

# RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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End Times

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How close are we to the end of the world? What are the signs that would precede the end of the world? How do we know when it is about to happen? Jesus said that there would be wars and rumours of wars, nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, that there would be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. He said as well, that those events would only be the beginning, but that the end was not yet. He compared the times as when a woman is in travail, about to give birth, and the pangs increase, both in intensity and frequency. If those events are the beginning, we are well into the beginning.

Also, when Jesus says those are only the beginning and the pangs will increase, it implies that things are only going to get worse. Things can only accelerate from here. We have right now nations rising against other nations, there are earthquakes, famines, disasters, misery everywhere. We have right now unstoppable diseases such as AIDS that keep expanding in percentage of population worldwide. We have right now unstoppable armament by nations. China and Russia are arming themselves to the teeth and have more spies than ever in the U.S. They want to learn our secrets, defeat our weapons. Even now Pakistan is in big turmoil after the murder of Benazir Bhutto. If Pakistan falls to the Muslims who want to murder us, it would be a giant leap in the power available to them. It would jump over all the efforts of Middle East countries hostile to us who have been active in trying to obtain weapons of mass destruction. Libya, Syria, Iraq, all had secret nuclear weapons programs, and more or less overt chemical and biological weapons programs. Iran is, at this point, at the forefront of those efforts.

But today Pakistan is the center of attention, because they got the finished product. Long range missiles with nuclear bombs ready to go. There appears to be a preparation all over the world for a major showdown in the future. How far is that future? Is it near, even at the door? Or is it yet far away? We try to figure out prophecy, we ask: Are these the things predicted? Are the present events the ones foretold by Jesus? They could be, but isn't it true that times past have been even more violent and more savage than what we are experiencing today, at the beginning of AD. 2008? How bad was it in the Middle Ages, when there was no law, no protection from invasions, no safety anywhere? Where do we get the verb vandalism from? We get it from the Vandals, a noun, the name of a tribe of terribly cruel and murderous people who spread terror in

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what is now Europe. The very fact that the word that was once a noun is now a verb indicates the intensity of their impact in those times. How was it living in those times? And the Vandals were only one of several different tribes that emerged and dominated for a time over long periods of time. What is the difference between now and then? Or does it feel like it is worse now only because it is us, we ourselves who are living through uncertain times? How about World War I and World War II? Weren't those times worse than what we are experiencing right now? Because this thing of nations rising against other nations is the history of the world from the beginning, isn't it? Yet we still want to know what is the degree of badness, the intensity, the tipping point from which things will accelerate for sure. In other words, what we want to know is, when will these things happen, and what are the signs of thy coming and of the end of the world? What else needs to happen for the end of the world to come upon us? No better words than those of Jesus. He said that even at the time of those disasters the end was not yet, Matthew 24:6, ". . . see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet." Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations; and then will the end come." That's a clear demarcation. The Gospel has to be carried to the ends of the Earth and then will the end come.

What is the Gospel? The word "Gospel" means "Good News." The Good News is that the very beloved of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, has died for our sins. He has rescued us from the second death, that final separation between us and God. There is a place called Hell more terrible than the most terrible Vandal. Jesus was killed in our behalf, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Now, has the Gospel been carried into all the world as a witness to all nations? If one were to look at the history of missionaries in the last few centuries it would be easy to make the case that the Gospel has indeed reached every remote place on Earth. Missionaries have discovered people nobody knew existed, in the most exotic and faraway jungles. Some lived with them for years and years, just so they could learn their language, just so they could tell them the Gospel. And if something was not covered before, it is now, in our times. Worldwide television, radio, Internet, reach every country on Earth today. And it cannot be that every human being would have to know the Gospel before the end can come. If that were the case the world would never end. Every second there are people born simultaneously all over the world, do we wait until they can understand what they are being told? What about the ones that are born the next millisecond? Do we wait for them? Or else there would have to be a moratorium all over the world that no children should be born for a period of time long enough that it would give enough time for everybody that is alive then to understand. No, obviously the ends

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of the world has to mean basically every country on Earth. If that is the case the end could come at any time. The Gospel has reached every continent and many extremely remote areas in those continents. It has already been preached to all nations, as Jesus said it would be at the end. The stage is set right now, nothing else needs to happen for the end to come. It is now up to God to see how long he will delay, how long will he stay his hand because he is longsuffering. Ezekiel 18:23: "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" God wants us to be saved, he wants as many as possible to be saved. So, our response to the nearness of the end of the world should be, first of all: to be certainly aware that death can catch up with us at any time and our end will be the end of the world for us. There is nothing to wait for, we must be covered now. The other part of the response should be that we want to tell others, at least family and friends, about the wrath to come and the sure refuge available.