

NEWSBYTES

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"Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Tozer

Famine Is 'Knocking On The Door' Of 2021

Unless there is some sort of unforeseen miracle, millions of people could literally starve to death in 2021. We are facing a global food crisis that is unlike anything we have ever seen before in modern times, and 2021 is going to be the year when it starts to become extremely painful all over the globe.

But don't take my word for it. David Beasley is the head of the UN World Food Program, and so he is in a better position to assess the global hunger crisis than any of us. According to Beasley, 2021 "is literally going to be catastrophic" and his organization is facing "the worst humanitarian crisis year since the beginning of the United Nations"...

"2021 is literally going to be catastrophic based on what we're seeing at this stage of the game," said Beasley, adding that for a dozen countries, famine is "knocking on the door." He said 2021 was likely to be "the worst humanitarian crisis year since the beginning of the United Nations" 75 years ago and "we're not going to be able to fund everything ... so we have to prioritize, as I say, the icebergs in front of the Titanic."

Beasley is feverishly trying to raise more money to meet the rising tide of hunger that he is witnessing all across the planet, but he feels like he is fighting a losing battle.

Freakish weather patterns, crippling droughts and colossal armies of locusts have devastated crops throughout 2020, and the COVID pandemic is putting an extreme amount of stress on global food distribution systems.

As a result, food prices are surging and hundreds of millions of people living in impoverished countries now find themselves unable to afford enough food to eat on a regular basis.

Here in the United States, approximately 50 million people have experienced food insecurity at some point in 2020. According to PBS, this hunger crisis is even worse than what we went through during the last recession...

Those fighting hunger say they've never seen anything like this in America, even during the Great Recession of 2007-2009.

After the initial wave of fear caused by the COVID pandemic started to subside, a lot of Americans thought that we were out of the woods, but now a new wave of lockdowns is being instituted and CNN

is reporting that the hunger crisis in America is actually "getting worse" as we approach the end of the year.

Hunger skyrocketed at the pandemic's onset because of record high job losses, school closures and strained food pantries. But at that point, Americans were better positioned to make ends meet with support from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamp, benefits.

Yet, as we near year's end, the problem is getting worse, not better. With the expiration of CARES Act benefits and without any hint as to when the next round of federal aid will hit people's pockets, families around the country are suffering and will likely continue to do so throughout the holiday season.

Could it be possible that 2021 will end up being even more painful for hungry Americans than 2020 was?

That is difficult to imagine, because the numbers from this year have been truly horrific. The AP analyzed Feeding America data from 181 different food banks, and they found that those food banks had given out 57 percent more food in 2020 than they did in 2019.

If the demand continues to skyrocket, eventually there simply will not be enough food for everyone.

We are all familiar with the photographs from the Great Depression that show men waiting in very long lines for free food.

Well, the same thing is happening now, but with a twist. Needy people are lining up as early as 2 AM and are waiting in their vehicles for up to 12 hours just to get a few bags of provisions from their local food banks...

The history books are filled with iconic images of America's struggles against hunger. Among the most memorable are the Depression-era photos of men standing in breadlines, huddled in long coats and fedoras, their eyes large with fear. An overhead sign reads: "Free Soup. Coffee and a Doughnut for the Unemployed."

This year's portrait of hunger has a distinctively bird's eye view: Enormous traffic jams captured from drone-carrying cameras. Cars inching along, each driver waiting hours for a box or bag of food.

From Anaheim, California to San Antonio, Texas to Toledo, Ohio and Orlando, Florida and points in-between, thousands of vehicles carrying hungry people queued up for miles across the horizon. In New York, and other large cities, people stand, waiting for blocks on end.

Of course my readers were warned in advance that all of this was coming.

For years I have been warning my readers that economic collapse, civil unrest and global famine were approaching, and I strongly urged everyone to stockpile food and supplies.

Now we are constantly being bombarded by headlines that declare that the days that I have been warning about are here, and 2021 threatens to be even worse than 2020 was.

Today, I came across a news story that I think is an appropriate metaphor for what we are potentially facing in 2021. Hundreds of black vultures have invaded the town of Marietta, Pennsylvania and they are causing tremendous problems. They are tearing up rooftops and garbage cans, they are defecating all over the place, and they "spew vomit that smells 'like rotting corpses' on sidewalks and homes".

