



THE LAST DAYS?



FROM
JOHN'S
HEART
TO
YOURS

The first was from a UK pastor to his flock informing them with absolute authority and supposed scientific backing, that without any doubt whatsoever, this virus was caused by 5G.

The theories continued to grow, and conspiracies have raged on social media blaming everything and everyone you can imagine. If it was not the influenza vaccine being the cause, then it was an international conspiracy of the Illuminate or Bill Gates. Bill had predicted a pandemic back in 2015, so he'd obviously planned this. We are warned by propagators of this conspiracy, never to take another vaccine ever. This is a very

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was still an epidemic and known as the novel Corona virus, I received several links from various folk.

irresponsible statement in my view, given the horrific plagues of the past with huge morbidity and loss of life, prevented now by vaccines, but always lurking in the background.

The Americans have blamed the Chinese, and the Chinese the Americans and no amount of scientific evidence from experts working in the field seems to sway the opinions of those looking for someone to blame.

Some Christians have taken it to another level and declared the establishment of the New World Order or God's judgment on the world, because of His anger over a particular sin. Still others have declared it to be the start of the Tribulation or The End Time.

It's a sign, they say, of the Lord's coming.

As believers, what should our response be?

I don't think turning to examples of God's judgment on Israel in the Old Testament is helpful or applicable. It's not as simple as "bad things happen to bad people" as we well know. Remember Job.

No, our response I believe, needs to be based firmly on Jesus, because "now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law... " (Romans 3:21)

People asked Jesus for a sign. He saw it as a sign of their unbelief.

The signs Jesus gave us, were largely about the new creation: water into wine, healings, food for the hungry, sight for the blind and life for the dead.

We should not be living in the "then" of the Old Testament but look for the "now" of Jesus. He was not looking backward to sins which might bring about judgment but forward to the new thing the "now" thing that was happening: The Kingdom of God!

In John 9 the disciples asked Jesus about the blind man (just as is being asked today of the COVID-19 pandemic) "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

Then He heals him.

Should we not also be looking forward to see what Jesus will do?

He points us to a new world in which He will be the one true sign.
"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet." {Matthew 24:6}

Conspiracy theories have always been around, but Jesus says stay calm and trust in Me.

Pray like this, He says: "Thy Kingdom come on earth as in heaven."

Of course, we must repent, and we should also lament for the world, but we're already living in the last days "God has spoken through His son." (Hebrew 1:2)

Jesus warned that people would 'look here!' or 'look there!' but His death and resurrection, the single, ultimate sign of the arrival of God's Kingdom, remain the call and pointer to penitence. They were the sign.

Claims to tell from world events when "the second coming" will occur are claims to know more than Jesus himself. The resurrection is the beginning of God's new creation, His saving rule on earth.

I'm grateful to Tom Wright for some insights from his recent book "God and the Pandemic." He says: "The cross is where all the world's sufferings and horrors have been heaped up and dealt with. The resurrection is the launch of God's new creation, of His sovereign saving rule on earth – starting with the physical body of Jesus himself. Those events are now the summons to repent and the clue to what God is doing in the world. Trying to jump from an earthquake, a tsunami, a pandemic or anything else to a conclusion about 'what God is saying here' without going through the gospel story is to make the basic theological mistake of trying to deduce something about God while going behind Jesus' back."

In Mark 12:1-12 the owner of the vineyard, having had his messengers rejected by the tenants, makes his last and final move by sending his son and they kill him too.

After that there can be no more messengers,
no more warning signs.

From now on the summons to repentance
comes through Jesus, God's ultimate plan.
(see Eph 1:10)

There's no point in asking why this happened.
We live in a fallen world.

Let's rather ask: "what can we, as the church,
do?"

It was their love and care for others not clever
interpretations that turned the world upside
down in the early days of the church.
Only in Christ and the coming Kingdom will we
find our peace, as we look forward in these
difficult and challenging times.

There are 1,7 million unknown viruses in
wildlife of which 700000 have the potential to
infect humans the BBC reports. All known
Corona viruses come from wild animals and it
is likely that pandemics will become more
frequent the scientists say. This is just one of
those.

This fits with what I learned in Medical School
45 years ago, that influenza viruses mutate in
the vast bird populations of China, constantly
creating new strains, to which we have to
become immune. It's part of the fallen world.

But don't despair, let's look forward with great
hope:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,
for the first heaven and the first earth had
passed away" Revelation 21:1 (ESV)

John



R E L I V E T H E S E N D I N G O N L I N E

We are very excited to announce that we will be streaming The Sending Conference 2019
free of charge from the 3rd - 5th of July 2020.

Relive the worship with **Jeremy Riddle** and **Brenton Brown**, relive the
sessions with **Tony Fitzgerald** and **Bob Hazlett**, as well as some never
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