"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."   Revelation 15:1; 18:4

New 'Mega Virus': Is it dangerous for humans?
RussiaToday.com / September 9, 2015

"A new, unusually large virus uncovered by French scientists in Siberian permafrost will be examined with great caution as nothing is known about it and the potential danger to humans, says William Schaffner from the Department of Preventive Medicine.

"William Schaffner: 'I think it is very exciting of course scientifically to find new viruses under the permafrost up under the Arctic. We need to know much more about these viruses. I hope the scientists can get it to multiply, to become alive in the laboratory so that they can test it out. We don't know what the host of the virus is. Could it be a virus that infects humans? It would be a very unusual event for a virus this large to infect a human. Other animals, reptiles perhaps? We just don't know.'

"RT: 'Have scientists found some other viruses of this sort?"
"WS: 'Yes, this is the fourth such virus of these very large viruses that have been discovered in this fashion. Probably they have been lying dormant for thousands of years.... In the past these viruses have not been human viruses, but fortunately so. So we need to find out more about this virus, and the scientists will be approaching that with great caution."

"RT: 'Is there something that could go wrong while studying the virus?'

"WS: 'There are several things that could go wrong, because that happened before on one occasion. The virus, for example, could infect the scientists themselves, and then the scientists go out of the laboratory and could spread it to their family, other scientists and friends -- then that could start an outbreak. That is the sort of thing that people are very worried about.'"

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**Bubonic Plague Surfaces In Michigan for First Time As Average Annual Cases Double**

By: Korin Miller / Yahoo Health.com / September 15, 2015

Reported cases of human plague--United States, 1970-2012

"Another case of the plague has occurred in the U.S., officials say -- and this time it's not out west.

"A Michigan resident who recently returned home from Colorado has come down with bubonic plague, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services announced Monday. This is the first known report of a Michigan resident contracting the plague, according to the department.

"Officials stress that the patient contracted the plague in Colorado, where cases are more common."
"This marks the 14th case of the plague in the U.S. this year -- **double the typical average number of annual cases, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.**

"Plague cases reported this year have been contracted in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah. All the cases were believed to have been contracted west of what infectious disease specialists call 'the plague line.'"

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A new, unusually large virus uncovered by French scientists in Siberian permafrost will be examined with great caution as nothing is known about it and the potential danger to humans, says William Schaffner from the Department of Preventive Medicine.

READ MORE: 'Frankenvirus': Scientists set to revive giant 30,000 year old virus discovered in Siberian permafrost

RT: French scientists claim they have found a new prehistoric virus called 'Mollivirus sibericum' in the frozen Siberian wastelands, and are planning to bring it back to life. What can you tell us about it?

William Schaffner: I think it is very exciting of course scientifically to find new viruses under the permafrost up under the Arctic. We need to know much more about these viruses. I hope the scientists can get it to multiply, to become alive in the laboratory so that they can test it out. We don't know what the host of the virus is. Could it be a virus that infects humans? It would be a very unusual event for a virus this large to infect a human. Other animals, reptiles perhaps? We just don't know.
RT: Is there a possibility this virus can become a threat to human beings?

WS: Whether it can mutate and become a threat to humans is also something unknown, but it is something that we have to be very cautious about. So all of the scientific work will be done in very highly secure laboratories under very controlled conditions, because it is a virus about which we know nothing. And should it be a bad virus for humans, we don’t want it to get out of the laboratory.

RT: Have scientists found some other viruses of this sort?

WS: Yes, this is the fourth such virus of these very large viruses that have been discovered in this fashion. Probably they have been lying dormant for thousands of years, perhaps 30,000 years. In the past these viruses have not been human viruses, but fortunately so. So we need to find out more about this virus, and the scientists will be approaching that with great caution.

RT: Is there something that could go wrong while studying the virus?

WS: There are several things that could go wrong, because that happened before on one occasion. The virus, for example, could infect the scientists themselves, and then the scientists go out of the laboratory and could spread it to their family, other scientists and friends - then that could start and outbreak. That is the sort of thing that people are very worried about.

RT: What is the difference in this virus from the other we already know about?

WS: The virus depends on the kind of damage it does to the person and there are many viral diseases for which we do not have cures at the present time. We can help the body overcome the virus, but since we don’t know what kind
of illness it causes, we’re kind of in a muddle. And these are very unusual viruses – they are much larger than the usual viruses that infect people. For example, the influenza virus which we know can cause a great deal of damage only has eight genes. This virus looks as though it has over 500. So it is a mega virus; we don’t know what that means when it comes to human infection. And I hope we never find out.

