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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is this: ***Was the current Ebola crisis predicted in the Bible?***

As you may have heard in the news, there is an outbreak of the Ebola virus in the west African nations of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. As of October 13, 2014 there have been approximately 8,400 cases diagnosed with 4,656 deaths (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/index.html>). So, a little over half of those contracting the virus die from the disease.

According to Wikipedia, the following article appears:

Thomas Eric Duncan was a Liberian and the first Ebola patient diagnosed in the United States. He died on October 8, 2014 from complications of Ebola at the age of 42, in Dallas, Texas.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Eric\\_Duncan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Eric_Duncan), accessed on 10/13/14 @ 12:41 PM.

A nurse who cared for Duncan has now been diagnosed with the disease (<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/dallas-nurse-ebola-identified/story?id=26160328>). This is the first case of Ebola being contracted in the United States.

The question before us is simply this: **Did the Bible predict this outbreak?**

Why is this question even being asked? Because of the following passage of scripture:

## **Matthew 24:6-8**

<sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, **pestilences**, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of sorrows.

In verse 7 is the mention of "pestilences." This means plagues, epidemics, viruses, and diseases. Some people believe what we are seeing in the United States right now is a fulfillment of this prophecy which Jesus gave about "pestilences" or the outbreak of diseases and epidemics.

The question we're asking here is: Is this true? Did Jesus predict the current outbreak of Ebola which we are now seeing? Is Mt 24:7 a prediction of current events which we are now witnessing?

The answer is simply, "NO." With confidence I assure you that the current outbreak is not the focus of Mt 24:7. Mt 24:1-34 is not a discussion of the end of time. Rather, this passage is a discussion of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem which occurred in the year AD 70 when the Roman army, led by the Roman general Titus, ransacked the city and destroyed the temple.

Notice the very beginning of this passage:

### **Matthew 24:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

The disciples then asked:

### **Matthew 24:3**

<sup>3</sup> ... "when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

There are two basic questions here:

- When will the destruction of the temple and the city occur?
- What will be the sign of Your second coming and the end of the world?

The first question is answered in verses 4-35. At the end of this section discussing Jerusalem's destruction, Jesus said this:

### **Matthew 24:34**

<sup>34</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation** will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

"This generation" means the generation of people who lived at the same time Jesus Himself was alive on the earth. That first century generation would not pass away until all the signs given in verses 4-33 were fulfilled.

The second question about the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world is answered in verses 36-51.

Now to answer the question. Verse 7, which speaks of epidemics and pestilences, falls in the section of the chapter in which Jesus is discussing the destruction of Jerusalem. Since He was discussing the destruction of Jerusalem, the current events of 2014 have absolutely nothing to do with any prediction Jesus gave in Matthew 24.

What we do know about the Lord's second coming and the end of the world is that it will be like a "thief in the night" (1 Th 5:2). This means, no one can possibly know when the Lord will return the second time to destroy the world. It will happen when people are least expecting it. Jesus said this:

**Matthew 24:36**

<sup>36</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Since no one knows when the Lord will return again, it would be wise to make preparations and live each day as if each day might just be the final day of all time. If you are not ready to meet the Lord in judgment, you need to make preparations while you still have time and then live in a prepared condition each and every day.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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