? We don't believe so. However, keep in mind that the things that will happen at the end have to start somewhere. We think conditions are getting positioned or falling into place for what is to come in full later. The stage is being set behind the curtain, and it won't be long until the show begins.

In the end, there will be a one-world government and economic system (Rev. 13:16-17). This is the first time the whole world has a problem that needs a universal answer. We are looking for someone to step up and solve it. This makes the conditions more favorable for the world to accept a charismatic, peacemaking leader, such as the Antichrist will appear to be when he takes power.

Through this epidemic, we have also seen destabilization of the European Union. In January 2014, the UK exited the EU and a recent statement by Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage, Italy, Denmark and Poland might be next <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1236213/EU-news-who-will-leave-the-European-Union-next-Italexit-Germany-France-news>). For events to align with prophecy, leadership will come from only ten nations, and there are currently 27 (europa.eu) states that make up this political and economic union in Europe. However, there's no indication of which 10 nations will comprise this alliance.



Based on Revelation 13:16-17, we also know that the world will one day operated on a world-wide monetary system. We are seeing less stores accepting cash these days. It's easy to see how we are only a few short steps from moving to digital dollars, which could be implanted as a world-wide currency.

People are speculating and asking, "could a coronavirus vaccine be the mark of the beast?" Scripture indicates that this mark will be implemented after the antichrist has been healed from his mortal wound and sets up an image to be worshiped. Those who worship will be marked on their right hand or forehead, giving them the privilege to buy and sell (Revelation 13:16-18). You won't be tricked into taking this mark. You have to swear allegiance to receive it. So, a vaccination is not the mark, but the technology is in place to implement some sort of implant or imprinted barcode that can both track and be used for digital purchases.

Many things seem to be working together during this particular time in history to indicate we are living in the last days. What an exciting time! We don't believe the end of the world is here, but we are certainly seeing "Nation rise against Nation, and kingdom against kingdom... great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences." As bad as things seem to be at the moment, Jesus said these signs are just small contractions in comparison to the pain of childbirth that is to come.

But what on earth does this have to do with my Marriage Adventure?

We believe God has plans for our marriage and family in these last days. We have an important mission, and Jesus commissioned us with it in Matthew 28:18-20, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

There are so many questions and uncertainties we face today. Will I be infected with Covid-19? If I am, will I die from it? If there is a vaccine, should I take it? Should I wear a mask or not wear a mask? Should I send my children to school in person or keep them online? If they don't go back to school, will we all lose our minds? If my job is deemed unnecessary, how will I take care of my family? Will my business be looted in a riot? Will I lose friends or be judged for stating an opinion on social media? No matter what is happening in our Nation or in our cities, we have hope and promise from Jesus. He will be with us all the way until the end. We can find peace and take comfort in knowing that He sees us and is with us. We can't allow the enemy to distract

us and make us so afraid that we are rendered useless for the Kingdom of God. We must determine to stay on mission and share Jesus with people who need Him.

Knowing the days may be short until Jesus returns, we also have to stay united in our marriage. We don't have time to waste arguing and allowing petty selfishness to divide us. Like the united front we present when our children attempt to divide us, we have to stand together against the Enemy in our pursuit of Jesus and our mission. In the scope of eternity, how significant is the disagreement you and your spouse are entangled in? Put it this way, if you only had 24 hours left to live, what kind of conversations would you and your spouse be having? How would you be loving each other and living?



Finally, the most important thing for your marriage and for your security for what may come is to know where you individually stand with Jesus.

If Jesus is returning soon for His people, will you be ready? Do you know that you belong to Him? The Bible says that if we do nothing with Jesus, we have chosen to reject Him. God is perfect and cannot have a relationship with us based on our own works because there is nothing we could ever do to measure up to His holiness. Everyone sins, and no one is perfect like God (Romans 3:23). If we don't turn away from our sin, the punishment we earn is death and separation from God (Romans 6:23). But, God loves us too much not to give us an option for salvation. He sent his own perfect son, Jesus, to take our place (John 3:16). To receive God's forgiveness, we just believe in Jesus' life, his death on the cross, and His resurrection, and confess that we need him to save us from our sins (1 John 1:9, Romans 10:9). This is the one and only way to get to heaven (John 14:6).

We know this post is far more in-depth than our typical post. However, if you've made it this far, it may be the most important one you'll read from us. We challenge you to study these things and discern the truth for yourself. As we said, we aren't prophets. We are just two people who love Jesus and want to know what His word has to tell us about the things we see happening around us. Like you, we are looking for answers to make sense of the chaos in our world. If you are interested in further study, you may enjoy teaching from pastors and scholars who have devoted themselves to uncovering the meaning of prophecy. We have listed additional resources below our you can also find recent teachings by these and many others when you search for them on YouTube. You can also search for Bible study curriculum on the book of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation by teachers and authors you trust to teach the inerrant word of God or those listed below. Just be careful and discerning. If someone predicts a day or time of Jesus' return, don't listen to them!

Additional Resources

Dr. David Jeremiah Jeremiah (www.davidjeremiah.org)

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (<https://billygraham.org>)

Jack Hibbs (www.reallifewithjackhibbs.org)

Amir Tsartfati (www.beholdisrael.org)

Don Stewart (www.educatingourworld.com)

JD Farag (www.calvarychapelkaneohe.com/prophecy-updates)

Jay McCarl (www.jaymccarl.com)

Max Lucado (<https://maxlucado.com>)