

The End Times Signs of Pestilence and Fearful Events

(Broadcast: September 17, 2014 | <http://www.twave.tv>)

Format: Edited Transcript



By [Nathan Jones](#)

Vic Batista: Our subject will be the End Times Signs of Pestilence and Fearful Events. We'll be reading from Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13, which are all parallel passages.

Nathan, in the past you've taken us through this very exciting journey through the Word of God speaking about the signs of the times. As we move on to this new sign, I want to ask if you would recap a bit about some of the other signs of the times Jesus gave in those chapters?

Nathan Jones: Certainly. The discussion began when the Apostles asked Jesus three questions. They wanted to know:

- 1) When will the Temple would fall? Jesus had just told them that not one stone of the Temple would be left upon another. That declaration really surprised the Apostles, because they thought that the Temple would always be there because it was God's home.
- 2) What will be the signs of the end of the age? In other words, the end of the Church Age when Jesus comes back to rapture the Church up to Heaven.
- 3) What will be the sign of Jesus' coming? This question refers to when Jesus comes back at the Second Coming at the end of a seven-year long Tribulation that will befall the earth.

As Jesus was answering those questions, He revealed to the Apostles ten signs. Jesus also said that each sign would get more frequent and more intense and more ferocious the closer we got to the answer to each of these questions.

We know from history that the Temple fell in 70 AD by the hands of the Romans. They destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. They besieged Jerusalem for three years, and by the time their assault was complete, there was literally not one stone left upon another. The Romans actually pried the stones apart to get the gold that had melted down in between the stones. That fulfilled the prophecy related to the first question back in 70 AD.

We are still waiting for the fulfillment of the second and third questions related to the signs of the end of the age and the signs of Jesus' Second Coming.

Signs #1-3

Nathan Jones: Jesus in Luke 21 and Matthew 24 and Mark 13, in those parallel passages, gave us ten signs. The first sign was the sign of false Messiah's. As we get closer to the time of Jesus' return to rapture the Church, one of the most prolific signs we would witness would be

many cults and false teachers. We have 500 cults in the United States alone, not to mention all the other false religions of the world. Such a proliferation of false teachers shows we are clearly living in that time Jesus prophesied of false Messiah's and false teachers.

The second sign Jesus told us about is that there will be wars and rumors of wars. He said that wars would increase in frequency and in intensity and in their destructive capability the closer we got to His return. Certainly, with 38 wars raging around the planet right now, we are living in that time of war. Amazing, isn't it? We are living in a time of great wars that Jesus prophesied nearly 2,000 years ago!

We also talked about earthquakes, which is the third sign that Jesus gave us. Quakes would increase in both frequency and intensity. Certainly the National Weather Service and other weather watchers have proven that earthquakes are exponentially increasing. Therefore, we know Jesus is coming back soon.

Sign #4 — Famine

Nathan Jones: We also just began to touch on the fourth sign, which is the sign of great famines across the earth. What a terrible death toll that has wrought!

In Matthew 24:7, Jesus said, "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places and these are the beginnings of sorrows." This is the beginning of the signs just before Jesus returns.

When we read about famines, we know that to answer the question, "When would the Temple fall?" that there were famines before the Temple was destroyed. We can read about one such in Acts 11 where it talks about a man named Agabus. The chapter says that during this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, and one of them named Agabus stood up and through the spirit predicted a severe famine that would spread over the Roman world. This happened during the reign of Claudius Caesar, which was about 41-54 AD. So, we know there were famines occurring at that time.

As we get closer and closer to the end of the Church Age, the famines will come more frequent and more intensely. And, Pastor Vic, the famines of the 20th Century have been incredibly destructive.

Vic Batista: Nathan, you have for us some incredible statistics about the effects of famines? We also know about the shortages that soon come when disasters such as famine take place. Even in our modern time with so much surplus of food and technology, the amount of people who are suffering from famines and even plagues is just astounding.

Nathan Jones: For statistics, we can look back at the Great Chinese Famine in 1959-61 when 43 million people starved to death. That's an astronomical number! Russia in 1921 lost 5 million people. Ethiopia in the mid-80's lost 400,000. North Korea in '96 lost 3.5 million people. So, there were lots of famines in the 20th Century, and these are just a few examples.

