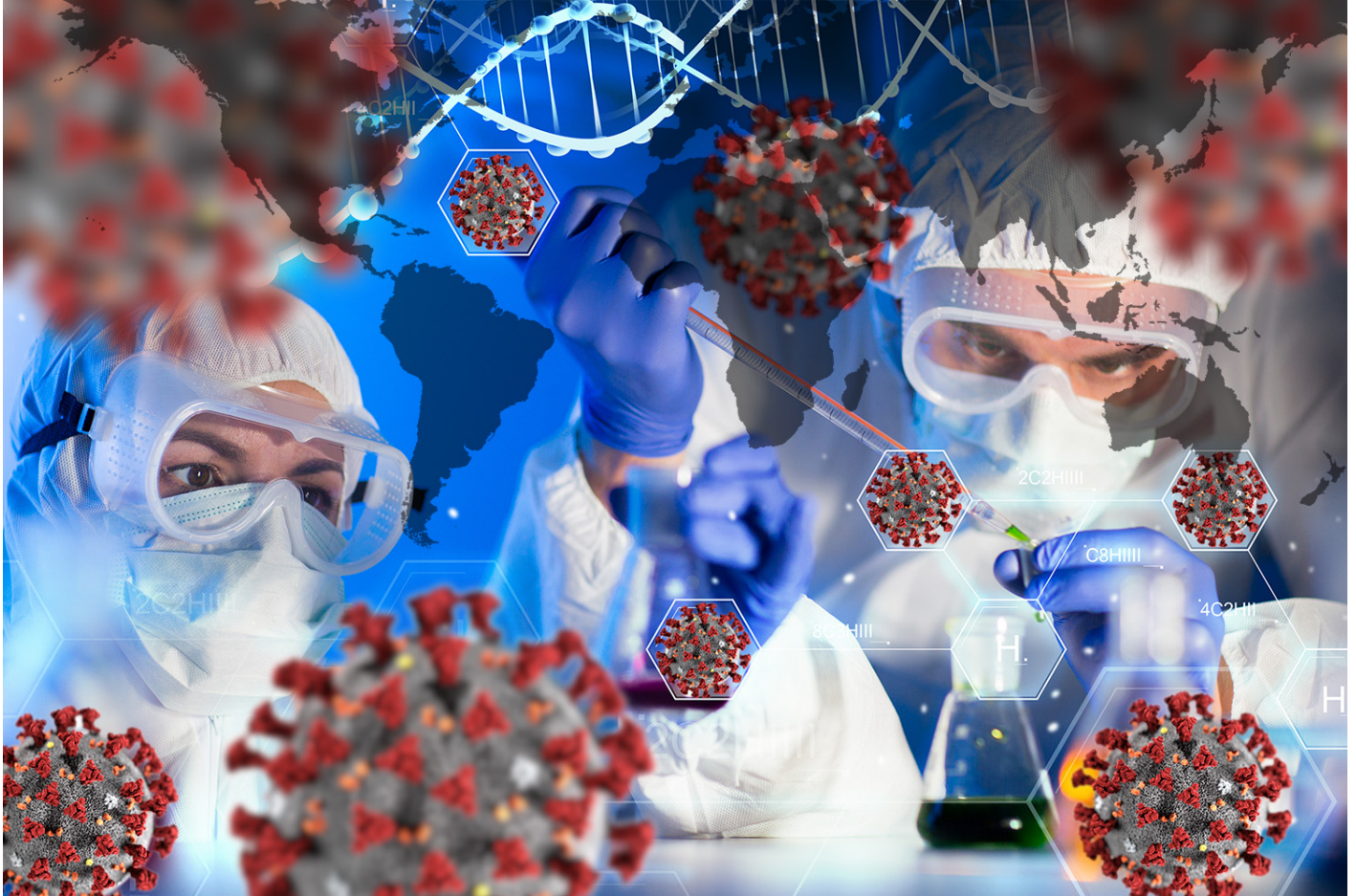


Coronavirus (COVID-19) and End-Time Lessons

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | March 31, 2020



Over the past several weeks, as the COVID-19 pandemic has swept the world, I have received multiple inquiries regarding how this crisis relates to the end-time events of Revelation.

The Bible says that the “gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14 NIV84). Many have wondered how everyone will hear the gospel. Could this pandemic be a catalyst that helps spread the gospel to the world? How will everyone be brought to the point of choosing between God and Satan, between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world?

Have you heard end-time scenarios that describe human armies battling each other in the Middle East, or religious groups controlling governments to pass laws enforcing certain doctrines or religious practices? In these scenarios, it is suggested that the world is brought to the point of having to choose which army to back, or which doctrine to believe, or which religious practice to embrace.

