

April 18, 2020

## And Counting...

You have likely been hearing about the duration of this pandemic or attempts at encouragement during this time where the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted life as you have known it.

You hear Laura Ingraham conclude her opening monologue “These are my thoughts on day XX of America in Shutdown”

or you have likely seen some sort of psa that would sound like this...

“We are all in this together, one day closer to returning to...”fill in the blank”

How can we be any closer when, to use a now tired cliché, “the goal posts keep moving” A term that conveys that the destination, the goal line keeps changing, thus making it impossible to score.

What have we seen in the last month alone?

The term “flatten the curve” of infection has become part of our conversation. It was thought that the spread of the virus could be defeated through social distancing for 15 days.

What happened? Our Governor institutes a stay at home order that was to last until April 15<sup>th</sup>. This as other state's Governors are doing the same, yet with varying degrees of authoritarianism.

What happened come April 15<sup>th</sup>?

Our Governor, day's prior extends her executive order for an additional 30 days with a now end date of May 15<sup>th</sup>. So, the 15 days of distancing have been extended by 30 days. The narrative now is “30 days to flatten the curve of infection” when in reality it is 45 days from the start of the first executive order.

The goal post has been moved, and so has the narrative.

Now, the talk is not just about flattening the curve of the rate of infection, but now there is talk about “defeating the virus infection all together and doing so before anything can truly resume. Even with the newly released White House Covid taskforce's r three phase plan for returning to life as we know it, the discretion lies in the hands of each state's Governor.

The goal posts have changed because information keeps changing which brings me to drawing another conclusion that this pandemic is not of Adonai. It is not a judgment where He is pouring out His wrath on His disobedient creation. This is anything but that.

Many are infected (over 2.2 million worldwide and nearly 700K domestically), while many have died (150K+ worldwide and 35K domestically). We don't know the real rate of those who have been infected and therefore we cannot truly calculate a real fatality rate. To give you a number, this year's number of fatalities for the flu in America – 40K.

We have lived a regular life with the chance we would contract a virus that could be fatile previously. Consider the last major infection – H1N1 aka the swine flu...

“The 2009 H1N1 swine flu - Between the spring of 2009 and the spring of 2010, the virus infected as many as 1.4 billion people across the globe and killed between 151,700 and 575,400 people according to the CDC”

In the U.S., between April 2009 and April 2010, the CDC estimates there were 60.8 million cases of swine flu, with over 274,000 hospitalizations and nearly 12,500 deaths — that's a mortality rate of about 0.02%.

<https://www.livescience.com/covid-19-pandemic-vs-swine-flu.html>

And yet, here we are counting days that have elapsed to where we are counting with no real determined end in sight. You are starting to see unrest among the people with protests occurring in states like Michigan and Minnesota where further restrictions have been put in place that offer no rhyme or reason. For instance, in Michigan, you can purchase lottery tickets but not seeds to plant in your garden. One would think that tending to one's garden on their own property would be the epitome of social distancing.

How is this pandemic not of Adonai?

If anything, He is definitive, He is precise.

When Judah had followed the path of transgression the Northern tribes of Israel had laid, they would also end up being removed from the land. This is the letter written by the Prophet Yirmeyahu...

**Jer 29:4** "Here is what Adonai-Tzva'ot, the God of Isra'el, says to all those in exile, whom I have caused to be carried off captive from Yerushalayim to Bavel:

**Jer 29:5** 'Build yourselves houses, and live in them. Plant gardens, and eat what they produce.

**Jer 29:6** Choose women to marry, and have sons and daughters. Choose wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage to men, so that they can have sons and daughters — increase your numbers there, don't decrease.

**Jer 29:7** Seek the welfare of the city to which I have caused you to go in exile, and pray to Adonai on its behalf; for your welfare is bound up in its welfare.'

**Jer 29:8** For this is what Adonai-Tzva'ot, the God of Isra'el, says: 'Don't let your prophets who are living among you and your diviners deceive you, and don't pay attention to the dreams you urge them to dream.

**Jer 29:9** For they are prophesying falsely in my name; I have not sent them,' says Adonai.

In other words, Adonai is conveying to His people...get comfortable, because you are going to be staying here for a while, yet not indefinitely...

**Jer 29:10** "For here is what Adonai says: 'After Bavel's seventy years are over, I will remember you and fulfill my good promise to you by bringing you back to this place.

**Jer 29:11** For I know what plans I have in mind for you,' says Adonai,'plans for well-being, not for bad things; so that you can have hope and a future.

If they were counting, they would have been counting towards a definitive conclusion...70 years.

**Ezr 1:1** In the first year of Koresh king of Persia, in order for the word of Adonai prophesied by Yirmeyahu to be fulfilled, Adonai stirred up the spirit of Koresh king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his whole kingdom, which he also put in writing, as follows:

**Ezr 1:2** "Here is what Koresh king of Persia says: Adonai, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms on earth; and he has charged me to build him a house in Yerushalayim, in Y'hudah.

What do we see here, but a definitive conclusion.

He removed them from the land and placed them under the authority of another nation that would last for a time, seventy years in total. Once that time had reached its fullness, Adonai stirred up the spirit of the King of Persia who then “got the ball rolling” for the Jewish people to return to the land.

On the other side of the coin I am sharing with you, Adonai's judgment. This too is definitive and swift.

I go back a week to our Passover Seder and the 10<sup>th</sup> plague.