Again, the famines are increasing in frequency and in intensity. Just in the 21st Century now, Pastor Vic, there are 17 famines going on around the world today — Myanmar, Malawi, North Korea, East Africa, Kenya, Somalia and other countries. They are all facing horrific famines.

Did you know that 925 million people go hungry every day?

Vic Batista: That's tragic! There are so many people who are in the dark about this problem.

Sign #5 — Pestilence and Plagues

Vic Batista: Not only are we seeing earthquakes and famines increasing, but also plagues, too, right?

Nathan Jones: Yes, we read in Revelation 6:5-8 that after the rapture of the Church, when the Tribulation and its great wars come, the world will be rocked by subsequent famines and plagues. There will be so much famine and plague that Revelation reveals they will both contribute in part to killing a fourth of the world's population. That's 1.5 billion people who will starve to death or suffer sickness during the Tribulation!

Pestilence, or plagues, which Jesus warns us about in Matthew 24 is the fifth end time sign that He gave us.

Vic Batista: People today don't often think of plagues affecting us, but look at AIDS and the many other venereal diseases in the world today.

Nathan Jones: That's right. Did you know that AIDS has been around since 1981, and since then 25 million people have died from it?

Vic Batista: No, I didn't know the death toll was that high.

Nathan Jones: That's because nobody talks about AIDS since it's usually sexually transmitted, and nobody wants to give up their fornication and all the other sexual immoralities that our country seems to love so much.

Some 25 million people have died from AIDS, but that's nothing compared to the Black Death. Back in the 1300's, 75 million people died from the Black Death plague. As bad as the Black Death has made a name for itself in history, in the 21st Century 300 million people have died from Smallpox. Another destructive plague was the Spanish Flu back in 1918-1919 which killed 100 million people.

Vic Batista: Those are just incredible, staggering numbers! Nathan, I'm so glad that we are bringing this problem of plagues to light. These modern-day events are happening all around us, but because we can be so isolated from plague's consequences, many people when they think of famines or plagues just think of Pharaoh in Egypt. They don't realize that terrible plagues are actually happening right now in our time.

Nathan Jones: We read in Deuteronomy 28:59 about how the Lord told Moses that if Israel started disobeying and not following God anymore, that He would send a number of

punishments on them to make them repent and come back to Him. The verse reads, "The Lord will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disaster, and severe and lingering illnesses."

Certainly throughout Israel's history they experienced plagues, disasters, illnesses and famines. Every time they wandered away from God, God's blessings would stop. The Israelites would start getting attacked by their neighbors or get sick or something awful. The Lord used plagues to bring people back to Him, and He still works that way today. God still allows famines and plagues and death to come upon people so that they will say, "Hey, we need to turn back to Jesus Christ. We need to give up our sins and we need to repent and return to Him." As terrible as such suffering is, it works in bringing about repentance.

It's just sad that our pride keeps us from bending our knees and giving our lives to Jesus Christ. When people ask, "Why is there so much suffering in the world?", the answer is that our sin and rebellion against God has brought that suffering down upon us.

Vic Batista: Excellent point, Nathan. That's why we want to encourage everyone to understand that God's message is still the same. God's called us, especially as believers, to live pure lives. That's one of the problems that we are seeing today. In these last days people are just not wanting to live pure lives. Instead, they want to remain in rebellion against God and His moral law. That's why we have all these diseases and plagues in the world today.

Nathan Jones: People want God to step in and stop all the suffering in the world, but if He did that then He would also have to stop our freewill, because it's our freewill that decides our actions. Are we going to sleep with someone outside of marriage, or not? Are we going to kill somebody, or not? Are we going to follow God's rules which bring us life and peace?

When we disobey God by acting on that freewill, then we face the consequences, not only for our sins, but from the sins of others around us. That, too, also affects us. Sin affects society and drags society down. When you drag society down, economies start collapsing, armies start getting weak, and nations start crumbling.

We are bringing this calamity upon ourselves when we rebel against God. But, when we are in God's will and are following His law, then He blesses us by keeping the famines, plagues, attacks and natural disasters at bay.

At this time, though, all evidence points to the fact that we are currently living in an era where the world just keeps getting more corrupt and more rebellious against God. Because of this increase in sin, the end times signs will increase both in frequency and intensity, just like Moses prophesied and just as Jesus told us back in Matthew 24.