But I want to suggest that the final presentation of the gospel and the final test that every person will face will be much more basic and simple. It will be a test, not over correct doctrine, but of character: Do

we love others or do we love self more – this will be the test. Do we choose godly, self-sacrificial service, or do we choose to protect self, even when it hurts others?

Two weeks ago, I posted a blog about [viruses](#) and described how viruses were not part of God's creation, but are manifestations of selfishness. Viruses seek only to replicate themselves – me, me, me, and more of me, without regard to anything but their own replication, ultimately killing the host and itself. Viruses are the physical manifestation of the law of sin and death, of selfishness, of the principles and methods of Satan's kingdom. It is the opposite of God's kingdom of love, which is the principle of giving, of service, of self-sacrifice. Jesus said:

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (John 15:12, 13 NIV84).

John wrote:

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers (1 John 3:16 NIV84).

God's kingdom is the kingdom of love – a kingdom not driven by fear, not focused on self, not exploitive of others, but a kingdom that serves, that gives, that heals and restores. Revelation describes the end-time people of God, who are ready to meet Christ when He returns: "They did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death" (Revelation 12:11 NIV84). These people are not driven by fear. They don't seek to protect self. They refuse to run from doing what is right, in order to save their own lives. This is the opposite of this world of selfishness, opposite of the survival drive – and it is possible only for those who have God's law of love written on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10).

As the world moves ever-closer to the second coming of Christ, the Bible describes that the people of earth will be caught up in the business of life: putting food on the table, building houses, getting married, and entertainment, such that they don't realize that the world is nearing its end (Matthew 24:36-39; Luke 17:26-30).

God wants all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9), so to wake people up, He mercifully allows the four angels, who hold back the winds of strife, to loosen their grip – to give people the opportunity to think and to act, to test their character, and to choose which kingdom will be theirs (Revelation 7:1-3).

- Will they love others, or will they harden their hearts in selfishness?
- Will fear take control of their hearts, or will love cast out fear?
- Will people choose God's kingdom of love or Satan's kingdom of fear-based survival of the fittest?

When a pandemic occurs, will people choose to wait until they have a need to procure a limited resource, or will they stockpile what they don't need and, thereby, deprive others, who do have a need, of lifesaving resources?

Will people seek to price gouge and take advantage, or will they seek to give what they have to those in need? This week, one of my patients gave me two N95 masks that he had at home; he was concerned for me and thought I would have more use for them than he did. This was godly love in action!

Godly love does more than share; it puts self in harm's way to help others: Doctors, nurses, first responders, and many others care for those in need, despite risks to themselves.

Godly love shines more brightly still; it leads to a willingness to sacrifice self for others. Amid the rampant fear caused by the corona pandemic, Don Giuseppe Berardelli, a 72 year-old Italian priest who contracted coronavirus, chose love and rejected the fear-driven survival drive. He did not love his life so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11) and gave up his ventilator, so a younger patient could have one. And yes, sadly, this kindly priest died. He chose God's kingdom of love over the ways of the world. His test was not about denominational affiliation, creeds, or religious rituals, but about character. And oh, how brightly his life of love shines!

How will every person in the world be brought to a decision point for God's kingdom? By events just like this pandemic: Each person will be placed in situations in which they have to decide whether they will give into fear or will act to love others. Will they socially isolate or party on a beach? Will they hoard masks, disinfectant, toilet paper, medications, water, and food, or use only what they need and allow the supplies to go to those with the greatest need? Will they sacrifice self for others, or will they sacrifice others for self?

Most books written on end-time events argue that the final test people will face will be over the right doctrine or religious practice. But I believe that the final test will be over character - do we love God and others, are we willing to sacrifice self for them, or will we allow fear to harden our hearts and solidify our characters in selfishness, such that we refuse to help others in order to protect self?

In the future, regardless of whatever particular crisis, disaster, disease, or plague hits, the question will be who do you love, who do you trust, and whose character do you possess - Christ's or Satan's?

Jesus, speaking to the church, says:

I am returning soon. ... Everyone who prevails by completing the treatment and lives in harmony with my methods of love until the end, I will make a pillar, a living stone, in the heavenly temple of my God - a community of holy beings. Their connection with God will never be severed and I will write in their beings the character of my God, and they will be marked by me as citizens of the New Jerusalem which is coming down out of heaven from my God. I will also write my name upon their hearts and minds (Revelation 3:11, 12 The Remedy).
