

Is Covid-19 a Sign of the Apocalypse?

By Dr. Michael Rydelnik, April 4, 2020

This article was aired on, OPEN LINE with Dr. Michael Rydelnik, which is heard every Saturday across the Moody Radio network. It answers questions many people are asking today about the Covid 19 virus situation.

Is the Covid-19 virus a sign of the Apocalypse? Has the Tribulation before the return of Jesus begun? There has been a lot of talk lately that the Covid-19 pandemic proves we are in the last days, that this is the apocalypse. One scripture used to demonstrate this is Luke 21:11: "There will be violent earthquakes, and famines and **plagues** in various places, and there will be terrifying sights and great signs from heaven." The prediction of "plagues in various places" is taken as proof that we're in the time of the end. Yet, as serious as this pandemic is, for several reasons, it clearly isn't the "Day of the Lord."

First of all, none of the corollary events connected to the tribulation period have taken place. These are the earthquakes, famines, and terrifying signs in the heavens mentioned in Luke 21. In Revelation 6:12-14, there is a description of the 6th seal judgment which will take place in the first half of the 7 year tribulation. It says: "A violent earthquake occurred; the sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair; the entire moon became like blood; the stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind; the sky separated like a scroll being rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved from its place." Plagues will be part of the Day of the Lord—but so will other terrifying events, none of which have occurred yet. And while there is a pandemic now—there have been other terrible outbreaks in the past, some that were even more serious than this one. For example, there was the black plague of the Middle Ages in which 25 million people died, about 40% of Europe's population. As bad as that was, it was not the tribulation period predicted in Scripture. A plague alone is not the sign of the Day of the Lord.

Second, the man of lawlessness has not yet been revealed. In the first century, there were false teachers spreading the idea that the tribulation had already begun. In Thessalonians 2:3, Paul responded by pointing out that it could not be so because the man of lawlessness had not yet been revealed. Paul was speaking of a coming world dictator, the future false Messiah, the ruler the Scriptures also call the Anti-Christ. In every

generation, people speculate as to who this ruler will be, but like Paul, I can categorically state, he has not yet been revealed. Therefore, we are not yet in the Tribulation period.

Third, Israel has not signed a covenant with this future false Messiah. In Daniel 9:27, it indicates that the future 7 year tribulation (the 70th Week) will only begin when this future false Messiah makes a treaty or covenant with the leadership of Israel. Perhaps this will be a 7 year treaty guaranteeing peace and security to Israel. Whatever it is, it has not yet been signed, so we are not yet in the tribulation.

But even if we are not in the Day of the Lord, what can we learn about the end times from this? First, this pandemic shows how a crisis like this can cause people to turn to a dictator, like the Anti-Christ. An example of this is in Hungary, where in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, that nation's parliament has just handed their leader, Viktor Orban, absolute dictatorial power to cope with it. When the world is in crisis, it's evident that people will turn to a dictator to solve their problems. That is how Adolf Hitler obtained absolute dictatorial powers. And that is how, the future false Messiah will become a world dictator.

Second, this pandemic shows how quickly God can indeed bring about the end-time events described in Scripture. Some skeptics have doubted whether God could actually bring about the events described in the book of Revelation in just 7 years. The Covid-19 pandemic shows that the Lord would only need about 7 weeks to bring the world to its knees. In this way, the pandemic is just a sign that God can very well bring about the end very quickly.

Even though we are not in the Tribulation, it's not surprising that we are facing this frightening situation. Yeshua said, "In this world, you will have tribulation" (John 16:33). Nevertheless, He told us not to fear because He has conquered the world. He is the Sovereign of the universe and nothing can befall us apart from His loving hand. He can and will bring us through this crisis or bring us home to His loving arms. No matter what, although it is entirely natural to experience stress and fear, we can take comfort in knowing that when we believe in Yeshua, the Lord will deliver us from the wrath to come (1Thess 1:10).