Sign #6 — Fearful Events

Vic Batista: Another fearful event that the Bible warns us about is fearful signs. I read in Luke 21:11 that there will be great earthquakes, famines, and pestilence and there will be fearful signs and great signs from heaven. Can you tell us more about that end times sign, Nathan?

Nathan Jones: Sure. Jesus bundled a few of these signs together there in Luke 21:11. We are now answering the third question that the Apostles asked Jesus, "What will be the signs before Jesus' Second Coming?" We know that Jesus' Second Coming happens at the end of the seven-year Tribulation, which is a time of wrath that will come upon the world. People will be begging God to end all this suffering in the world, and He does, but He returns in judgment.

As always, God allows and even causes the fearful events of the Tribulation in order to get people on their knees, asking for forgiveness of their sins, so that people turn back to Him.

During the Tribulation, God steps back and lets people have their way. He takes away His restraining influence — the Christian influence — which is the Holy Spirit's work through the Church. We read in Revelation 6:5-8 that a fourth of the world will then die from the judgments of the plagues and the famine.

We also read about the First Bowl Judgment in Revelation 16:2 where ugly festering sores break out on the people who have the Mark of the Beast and worshiped him. The Antichrist will be worshiped during the Tribulation by those who will reject Christ and His salvation. The people who worship him will take his loyalty mark, which is the number or his name on their right hand or forehead. Those people are the ones who will take the Mark and so break out in ugly, festering sores.

Then the Fifth Bowl Judgment occurs near the end of the Tribulation. That judgment causes people to have pains and sores all over their bodies. The description is very much like what's caused by nuclear radiation. We know from passages such as these that there will be nuclear war going on during the Tribulation.

And then there will also be the sixth end times sign that Jesus gave us in Luke 21, which is fearful events. These cover both social and economic problems.

Vic Batista: Of course, there were these types of signs even in Jesus' time, but we are going to see these increasing more so in our time as we approach Jesus' return.

We are frequently hearing in the news about asteroids, meteorites and meteor showers. Not that long ago a meteor actually hit an area of Russia, right?

Nathan Jones: Yes, and there was talk of one hitting recently down in Managua, Nicaragua, which is their capital. Those are indeed fearful signs from the skies.

For the Jews who lived before the Temple fell, they knew fearful social and economic problems. After all, the Romans came in and they annihilated the nation of Israel. They scattered the Jews to the four corners of the earth. For almost 1,900 years the Jews have lived in exile, strangers in foreign lands, with no Temple to worship God in. They knew fearful social and economic times.

But, as we get closer to Jesus' rapturing the Church and then seven years of Tribulation before His Second Coming, there will continue to be fearful social and economic problems, but in even greater frequency and intensity than before the Temple fell.

Financial Fearful Events

Nathan Jones: We could cover many different areas concerning fearful events, but let's just take financial for now. Now and then we have these terrible stock market crashes. It gets people thinking about whether money is truly our God. We worship money and what it can do for us. Sometimes God kicks the money out from underneath us and says, "No, I am your source. I am your strength and your shield. You need to turn to me and not turn to money for sufficiency."

Vic Batista: That's a very important point you are making, because it seems to be one of the problems today in the business world, that it's all about money. To all these companies and people, money is their God. We saw what happened when the stock market crashed. People lost all of their money and then even committed suicide.

Nathan Jones: There's a fascinating article titled, "The 10 Worst Stock Market Crashes in U.S. History." It's a fascinating read. For instance, did you know that 2000-2002 was the tenth worst stock market crash in U.S. history? It lasted almost 999 days with a 37.8% loss in income.

The seventh worst crash was during the Vietnam War in '73-'74, with a reported 45.1% loss of income.

The Great Depression, believe it or not, actually happened in stages, so you could say there were a few stock market crashes wrapped up in a big title. The major crashes during the Great Depression occurred in 1929. For 71 days it lasted with a 47.9% loss in income.

The worst Great Depression stock market crash ever occurred in '30-'32 and lasted 813 days. There was an 86% loss of income. So, picture this. You have \$1,000 on September 3, 1929. That money would have gone down in value to only being worth \$108 dollars. You'd have went from \$1,000 to \$108. To recover from that kind of loss, your portfolio would have to go up 825%. As a matter of fact, no one recovered from the Great Depression fully until 1954, which was a full 22 years later.