RT: So is the process of working in laboratory itself a dangerous thing? What is it actually about?

WS: ... Everything will be done very carefully in a laboratory to see if this virus can wake up, whether it can multiply, in which kinds of cells it likes to multiply, because viruses require to be inside cells. Could it be cells from mammals, could it be cells from reptiles – the scientist will be trying to work that out very carefully.

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The statements, views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of RT.
Bubonic Plague Surfaces In Michigan for First Time As Average Annual Cases Double

A microscopic image of Yersinia pestis, the rodent-spread bacteria behind Bubonic Plague. (Photo: Getty Images)

Another case of the plague has occurred in the U.S., officials say — and this time it’s not out west.

A Michigan resident who recently returned home from Colorado has come down with bubonic plague, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services announced Monday. This is the first known report of a Michigan resident contracting the plague, according to the department.

The unnamed patient is “recovering after receiving appropriate treatment,” officials say, adding that there is no concern of human-to-human transmission in this case. It’s unusual for the plague to be seen as far east as Michigan. However, officials stress that the patient contracted the plague in Colorado, where cases are more common.

This marks the 14th case of the plague in the U.S. this year — double the typical average number of annual cases, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Late last month, an elderly person in Utah died of the plague, state officials announced, marking the fourth death from the plague in the U.S. this year.

Officials believe the patient may have contracted the disease from a flea or after having contact with a dead animal,
which is how the plague is commonly transferred to humans. The plague naturally occurs in Utah and is typically seen in the prairie dog populations each year, officials said in a press release. The disease is caused by Yersinia pestis bacteria.

Related: **Examining the West’s “Plague Line”**

That news came less than 10 days after officials in California announced that a Georgia resident who camped at California’s Yosemite National Park fell ill with what is believed to be the plague. That was the second case in August of a person contracting the plague after visiting the park.

The first was a child who went to the hospital with the plague after camping at Yosemite.

There have been two plague-related deaths in Colorado alone this summer. One adult died in early August after contracting the plague from an unknown source. The Pueblo City-County Health Department has not revealed his or her identity but said the person may have developed the disease after coming into contact with fleas on a dead rodent or other animal. The department also noted that a dead prairie dog in the western part of the county tested positive for the disease.

In June, Colorado teenager Taylor Thomas Gaes died just days after coming down with flulike symptoms caused by the septicemic plague, which he was thought to have contracted from a flea bite, the Denver Post reports.

Plague cases reported this year have been contracted in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah. All the cases were believed to have been contracted west of what infectious disease specialists call “the plague line.”

Related: **Where Plague Happens in America**

The plague line is a geographic marker that delineates areas of the U.S. in which the plague is most likely to occur due to migrations of rodent populations that carry the disease, infectious disease specialist Amesh A. Adalja, MD, an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, tells Yahoo Health.

Adalja says the West’s plague cases could be linked to a plague outbreak that happened in San Francisco around 1900, which “seeded the American rodent populations.”

The last urban plague epidemic in the United States occurred in Los Angeles from 1924 through 1925, according to the CDC. The plague spread from urban rats to rural rodents and became entrenched in many areas of the western U.S.

While experts say cases of the plague are rare, Adalja admits that we’re experiencing a higher than normal year — the second highest year on record for plague cases. The highest year was 2006, in which there were 17 cases, according to CDC data.

But Adalja cautions that people shouldn’t panic. “When you deal with numbers this small, any one is going to make a difference,” he says. “It’s a rare disease, and we’re still in what is considered a ‘normal’ range. These cases are occurring in a part of the country that we would expect.”

Adalja says we need more data on the activities of the patients to better determine what’s behind the rise in cases but says it could be tied to the drought that has been happening out west.

The rodent population may be looking for more food sources in campgrounds because of the drought, he says, or fleas may jump from animals that are dying due to the drought onto humans. “It likely has to do with a whole host of factors," he says.

However, he expects plague cases to dwindle shortly, as the weather turns colder and people spend less time
outdoors. Plague cases are typically seasonal, with most occurring between late spring and early fall.

Symptoms can vary depending on the type of plague a person contracts. But a high fever is present in nearly all cases, as well as flulike symptoms. People with pneumonic plague may also develop a bloody cough, and those who contract bubonic plague usually experience painful swollen lymph nodes.

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