Residents have been desperately trying to scare them away, but they can't shoot the vultures because they are protected by law...

More permanent solutions are in short supply, as the black vulture is federally protected and can't be exterminated without permission.

It's illegal in the US to trap, kill or own black vultures without a permit and violators can face a fine of up to \$15,000 and up to six months in prison.

So those vultures will get to stay in Marietta for as long as they wish.

Sadly, vultures are now circling over America too. I have written countless articles about the rotting, decaying carcass that our society has become, and those that hate traditional American values have increasingly gained more and more power.

Now we are just a few weeks away from the start of 2021, and there is every indication that it is going to be an exceedingly painful year.

Gold bead, apparently lost on Temple Mount 3,000 years ago, found by 9-year-old

When Binyamin Milt uncovered the bead as he sifted earth for Temple Mount Sifting Project, it was so well-preserved that archaeologists initially didn't realize its unique nature.

A first ever First Temple-era gold granule bead was discovered during wet sifting of earth from the Temple Mount by a nine-year-old. Jerusalemite Binyamin Milt uncovered the perfectly preserved minute cylinder, created by four layers of tiny gold balls.

The bead was in such outstanding condition that it was initially dismissed as a modern "invader" into the jumbled earth and artifact bucket that the Milt family was sifting.

The family was sifting through dirt for the Temple Mount Sifting Project, which salvaged tons of dirt that were discarded in the Kidron Valley between 1996 and 1999 by the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement during a large-scale building project on the Temple Mount, a site holy to all three monotheistic religions. Volunteers have for the past 16 years been sorting through the jumble of debris and earth that was illegally excavated from the Temple Mount, the holiest place in Judaism and site of the third holiest shrine in Islam.

Nine-year-old Milt found the bead in August, but its unique nature was only recognized recently, the Temple Mount Sifting Project said on Thursday, after project co-director Prof. Gabriel Barkay took a closer look. The dating of the bead has now been drastically adjusted back to the First Temple period, based on examples Barkay had excavated at Ketef Hinnom, located next to the Menachem Begin Center in Jerusalem.

In the late 1970s, Barkay recovered several almost-identical silver beads that were manufactured using the same "granulation" technique as the newly found gold bead at the site where the silver priestly blessing scrolls — considered the oldest written example from the Hebrew Bible — were uncovered,

along with troves of jewelry and other artifacts. According to Barkay, granulation is a decorative technique also known from Phoenician and Etruscan jewelry.

Similar beads were also found at other Holy Land sites in contexts ranging from the 13th century BCE up to the 4th century BCE, with the overwhelming majority dating to the Iron Age (12th century BCE up to the 6th century BCE), according to the Sifting Project.

Tel Aviv University Prof. Benjamin Sass said that such granule beads are known from the Late Bronze Age and even potentially from the Middle Bronze Age. They are found in all stages of the Iron Age, in the Hellenistic era, through possibly the Roman era. Though the bead is itchy bitsy, he described it as “heavy” due to the purity of the metal and the highly specialized granulation methodology used to form it. This handmade bead is fashioned from four layers, each made of tiny gold balls that adhere to each other, but more simple examples were made of a single circular layer.

Project co-director Zachi Dvira said that what makes this unique find even more curious is that it is extremely rare to find gold jewelry outside of graves or treasure troves. Dvira acknowledges that when looking at the tiny, 6 mm diameter and 4 mm high bead, “It’s difficult to explain why a bead is so interesting and important. But it’s very curious whose bead it was,” he explained to The Times of Israel. “It’s not like today when everyone can have gold jewelry, back then it was very rare, and not for the common people.”

Anchored to the Rock

December 8

Todd Hampson

Rapture Ready

Psalm 2:1-4

“Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.’ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.”

Everyone sees the world deteriorating in a myriad of ways. Unfortunately, many do not understand that this is exactly what the Bible says the world would be like near the time of the end. So much has happened in 2020 that people are just ready for the year to be over. Relatively few are aware of some gigantic prophecy-related events on the horizon which 2020 merely set the stage for. If you think 2021 is going to offer a return to normalcy after the unprecedented events of 2020, I’m afraid you’ll be blindsided by what’s coming our way.

