

Aug 7 2020~ **A volcano and disaster at the “Fullness of Time”** (eflsuccess.com)

**Vocabulary:**

\*\*Remember: **sth** = something; **sb** = somebody.

1. assassinate: to intentionally kill sb important, normally because you don't like their political or religious views
2. critical: involving careful judgments or thoughts about sth (Note: unlike “criticize”, “critical” can be both positive or negative)
3. famine: a widespread lack of food (often because of harsh environmental conditions, like a lack of rain)
4. ice cores: a tube-like sample of old ice, whose layers are like the rings of a tree, revealing things about history (the ice is normally in the arctic or a glacier)
5. mystery/mysterious: unknown or unexplained event or situation, that can often be understood with enough information
6. pardon: to officially allow sb who has been judged “guilty” to go free without being punished
7. region: a large though often undefined area
8. sin: human imperfection; according to the Bible, sin is every human act that falls short (“misses the mark”) of the perfection God intended for humans; all sin brings shame and separates people from God, and the only way to “pay” for sin was through blood sacrifice
9. technology: the practical application of scientific knowledge to do things better; new equipment and ways of doing things that reflect growing or modern knowledge
10. volcanic eruption: when hot, liquid rock (or gas) explodes from a certain type of “fire mountain”
11. wreak havoc: (phrasal verb) to cause a lot of damage or problems
12. “the Good News”: the account of Jesus’ life, teachings, death, and resurrection (return to life)

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**A volcano and disaster, at the “fullness of time”** July 2020

*Alaska Volcano in 44BC affected Europe’s climate, preparing history for monumental change*

In early 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic shows how an action in one place can affect the whole world. But it wasn’t the first time that “mysterious” forces wreaked havoc around the globe. Recent research suggests that a giant volcanic eruption in Alaska in 44 B.C. shocked the climate and created economic and political havoc across the Mediterranean, a few decades before Jesus was born in the region.

Rome’s ruler (Julius Caesar) was assassinated in 44 BC, causing a power struggle. At around the same time, famine and disease struck Egypt, making it hard to feed Rome’s millions. By examining Arctic ice cores and other research, we now know why crops failed: the 44 BC eruption of Alaska’s Okmok volcano made 43 and 42 BC two of the coldest years in the Mediterranean region, starting a decade-long cold spell. Egyptian and Roman records suggest that the entire Mediterranean was suffering from food shortages, disease, and unrest, contributing to political change at this critical time in Western civilization.

Unlike 44 BC, technology now reduces the mystery behind the COVID-19 pandemic. But it is easy to see how a disaster can disrupt supply lines, wipe out jobs, create social unrest, and affect global politics. While it is impossible to establish a clear cause-and-effect link between disasters and the hand of God, it is easy to see that we humans are not “in control.”

The Bible calls the time when Jesus was born “the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4), when God’s invisible hand gave the western world a common language, safe roads, convenient travel, and otherwise created an unparalleled climate for the Good News of Jesus to quickly spread across a major part of the globe. Now we know that even a distant volcano and the weather were involved. Christians say that God sent His Son (Jesus Christ) to redeem us from the penalty of God’s righteous law (which we have all broken), offering a pardon to any who surrender their lives to Him. Was God using this Alaska volcano to get people’s attention “in the fullness of time”? Could God again be using a global crisis to get our attention, and turn us from the destructive path of sin...before it is too late? These are questions worth thinking about.

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**Questions:** *(Use the underlined term when you answer a question, to make sure you can use it correctly.)*

1. What is one thing that you’ve done today that affected someone else?
2. What are some ways that COVID-19 has wreaked havoc around the globe?
3. If you can’t solve a mystery, how do you feel? Why do people feel this way?
4. What do people like to think that they are “in control” of? Are they really “in control”?
5. Do you think God still tries to “get people’s attention”? If so, why? If you don’t believe this, why not?

*If you still have time:*

6. The “Good News” involves very bad news, followed by remarkably good news. What’s the bad news and what’s the good news?
7. The Bible says that “all people have sinned” (Rom 3:23) and that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). What is your reaction to both of these ideas? Read Rom 6:23; what “free gift” is offered to those whose sin has been pardoned?

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (ESV)

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

Going deeper: Look for the longer version of this article at <http://wp.krigline.com/purpose2>

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Primary source about the volcano is an article by Brooks Hays, UPI, Accuweather.com

<https://www.accuweather.com/en/weather-news/volcano-halfway-around-the-globe-altered-romes-history-forever/766169>