

## Barbarians At the Gate

### Commentary for March 1, 2020 — What Should We Do; How Should We Respond?

This month's article is "Israel and Judah: 37. Hezekiah and God's Salvation." It is introduced by the "[March 2020 Newsletter](#)." They both involve the events during the time of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah; and the siege of Jerusalem by Assyrian King Sennacherib and his army. There appeared to be no hope for those in the city because most of the Kingdom of Judah had been conquered, pillaged, and many people wounded, taken captive, or killed. How does one deal with such news?

Every generation of humanity has lived with some kind of threat of mass death and destruction coming near to them personally or to their loved ones. People flee such threats, yet many are snared by circumstances that threaten their lives.

How does a person cope with the emotional suffering? It is difficult for me to imagine such things in our modern societies. Yet it will be so in the future as the apostle Paul wrote, "**This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come**" (2 Timothy 3:1). In my opinion, the last days have not arrived yet.

Now in recent months a new fear of plague has arisen. It might be widespread and if so, many will die around the world. There will be other such things to fear as we approach the last days. See Dr. Martin's article, "[Disease Epidemics and Bible Prophecy](#)."

### **The Greatest Personal Threat "At the Gate"**

The greatest threat we each face is death.<sup>1</sup> It is the last enemy (Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:26; 1 Timothy 4:10). Perhaps some young people alive now will see His Second Advent, but even then, most people will die before Christ rescues humanity from extermination. If the time is not shortened, then "**all flesh**" including all human life will die. Jesus spoke about "**the last days**":

**"For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time [of affliction], neither shall be.**

**And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he has chosen, he has shortened the days."**

• **Mark 13:19–20**

---

<sup>1</sup> I hope that fear for others has priority over fear of our own death. Such is the nature of love, "**For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another**" (1 John 3:11). "**This commandment have we from him, That he who love God [shall] love his brother also**" (1 John 4:21). See my August 2015 article, "[God and Demographics](#)" where I note the work of geneticist Dr. Mark Sanford. He calculated that humanity has a tipping point beyond which the generational genetic mutation load prevents humanity from reproducing in sufficient numbers to sustain the human race. God is in control. Be at peace with that knowledge.

Jesus was not talking about only the land of Israel and the Middle East, He meant the entire world. **“No flesh should be saved”** is meaningless unless it means total destruction of all life.<sup>2</sup>

We all fear death as long as we live, eased only by our hope in God and Christ. The lives of most people have been, [“Nasty, Brutish, and Short.”](#) King David described his fear of death:

**“My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me.”**

• *Psalm 55:4–5*

When Christ returns He will abolish death for all believers up to that moment. Death will eventually be abolished for all humanity:

**“Who has saved us ... which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”**

• *2 Timothy 1:9–10*

**“We trust in the living God, who [at the present moment] is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe. These things command and teach.”**

• *1 Timothy 4:10–11*

Paul in Hebrews explains how Christ has done this for us and will do for all in due time:

**“And again, ‘I will put my trust in him.’ And again, ‘Behold I and the children which God has given me.’ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;**

**that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”**

• *Hebrews 2:13–15*

We all live our lives subject to the bondage of our fear of our impending death. That fear was, is, and will be universal. Christ will accomplish the destruction of death. Once we are resurrected to immortality death will never have a claim on us again.

**“For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. ...**

**[God] Who has saved us, ... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”**

• *2 Timothy 1:7, 9–10*

Other articles to read: [“Victory Over Fear,”](#) [“How to Prepare for the Future.”](#)

David Sielaff  
[david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com)

---

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 24:22 has a shorter version of Mark 13:19–20. After **“those days”** refers to the times of tribulation and affliction (Matthew 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27). See Dr. Martin’s article, [“How to Fully Escape the Great Tribulation”](#)