

**Just To Be Clear**

By: Rev. Mark Breese

*Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.*

Generally I try to stay off of social media. Or at least I did. Now I'm keeping track of all those dormant online accounts a bit more. It's been helpful, so I am grateful they exist. But I have noticed one very disturbing question and some very bad answers for that question.

**Matthew 24:36**

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

So I am going to dispense with it here, once and for all—at least as far as I am concerned. And I'm doing it because I don't want people to have unnecessary worries at this particular moment. The question is some variation of this: *Is this COVID-19 pandemic one of the plagues that are supposed to be a sign of the end times?*

***No!*** I hope that is clear.

There is a pandemic because a virus has got the better of the planet right now. Consider the Spanish Flu of 1918 (also a coronavirus by the way, where at least 50 million people died), or the Black Plague of the 1300's (up to a little over 1/2 of the population of Europe died), or The Holocaust of WWII (6 million Jews killed), or Stalin (6ish - 8ish million dead), etc. None of those were the end times either.

Also, the “plagues” talked about in Revelations appear to be directed at a specific group – those that are followers of the “Antichrist”. Last I heard, COVID-19 does not ask for a membership card to any group before it makes someone sick—let alone being the cause of their death.

What's more, I'm personally of the opinion that the Book of Revelations is *more* about how John of Patmos was taking aim at the oppression and persecution of Christians by the Roman regime of the day. But even if I am totally wrong about that (I am just this guy from New Jersey, after all), and Revelations is a prophetic writing, there is one really important thing.

**Just To Be Clear**

By: Rev. Mark Breese

*Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.*

Generally I try to stay off of social media. Or at least I did. Now I'm keeping track of all those dormant online accounts a bit more. It's been helpful, so I am grateful they exist. But I have noticed one very disturbing question and some very bad answers for that question.

**Matthew 24:36**

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

So I am going to dispense with it here, once and for all—at least as far as I am concerned. And I'm doing it because I don't want people to have unnecessary worries at this particular moment. The question is some variation of this: *Is this COVID-19 pandemic one of the plagues that are supposed to be a sign of the end times?*

***No!*** I hope that is clear.

There is a pandemic because a virus has got the better of the planet right now. Consider the Spanish Flu of 1918 (also a coronavirus by the way, where at least 50 million people died), or the Black Plague of the 1300's (up to a little over 1/2 of the population of Europe died), or The Holocaust of WWII (6 million Jews killed), or Stalin (6ish - 8ish million dead), etc. None of those were the end times either.

Also, the “plagues” talked about in Revelations appear to be directed at a specific group – those that are followers of the “Antichrist”. Last I heard, COVID-19 does not ask for a membership card to any group before it makes someone sick—let alone being the cause of their death.

What's more, I'm personally of the opinion that the Book of Revelations is *more* about how John of Patmos was taking aim at the oppression and persecution of Christians by the Roman regime of the day. But even if I am totally wrong about that (I am just this guy from New Jersey, after all), and Revelations is a prophetic writing, there is one really important thing.

In Matthew 24, the Gospel reports that Jesus listed out a bunch of pretty awful stuff that will mark this “future” time (within his generation, by the way). *However*, Jesus also said one *very important* thing:

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, *but only the Father.*” (Matt 24:36)

Read that verse again please... OK.

The *whole point* of the discourse of Jesus in Matthew 24 is this: Since no person can know, and the angles don’t know, and He (the Son of Man) doesn’t know—then we all need to get our proverbial crap together and start living repentant lives *today*. And a repentant life means living with compassion, love, and kindness towards one another. Just do that, and all this crappy end of the world stuff, *is not your problem*. Stop speculating about stuff that no one (not even Jesus—God incarnate!!) can know.

So please, when you see those questions online in social media, when you see the “answers” that say “Yes, the end is near!”... just ignore them. Instead, pray for the sick. Pray for the doctors and nurses. Wash your hands. No unnecessary trips out so you don’t get sick and possibly make one less hospital bed available, or be *one more person that a healthcare worker has to help at great risk to themselves*. Live with thoughtfulness, compassion and love.

This is not the end of the world. This is not a sign of the end times, because every day for the past 2000 years or so has been the end times! AND even if I’m wrong (although I really don’t think I am) there is literally *no way to know when it might be!* Only God knows. Trying to figure it out, and *especially worrying about it*, is time you are not spending on the two most important things we are called to do:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second [commandment] is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mark 12:28-34)

Do that and you will not be “far from the Kingdom of God” whether it comes tomorrow or one hundred years from now.

Pastor Mark

In Matthew 24, the Gospel reports that Jesus listed out a bunch of pretty awful stuff that will mark this “future” time (within his generation, by the way). *However*, Jesus also said one *very important* thing:

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, *but only the Father.*” (Matt 24:36)

Read that verse again please... OK.

The *whole point* of the discourse of Jesus in Matthew 24 is this: Since no person can know, and the angles don’t know, and He (the Son of Man) doesn’t know—then we all need to get our proverbial crap together and start living repentant lives *today*. And a repentant life means living with compassion, love, and kindness towards one another. Just do that, and all this crappy end of the world stuff, *is not your problem*. Stop speculating about stuff that no one (not even Jesus—God incarnate!!) can know.

So please, when you see those questions online in social media, when you see the “answers” that say “Yes, the end is near!”... just ignore them. Instead, pray for the sick. Pray for the doctors and nurses. Wash your hands. No unnecessary trips out so you don’t get sick and possibly make one less hospital bed available, or be *one more person that a healthcare worker has to help at great risk to themselves*. Live with thoughtfulness, compassion and love.

This is not the end of the world. This is not a sign of the end times, because every day for the past 2000 years or so has been the end times! AND even if I’m wrong (although I really don’t think I am) there is literally *no way to know when it might be!* Only God knows. Trying to figure it out, and *especially worrying about it*, is time you are not spending on the two most important things we are called to do:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second [commandment] is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mark 12:28-34)

Do that and you will not be “far from the Kingdom of God” whether it comes tomorrow or one hundred years from now.

Pastor Mark