



Is this it?! Are we in the end times? What does Revelation say?

I'm guessing the person who asked me this isn't the only one wondering this same thing!

It's natural to wonder about such things when facing an extremely difficult situation unlike anything we've ever seen in our lifetime - especially when you consider the fact that the coronavirus doesn't just affect us in the United States, but it has impacted pretty much the entire world!

The pandemic is serious enough in itself, but it certainly hasn't helped that a number of media outlets seem bent on doing everything they can to scare the daylights out of us. (One of my friends refers to the daily update he gets from his favorite channel as "The Daily Freakout!")

My answer to the question in a word (or three): "I don't know."

That's actually a pretty safe answer, considering what Jesus said:

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:36) "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." (Matthew 24:42-44) And "Therefore, keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour" (of the last day when Jesus will return.) (Matthew 25:13)

Since Jesus plainly said that no one will know the time when He returns, the book of Revelation could not have been written with the purpose of satisfying our natural curiosity about when The End is coming! So, I wouldn't put a lot of stock in the "TV preachers" who claim to have figured out, for example, the identity of "The Beast" or "the false prophet" or who tell you with absolute certainty that we are in the End Times.

Revelation was actually written with the purpose of encouraging those who are being persecuted for their faith. The main message of Revelation is this: "Priority #1 is hanging onto your faith in Jesus - no matter what - because Jesus wins, and so does everyone who perseveres to The End with faith in Him!"

"Always be ready!" is the point Jesus was making when He told His disciples that no one will know when The End is coming. Be ready - with your faith placed firmly in Jesus - because The End will come unexpectedly, like thief in the night.

So, the better question for us to answer is this one: "How do we stay ready - how do we keep our faith strong?"

Jesus gave us the answer in John chapter 15 where He used an illustration from the vineyard. He said, "I am the Vine, you are the branches." He went on to say that branches that "abide" in Him will bear much "fruit" and those branches that don't "abide" in Him end up withering and dying. In other words, when we "abide" in Him (stay connected to Him) we stay ready with a strong faith in Him. The best way I know to "abide" in Jesus is by "feeding" on His Word.

With that in mind I picked some Bible readings for us to read or listen to (I'll record them and have them available at livingwordlutheran.net). I picked passages that show God's power at work saving His people - often in unusual ways and when the situation seems hopeless. Passages that give us hope, remind us God is in control and can make amazing things result from situations we never would have chosen. You can find those passages listed on the **"Abiding in Jesus while you 'Stay at Home'"** on the Readings Page.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net