I’ll resist launching into a commentary about how political corruption is at an all-time high, or how our country is crumbling before our eyes. Neither of those are exaggerations, by the way. If we don’t have a reliable voting system, we no longer have a democracy of “we the people.” I’ll also resist addressing (for now) the globalists’ planned “Great Reset” in June of 2021 (although just about everything we’re witnessing geopolitically is directly connected to that coming event). In this particular article, there’s something much more encouraging I’d like to focus on, and it is this:

God is still on the throne.

God is not pacing in the throne room wondering what to do next. He is sovereign over all things. God raises up and puts down leaders. His ways are high above our ways, and everything God allows moves history along to its prophesied end. Perhaps God wants us American Christians to put our trust solely

in God, rather than our comfort and security. He is enough. Actually, God is MORE than enough. Whatever we might face in the coming years, God is allowing it. Perhaps we'll face strong persecution. Perhaps the world will get worse and our light will shine brighter. Perhaps the Lord will come to take his Bride home and we'll finally be raptured out of this corrupt world with its impending globalism, lawlessness, upside-down thinking, and strong delusion. Regardless of what lies ahead, we must trust in Christ alone like never before. He is our only real security, and he is all we need.

In Exodus 17 as Joshua led the people to fight the Amalekites, the Israelites were winning as long as Moses held up his staff. Apparently, the battle went on for a long time, and as Moses' hands grew tired, Aaron and Hur provided a stone for Moses to sit on as they held up his weary arms. When studying this passage, I've always focused on the help from Aaron and Hur as they held up Moses' arms. But recently I noticed the other key detail—Moses sat on a rock. This may seem inconsequential, but I don't believe it is. Every detail in Scripture is there for a purpose.

Earlier in the same chapter of Exodus, we have the account of Moses striking the rock and water gushing out of it. Later (in Numbers 20) Moses struck another rock twice for water to pour out, but God chastised Moses because he was only supposed to speak to the rock. For this reason, Moses could not enter the promised land. This seems harsh until we realize that God was using the rock as a prophetic foreshadow of the Messiah. We read this in 1 Corinthians 10:4, "They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ." Jesus was only struck once. He died once for all (Romans 6:10). Psalm 118:22 tells us, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."

So, Moses sat on the rock. His foundation was Christ. Jesus picks up on this theme in his parable of the wise builder in Matthew 7. If you'll recall, the foolish builder constructed his house on sand while the wise builder assembled his on the rock. The wise builder drove down deep until he hit bedrock to which he anchored his foundation. Both builders had the same construction materials. Both builders faced the same storm. The only difference was the wise builder had his foundation anchored to the Rock. Jesus is our firm foundation. Unshakable.

Here's the practical application question we need to consider in the context of the coming year—2021. What are we anchored to? Are we anchored to Jesus, the unshakable one? Or, have we placed our trust in the unstable and temporary things of the world (people, politics, candidates, money, comfort, our country, etc.)? Will we face even tougher times? We might, but if we are anchored to the Rock, we will not be shaken. If Jesus is not shaken, neither should we be. What if the worst happens? What if (insert your worst-case scenario here) actually comes to pass in our lifetime—or even in the next year? Will it occur apart from God allowing it to? No. Will we still be able to live out our calling in this generation? Yes.

In times like these, we need to make sure we truly believe verses like Romans 8:28 or Psalm 139:16. As we head into the unknown of 2021, let's take stock in what really matters and evaluate what we are really trusting in. Regardless of what lies in our immediate future, we can't lose sight of God's sovereignty and his appointed times. We should not be surprised that the world is headed full-speed in the direction of last-days developments. Perhaps we're closer to the rapture than most people realize. Perhaps there is yet more time and we'll have to face tougher times than 2020. In either scenario (rapture or growing persecution and lawlessness), God is in control. In either case, God will guide us. In either case, we are destined for this moment. In either case, we must anchor deeply into bedrock. In either case, we must share the fantastic news of the cross with a lost world while we still can.