Vic Batista: That's incredible! That's a good reminder of Matthew 6:19-21 where the Bible says, "Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Nathan, what you are telling us is so important, because when these fearful signs come, if our foundation isn't Jesus Christ, then we'll lose what matters to us. That's where our treasure is, and if it isn't Jesus Christ, it can easily be lost. But, when Jesus is our foundation, then whatever comes, we are going to continue to just trust Him and we won't fall apart, right?

Nathan Jones: Exactly. Just look at the stock market crash of 2008. Our stock market dropped drastically when the housing bubble burst. The loss was \$1.2 trillion! What's interesting, and I don't know if this has a special meaning but it certainly does to me, is that the stock market dropped 777 points. That's the number of God. Was He trying to tell us something? I think He was.

Vic Batista: That's amazing! I didn't know that, Nathan.

Nathan Jones: Yes, 777 points. Was God telling us, "Wake up, people?" Of course, that drop started the Great Recession that we are just pulling out of, although there are still a lot of people unemployed.

God uses fearful economic events to say, "Wake up! Money can never buy your real God." Money buys pleasure, so really it is pleasure for self that we are buying. You are not your own god. God would say, "I'm God I'm in charge. And, if you follow my statutes, for I built the universe so I know how it works, and if you follow my plan, your life will work for you. When you don't follow my plan, your life will fall apart."

Vic Batista: God is going to shake the world us so that people will turn to the Him and follow His plan and not continue to go down this train wreck sort of lifestyle that's leading nowhere. It's incredible how all these events and signs have developed.

Nathan, it seems that things are actually going to get even worse with the economy and not better, right?

Nathan Jones: Yes, I believe you are right. Certainly we are seeing a temporary bounce back, but prophecy foretells an eventual worldwide collapse. Look at what happens during the Tribulation. We read in the Third Seal Judgment of Revelation 6:5-6, "Two pounds of wheat for a day wages, and six pounds of barley for a day wages, and do not damage the oil or the wine." The Bible there is talking about a worldwide economic collapse.

What would cause a worldwide economic collapse? The United States cannot sustain the debt that we've got. We're nearly \$17 trillion in debt! All the other countries of the world are dependent on our economy and the dollar. When we inevitably collapse, it could cause a chain reaction that wipes out the finance of the world. The Bible says a worldwide economic collapse will eventually come, and that of course in part will cause a lot of the starvation and diseases and death that follow.

Out of that global financial disaster, a one-world ruler will come and promise to fix the world system, especially the economic system. He and his False Prophet, who is like his own PR man, will create a financial system whereby people cannot buy or sell unless they have taken his Mark. You can read about that in Revelation 13.

We know from Bible prophecy that the dollar and all the other currencies will go away one day. There will be a one-world, cashless economic system where you cannot buy or sell unless you've sworn allegiance to this one-world ruler. If you don't, then you will starve. So, it's coming, it's coming. This debt that we have is unsustainable. The Bible says the world economy will collapse which will send the world towards a one-world financial system in order to try to fix the problem.

Never Fear When the Lord Is Near

Vic Batista: As we have been talking about famines, plagues, and fearful signs, there are likely those who are fearful. They are fearful because these things are inevitably going to come. But, Nathan, there is hope, right? There is hope. For those who are fearful, there's still time for you to turn to the only One who can give you that hope, and that is Jesus Christ.

Nathan Jones: I don't know how much time we have left before the Rapture of the Church, as it's an event that could happen at any time. No signs or prophecies have to be fulfilled in order for it to come. But, we know from the signs of the end times that because they are so prolific, they point to Jesus' soon return.

Knowing this, you have to ask yourself, "What is my heart condition? What is my relationship with Jesus?" Have you accepted Him as your Savior? Has He forgiven you of your sins because you asked Him to? Do you now walk in new life with Him, or are you still in rebellion against God and trying to do things your own way?

Maybe you are looking at your life and wondering why it's such a mess. How do you fix that? Well, you fix your life by surrendering it all to Jesus Christ. He died on the cross for you because He loves you and wants you to be saved. You just have to surrender and ask.

Vic Batista: Nathan, thank you for those encouraging words!

End of Program