

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Luke 13:6-9
Lesson #26
Signs of the time?
03/22/2020

James Watt, Secretary of the Interior under the Reagan administration, felt that there was no need to protect the environment because the end was coming SOON!

In 1981, he told a Congressional committee, "I don't know how many future generations we can count on until the Lord returns."



1

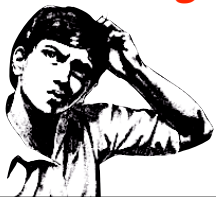
How are we to discern the meaning of current historical events from a theological perspective?

Some popular views of pandemics

God's judgment on the world.

This is a Satanic attack.

A sign of the Apocalypse.



What should a Berean conclude?

2

Predicted dates of Christ's return and the END

70	1533 (Oct.19)	1763 (Feb.28)	1880	1954 (Dec.21)	1995
247	1534 (April 5)	1780 (May 19)	1881	1957 (Apr.23)	1996 (Dec.13)
365	1544	1789	1890	1958	1997 *8
380	1555	1790	1891	1959 (Apr.22)	1998 *15
500	1556 (July 22)	1792	1895	1960	1999 *36
793 (April 6)	1583 (April 28)	1794	1896	1962 (Feb.4)	2000 *59
800	1584	1795 (Nov.19)	1899	1966	2001 *17
806	1588	1801	1900	1967 (Aug.20)	2002 *6
848	1600	1805	1901	1969 (Aug.9)1972	2003 *6
870 (March 25)	1603	1814 (Dec.25)	1908 (April 23)	1973	2004
992	1623 1624	1820 (Oct.14)	1910 (May 18)	1974	2005 *3
995	(Feb.1)	1832	1911	1975	2006 (Feb.12)
1000	1648 1654	1836	1914 (Oct.1)	1976	2007 *4
1033	1656	1843 (April 28)	1915	1977	2008 (Mar. 21)
1184	1657	1844 (Mar.21)	1918	1978	2009
1186 (Sept.23)	1658	1845	1919 (Dec.17)	1980 (April.1)	2010
1260	1660	1846	1925 (Feb.13)	1981 (June 28)	2011 (Dec.31)
1284	1666 1673	1847 (April 7)	1928	1982 (Mar.10)	2012 (Dec.21)
1290	1668	1849	1934	1983	2017
1306	1689	1851	1935	1984 (Oct.2)	2020
1335	1694	1856	1936	1985 (Mar.25)	2022
1367	1697	1862	1938	1986	2023
1370	1700	1863	1941	1987 (Apr.29)	2025
1420 (Feb.14)	1708	1867	1943	1988 (Sep.15)	2026
1496	1716	1868	1945 (Sept.21)	1989 (Sept.30)	2033
1504	1719 (April5)	1869	1947	1990 (April 23)	2035
1524 (Feb.20)	1734	1870 (June 28)	1950	1991 (Mar.31)	2037
1525	1736 (Oct.13)	1872	1952	1992 (April 26)	2040
1528 (May 27)	1757	1874	1953 (Jan.9)	1993 (Nov.14)	
1532	1761 (April 5)	1878	1953	1994 (Sept.29)	

3

The immediate context of **Lk.13:6-9**

Luke 13

"1 Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And He answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? 3 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

4

The immediate context of **Lk.13:6-9**

Luke 12:56

"You hypocrites! You know how to analyze the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not analyze this present time?"

Luke 13:2

"Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate?"

Luke 13:4

"Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?"

Luke 13:3

"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

THE POINT: Don't judge the meaning of life's circumstances too quickly.

5

Luke 13

6 And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. 7 And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' 8 And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; 9 and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'"

THE POINT: Don't judge the meaning of life's circumstances too quickly.

6

Observations on Lk.13:6-9

- **The fig tree** can symbolize Israel and / or individuals.
- **The fruit** can be receptive faith and / or a life that is virtuous.
- **There are two differing opinions** as to how to respond to the barren fig tree (Israel).
- **Two possible points of this parable:**
 1. Don't judge those who are not fruitful until you have nurtured them.
 2. The context suggests - **Don't judge the meaning of life's circumstances too quickly.**

7

Observations on Lk.13:6-9

Like the parable of the weeds in the wheat

Matthew 13

"27 And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' 29 But he said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

THE POINT: Don't judge the meaning of life's circumstances too quickly.

8

The application to Ancient Israel being cut off for unbelief.

Romans 9

"3 For I could wish that I myself were **accursed, separated from Christ** for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites,"

Romans 11

"17 **But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,** 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 Quite right, **they were broken off for their unbelief,** but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; 21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you."

9

The application to the church

- ✓ Be slow to condemn those you do not **first love and offer to help.**
- ✓ Don't confess the sins of others until you have **recognized and repented of your own sins.**

Matthew 7:5

"You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Romans 15

"1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification."

10

The application to historical events

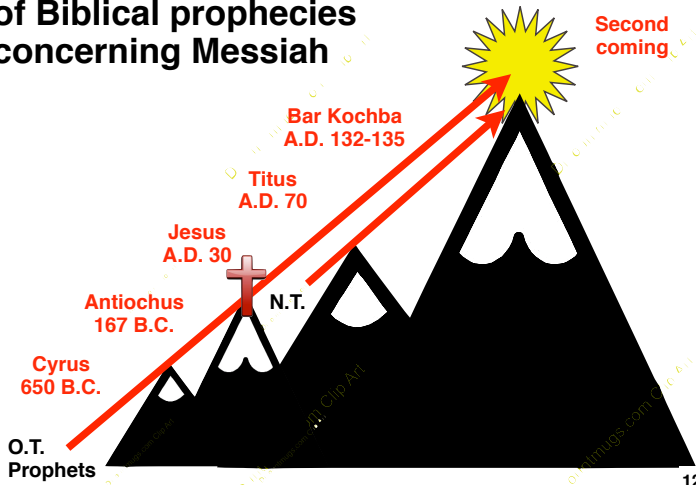
- ✓ Recognize the tendency to wrongly label the spiritual significance of circumstances.