As believers we must not live like practical atheists. If we say we believe God is on the throne; if we say that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of Lords; if we say we trust God with our lives and the future; if we say that we believe God is ultimately sovereignly in control of all things; if we say we believe what

the Bible says about where all of this is headed—then we can live with joy, hope, courage, faith, and perseverance even now. We must not let the deteriorating world conditions get us down. Fear and faith cannot occupy the same space. Trust and anxiety are polar opposites. My first pastor used to say, “Worry is a Christian sin.” When we worry, we are not trusting God (see Matthew 6:25-34 and Proverbs 3:5-6.)

Let’s rise up to be the Church that God intended for us to be at this moment in history. Though our number is shrinking in the West, we (along with believers everywhere) are still the salt and light of the World. We still have the guidance and enabling power of the Holy Spirit. We are still called to such a time as this. Don’t give up now. Seize this moment with our promised future in mind. You’ll be glad you did.

The darker the night, the brighter the light. As our spiritual eyes adjust to the darkness, let’s shift our gaze from the shiny things of the world to the leading light of Christ who provides just enough light for us to take the next step of faith. Believer—it is time for your Christian faith to be more real, more raw, more grounded, and more authentic than it has ever been. Let’s rise to the occasion and sprint to the finish line together. Perhaps the rapture is soon—but if not, we must be tethered to the unshakable Rock of Christ and stand firm in these truly unprecedented times.

Matthew 5:14

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Covid-19 Accelerates the Move to Cashless Payments

Fear of spreading the virus is changing the way Americans pay

By [BEN LUTHI](#) [Investopedia](#)

Updated Dec 4, 2020

Cashless payments have increased during the coronavirus pandemic, accelerating an already growing trend. The result is more swipe fees for merchants, which may ultimately lead to higher prices for consumers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The pandemic has caused many consumers to spurn cash and rely more heavily on credit cards and other non-cash payment methods.
- The spike can be attributed to changes in consumer behaviors, including more online shopping, touch-free payments, curbside pickup, and no-contact deliveries.
- Many merchants are also encouraging the move away from cash, which may ultimately result in higher prices for consumers.

Cash Is Not King in the Time of Covid-19

Many medical experts have declared that paper currency is not a major source of coronavirus transmission.¹ But that hasn’t stopped merchants and consumers from shying away from cash transactions, opting instead for touch-free payments.

What's more, interactions that might normally involve cash, such as shopping in-store or ordering a pizza and tipping the delivery driver, are being replaced by no-contact delivery, curbside pickup, and online shopping.

Merchants are also discouraging the use of cash. The percentage of "cashless businesses" almost quadrupled in less than two months after the pandemic began, according to payment processor Square—going from 8% on March 1 to 31% on April 23. The company considers a business to be cashless if 95% or more of its transactions come from debit and credit cards.²

Merchant Fee Increases on Hold but Scheduled to Rise

Both Visa and Mastercard were scheduled to hike their merchant swipe fees earlier this year, but they postponed the increase due to the pandemic. While it's unclear when they'll get back on schedule, an increase could affect merchants and consumers more than similar changes have in the past.

This is primarily due to the fact that cash customers have historically helped subsidize their cashless counterparts by reducing the total amount merchants have to pay in swipe fees. But with more consumers using cashless payment methods, merchants may be forced to increase prices across the board to maintain profit margins.

Cash Remains the Only Option for Many

Meanwhile, a significant number of Americans have no means of payment other than cash. Six percent of American adults are "unbanked," according to the Federal Reserve, which means they don't have a traditional checking or savings account.³ Using population estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, that comes to more than 14 million people.

For the unbanked, cashless payment methods are often out of reach. And if consumer spending habits continue to accelerate toward a cashless society even after the pandemic is over, that could leave the unbanked, as well as many older Americans who continue to rely more heavily on cash, out in the cold.

In response to these trends, some states and cities, including New York, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, have passed or are in the process of passing laws requiring merchants to accept cash payments. Federal legislation, the Payment Choice Act of 2020, has also been introduced to forbid merchants from declining cash, charging cash customers a higher price, or posting notices saying they don't accept cash.