**Exo 12:23** For Adonai will pass through to kill the Egyptians; but when he sees the blood on the top and on the two sides, Adonai will pass over the door and will not allow the Slaughterer to enter your houses and kill you.

What happened?

**Exo 12:29** At midnight Adonai killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock.

**Exo 12:30** Pharaoh got up in the night, he, all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was horrendous wailing in Egypt; for there wasn't a single house without someone dead in it.

What was the intent of Adonai's judgment cast upon Egypt?

To judge the false gods of Egypt,

**Exo 12:12** For that night, I will pass through the land of Egypt and kill all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both men and animals; and I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt; I am Adonai.

To free Israel, His people from bondage so they could worship Him.

**Exo 12:31** He summoned Moshe and Aharon by night and said, "Up and leave my people, both you and the people of Isra'el; and go, serve Adonai as you said.

How long did this all take?

One night.

A definitive duration of time executed by Adonai. It wasn't left open ended.

Not convinced, let's look into the future...

How about the 5<sup>th</sup> Angel and their Shofar...

**Rev 9:1** The fifth angel sounded his shofar; and I saw a star that had fallen out of heaven onto the earth, and he was given the key to the shaft leading down to the Abyss.

**Rev 9:2** He opened the shaft of the Abyss, and there went up smoke from the shaft like the smoke of a huge furnace; the sun was darkened, and the sky too, by the smoke from the shaft.

**Rev 9:3** Then out of the smoke onto the earth came locusts, and they were given power like the power scorpions have on earth.

**Rev 9:4** They were instructed not to harm the grass on the earth, any green plant or any tree, but only the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

**Rev 9:5** The locusts were not allowed to kill them, only to inflict pain on them for five months; and the pain they caused was like the pain of a scorpion sting.

**Rev 9:6** In those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

Locusts...wonder where we have heard about the use of locusts before? (Exodus 10) The locusts were instructed not to harm any of the vegetation in that this is what they normally do...harm the vegetation. Here they are brought forth with an intention to only inflict pain and suffering amongst the people not sealed by Adonai.

Swift in terms of when it happened (upon the blowing of the fifth shofar) and definitive in terms of how long it would last – 5 months. Notice that those with the seal of Adonai, in other words His protection would not be harmed. What we are seeing today is random, though there is greater susceptibility for those over a certain age and/or those who have other health conditions.

Again, this virus does not have the fingerprint of Adonai on it.

We know Adonai through what He has revealed to us in His Word. Additionally we have been given Ruach Ha Kodesh to guide us in situations like this. Consider Yeshua's Words from Yochanan's Gospel...

**Joh 16:7** But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I don't go away, the comforting Counselor will not come to you. However, if I do go, I will send him to you.

**Joh 16:8** "When he comes, he will show that the world is wrong about sin, about righteousness and about judgment –

**Joh 16:9** about sin, in that people don't put their trust in me;

**Joh 16:10** about righteousness, in that I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me;

**Joh 16:11** about judgment, in that the ruler of this world has been judged.

**Joh 16:12** "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now.

**Joh 16:13** However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own initiative but will say only what he hears. He will also announce to you the events of the future.

**Joh 16:14** He will glorify me, because he will receive from what is mine and announce it to you.

**Joh 16:15** Everything the Father has is mine; this is why I said that he receives from what is mine and will announce it to you.

You have the same Spirit residing in you that I have.

Today, we are counting, not to keep track of how many days our God given liberties have been violated in the name of a virus by which less than 1% of the nations population will contract it, but we are counting for another reason and we are counting with a purpose that brings us to our destination. What is the destination, but a promise we were to receive. A promise that continues to be fulfilled to this day. A promise that provides us with a seal of protection that regardless of what transpires in this world, we are part of something greater than this world. His Kingdom.

**Act 1:5** For Yochanan used to immerse people in water; but in a few days, you will be immersed in the Ruach HaKodesh!"

**Act 1:6** When they were together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Isra'el?"

**Act 1:7** He answered, "You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under

his own authority.

**Act 1:8** But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!"

Today we are counting with purpose...in remembrance of Yeshua's resurrection for it is now one week since He appeared first to Miryam of Magdala early in the morning on the first day of the week.

So, let us rejoice during this time of uncertainty that Adonai is swift and precise in all He does. Yeshua stands with us in this time, when we are in need and we call out to our Cohen Ha Gadol...

**Act 7:54** On hearing these things, they were cut to their hearts and ground their teeth at him.

**Act 7:55** But he, full of the Ruach HaKodesh, looked up to heaven and saw God's Sh'khinah, with Yeshua standing at the right hand of God.

**Act 7:56** "Look!" he exclaimed, "I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Are you like Stephen?

Are you full of the Ruach Ha Kodesh?

If you aren't, you need to be. I will share more about that next Shabbat.

We count with purpose.

We count with intent.

There is a distinction when Adonai's fingerprint is present. It is not present in that He is not the author of this virus. There is uncertainty, lack of clarity, an unknown duration. Yet when He does do something and reveals it, you will know that it is from Him.

So in closing with the Words of Yeshua...

**Joh 16:31** Yeshua answered, "Now you do believe.

**Joh 16:32** But a time is coming — indeed it has come already — when you will be scattered, each one looking out for himself; and you will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone; because the Father is with me.

**Joh 16:33** "I have said these things to you so that, united with me, you may have shalom. In the world, you have troubles (tsuris). But be brave! I have conquered the world!"