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1537		1876	1954	1994 (Sept.29)	

11

Multiple “fulfillments” of Biblical prophecies concerning Messiah



12

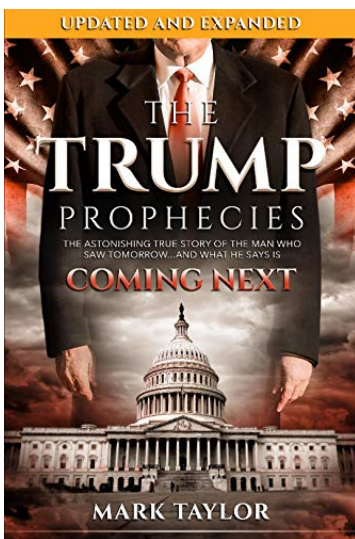
Recent U.S. presidents that some have believed to be “the Anti-Christ”

George Washington
Franklin D. Roosevelt
John F. Kennedy
Richard Nixon
Ronald Reagan
Bill Clinton
Barack Obama

Fewer have been labeled as “a messianic figure”

George Bush
Barack Obama
Donald Trump

13



14

“Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut.”
Isaiah 45:1

Half Shekel King Cyrus
Donald Trump Jewish
Temple Mount Israel
Coin LIMITED
\$60



15

Jude warns of the need to discern.

Jude

“4 For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, **ungodly persons** who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. . . .12 These men are those who are **hidden reefs** in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, **carried along by winds**; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; 13 **wild waves of the sea**, casting up their own shame like foam; **wandering stars**, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.”

16

The application to historical events

- ✓ Recognize the tendency to wrongly label the spiritual significance of circumstances.
- ✓ Don’t believe everything you hear from a **so called “prophet” or a peddler of “fear”**.
- ✓ Be a Berean - search the Scripture **wisely**.



17

2 Corinthians 12

“⁷ And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me – to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

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How could Paul have misunderstood his "thorn in the flesh"?

- ✓ It was Satan trying to stop Paul’s ministry. **“When in doubt, cast it out!”**
- ✓ It was God’s judgment on something wrong in Paul’s life. **“Do penance.”**
- ✓ It was a sign that Christian ministry was a “false call” for Paul. **“He didn’t have the gift.”**
- ✓ It was a call for more faith. **“Persist in prayer.”**
- ✓ It was an indication that God’s Word could not be trusted. **“Chuck the faith.”**
- ✓ It was a sign that Jesus was not there, or did not care. **“Try Buddha.”**

19

How are we to respond to a pandemic?

1. Put this in perspective **with former pandemics.**

TEN WORST PANDEMICS IN HISTORY

HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC (AT ITS PEAK, 2005-2012) 36 million died
FLU PANDEMIC (1968) 1 million died
ASIAN FLU (1956-1958) 2 million died
FLU PANDEMIC (1918) 20-50 million died
SIXTH CHOLERA PANDEMIC (1910-1911) 800,000 died
FLU PANDEMIC (1889-1890) 1 million died
THIRD CHOLERA PANDEMIC (1852-1860) 1 million died
THE BLACK DEATH (1346-1353) 200 million died
PLAGUE OF JUSTINIAN (541-542) 25 million died
ANTONINE PLAGUE (165 AD) 5 million died

<https://www.mphonline.org/worst-pandemics-in-history/>

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How are we to respond to a pandemic?

1. Put this in perspective **with former pandemics.**
2. This is a sign **of the nature of a broken world.**

Romans 8

“²⁰ For the creation was subjected to **futility**, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to **corruption** into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation **groans and suffers** the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly** for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”

- ✓ This is a reminder of our **plight and our longing** as part of a fallen world.
- ✓ We best not read more into this event.

21

How are we to respond to a pandemic?

1. Put this in perspective **with former pandemics.**
2. This is a sign **of the nature of a broken world.**
3. This is a call **to share the burden of a broken world and infuse it with faith, hope, and love.**

This parable sheds light on how we might understand a social issue like homosexuality.

Romans 1,2

“³² and, although **they** know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. ¹ Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” ²²

22

How are we to respond to a pandemic?

1. Put this in perspective **with former pandemics.**
2. This is a sign **of the nature of a broken world.**
3. This is a call **to share the burden of a broken world and infuse it with faith, hope, and love.**
4. This is a call **to be salt and light by speaking truth in love.**

Matthew 5:16

“**Let your light shine** before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Ephesians 4:15

“but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.”

23

Understanding the nature of our hope and calling.

- ✓ History is linear **with a destiny and is coming to an end.**
- ✓ Our ultimate hope is not to bring heaven to earth **but to show & tell of heaven to the world.**
- ✓ We do not know when this will happen but are to **maintain stewardship of kingdom values.**
- ✓ Natural disasters **call for acts of God.**
 - We cannot remove every bad circumstance.
 - But we can show compassion and self sacrifice in mitigating painful consequences and managing our environment.

24

- ✓ Our ultimate hope is in the **coming king with his kingdom.**

Titus 2

“¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the **blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;**”

25