

**BIBLE STUDY**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2020**

***"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing you look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, blameless" II Peter 3:13-14.***

Let's examine this verse.

The first word of verse thirteen, nevertheless, calls on us to consider what proceeds it. And what is that? A discussion of the days leading up to the end and then the consummation of this present age when the "elements shall melt with a fervent heat".

In our current situation, there has been a renewed interest among believers, and maybe a few unbelievers, as to whether or not the end times are upon us. Are we witnessing the evidence of the "birth pains" that Jesus spoke of?

In answer to that, I would say that there are far greater signs than just the current pandemic, although it could be among the signs. The greatest sign of the times is what is known by many as the sign of **convergence**. That is to say that many of the signs of the end are converging right before our eyes.

The greatest of all of these is that after nearly 2000 years, beginning in 1948, Israel is back in their land. To be sure, they are assembled in unbelief, but assembled none the less. And according to prophecy, this is a prerequisite the second coming of Christ. It is also a miracle among miracles that this has occurred. Space does not allow a full exposition of this fact, but consider just one among many prophecies that relate.

Ezekiel thirty-eight and thirty-nine tells us that Russia, along with a confederacy of Islamic nations will invade Israel from the north in the last days. If you had read this in April of 1948, you would have thought that there is no way this could be fulfilled because there was no Israel. Yet on May 14, 1948, there was a nation Israel! The nation is a modern miracle not only in its formation, but also in its continuance. A tiny strip of land about the size of Rhode Island, surrounded not only by enemies but enemies with a demonic vengeance against them, and yet it remains.

And there are other signs: Technology is one. The book of Revelation tells us that during the tribulation there will be two witnesses killed and that their bodies will be laid in the streets of Jerusalem and that the entire world would look upon them. If you had read that in the 50's, or even much of the 60's, you would have wondered how this could be possible. But now we know. In fact, we could view them on our phones. Our phones! In the 80's a phone was, well, a phone, and it had a cord connected. Then in the 90's wireless phones came along...but even then, we would have never thought of watching video on it or sending emails. And by the way, in the early 90's our question

would have been "what's an email?!"

Consider also, the book of Daniel says in chapter 12 that at the time of the end **"many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" 12:4.** (Notice that it does not say wisdom, but knowledge.) Has there ever been a time in history that man could have volumes of information at his fingertips? So much so that encyclopedias and libraries are a thing of yesteryear for most. And with the advent of flight, oceans that separate the continents that once took months to navigate can now be crossed in a matter of a few hours. Humanity is certainly running "to and fro" in our time.

But I digress on those things to ponder the aforementioned question; corona virus or not, are we living in the last days? Just from the few references above it would appear that we are. So, what is to be our response?

First, we are to be prepared. We believe that the next event on Gods heavenly calendar is the rapture of the church; then the tribulation. When the trump sounds, Peter tells us that we are to be diligent to be found blameless. Notice that it does not say sinless, but rather blameless. We know that we are sinners, but how can we be blameless for that sin?

**"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we may be made the righteousness of God in him" II Corinthians 5:21.** We become right with God when we receive Jesus' payment for sin as our own.

Next, we are to be looking for a new heaven and earth. This doesn't mean that we live in some sort of transcendental meditative state of denial. It means that we are to look beyond the trials and the heartaches and the degradation of this fallen world, knowing that it's only for a short while. We are to set our hearts and minds on the promises of God. Looking for a new heaven and a new earth where all is well.

Until then, look up!