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Trust in God

"My help comes from God, the maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1

Dear Ones,

It's the weekend! Have you done anything special to mark it? I got all excited and made a boiled egg for breakfast – you know, fancy stuff! Oatmeal through the week, eggs on the weekend – a girl's gotta cut loose sometimes 😊

We also need to keep a sense of humour, as much as possible! Some hard stuff is coming our way these days – terrible statistics, stressed out health care workers, a plunging economy. It's enough to make some people wonder whether The End has come.

Ava has asked me to write about some of the biblical predictions about the End of Times, or the Apocalypse (literally, *The Revelation*). You are probably aware of them. There are two which are cited most frequently:

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and pestilence and earthquakes in various places." (Matthew 24:7)

"I looked and there was a pale green horse! Its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed with him; they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and pestilence, and by the wild animals of the earth." (Revelation 6:8)

Because they both mention pestilence (or disease) it is quite natural for us to read those passages and draw a direct line to our own day. We might say, "Jesus predicted what was to happen, and now we are living it. The End has come." In fact, I am sure that some people somewhere are, indeed, thinking that. But I hope not you.

Because it is based on very bad theology. And bad theology can do a great deal of harm.

As "People of the Book," we tend to look to scripture to interpret the present moment in which we live. It is a natural tendency to search God's word for spiritual comfort. But I think it is very misguided to search God's word for predictions about any particular period of history. This is because, while we know that *God speaks to us through the Bible*, we also know that *it was written by frail human beings*, constrained by their own world-view, scientific knowledge, and politics. The early church felt that the world must surely be coming to an end when Jesus died... but it turns out that they were wrong.

For my part, I tend to take the descriptions of "the end of time" less as predictions, and more as historical descriptions of what the authors feared might happen. Or how they interpreted what was actually happening around them. People in every generation have feared earthquakes, fires and

disease, so it is no wonder that these figured large in the imaginations of our ancestors. And, perhaps, the world as they knew it was actually coming to an end. But not the world entire.

Rather than focus on passages from scripture which coincidentally seem to describe our present day, I encourage you to lean into the very *good* theology of other passages, which uplift and encourage us in times of trouble. I offer you my very favourite verses of the whole bible – but do please turn to your own favourites, if you have them:

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35,37,38)

Grace to you, and peace,

Kate

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