

Christians And The Coronavirus

Jesus warned, "There will be terrors (terrorism) and great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:11) ... "Be careful no one leads you astray (do not believe in false religions). Many will come in My name saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and will lead many astray. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled for all this must happen, but the end (of this age) is not yet. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom (also ethnic group against ethnic group). There will be famines, plagues (pestilences, epidemics, pandemics, diseases) and great earthquakes in various places. These things are the beginning. They (the ungodly) will deliver you up to oppression and will kill you. You (Christians and Jews) will be hated by all of the nations for My name's sake. Many (Christians) will stumble (turn away from God) and will deliver up one another and will hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will lead many astray. Because iniquity (sin, violence, Godlessness) will be multiplied, the love (for the Lord and of fellow believers) of many (Christians) will grow cold. Those who endure to the end (of the age) will be saved. This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world for a testimony to all of the nations and then the end (of this age) will come ... There will be great oppression (Great Tribulation) such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be again ... Behold, I have warned you beforehand. If they tell you, 'Behold, Jesus is in the wilderness,' do not go out there or 'Behold, Jesus is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. Just as lightning flashes from the east and is seen to the west, so will be the (sudden) coming of the Son of Man" (Matthew 24:4 to 14, 21, 25 to 27).

We can study Psalm 91:1 to 16 to reassure us, God is in control. Nothing happens without Him knowing about it before it happens and God has fore-planned our current circumstances. Christians do not need to fear. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled neither let it be fearful" (John 14:27). We can be assured of this ... most Christians will not come down with covid-19, but if by some chance some Christians are infected you can have peace knowing God is in control and in this sin-filled, germ-ridden world, God can and does heal. If by chance God does take a Christian home to be with Him we can praise the Lord they are forever at peace. There is no need to worry. Certainly it is wise to self-isolate but out of wisdom not out of fear. Furthermore, if your government tells people to isolate, we must obey the laws of the land and not rebel against the authorities.

The opening verses are a prophecy of terrible things that in Jesus' day, would have been far in the future. That future is now upon the earth and everything Jesus warned about is now happening. God is currently shaking the entire earth as the prophets, Jesus and the apostles foretold. 'It will be so in the midst of the earth among the peoples (all humanity) as the shaking of an olive tree' (Isaiah 24:13). God said, "Yet once more in a little while I will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea and the dry land and I will shake all nations" (Haggai 2:6 & 7). 'If they did not escape when they refused him (Noah) who warned when he was on the earth, how much more will they not escape who turn away from Jesus who warns from heaven, Whose voice shook the earth (Matthew 27:51) but now He has promised saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens"' (Hebrews 12:25 to 26). These frightening things are happening right now. Since Jesus our Lord warned us these things would happen, it is a concern that some Christians deny God would allow these extreme measures to judge the earth, but these things are just exactly what the prophets, Jesus and the apostles said God intended to do before Jesus comes again.

God is certainly shaking the earth but He did not create or cause the coronavirus, however He will use whatever is available to achieve His purposes. A terrible virus is what has caused the coronavirus, not God. In all of His dealings with humanity He almost always uses what is already here. During the plagues of Egypt, everything God used to shake Egypt was already there; fish, frogs, lice, flies, diseases, hail, locusts and sudden death. A multitude of people accepted the God of the Israelites and left Egypt with the Children of Israel as a direct result of the plagues (Exodus 12:37 & 38). This Bible study has been written to help Christians understand what is happening around the world today. As Christians, we have a mandate from the Lord to share the Gospel with as many people as we can before Jesus comes again. For us to witness to the unsaved successfully, we need to understand what God is doing and right now He is shaking everything.

Why is God shaking the earth? God is shaking the earth to bring unsaved people to repentance. This latest coronavirus pandemic is the Lord shaking mankind to wake unsaved people up out of their unbelief. Jesus warned us there would be an increase in earthquakes, famines, terrible diseases, terrorism and warfare between nations. God is love, that is true (1 John 4:8) but while there is still time, God is trying to bring unsaved people to repentance so they can avoid being eternally lost. That is what is really happening with the world events today. God wants unsaved people everywhere to repent because He has appointed a time in history when He will judge the earth before Jesus returns, and that time is right now. 'God commands all people everywhere to repent because He has appointed a day (our day, right now) when He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man (Jesus) Whom He has ordained, of Whom He has given assurance to all mankind, God has raised Jesus from the dead' (Acts 17:30 & 31).

Jesus warned us diseases like the coronavirus pandemic would happen before He returns to earth. This is the time of the Great Tribulation He warned us about. Why are these things happening all over the world? Because of sin. Because many non-Christian people all over the world have turned their backs on God as Jesus said, "If they did not escape when they refused him (Noah) who warned on the earth, how much more will we not escape who turn away from Jesus who warns from heaven." Millions of unsaved people have squeezed our Creator God out of their individual lives and out of their governments. Many people have turned away from God to false religions, false gods, evolution, foolish 'new age' and other ungodly beliefs. Jesus warned all of mankind not to believe in any other religion, false prophets and false messiahs. As a result of multiple sins, God is shaking whole nations and He is allowing His righteous judgements to come for the purpose of bringing people back to Him. This is where Christians can lovingly teach the Gospel of the Kingdom, because when people are under a lot of stress and fear, most people cry out to God for help and Christians can reach out to help them find God. Since the coronavirus spread over the earth, many thousands of people have called out to God and are turning to Him. Unsaved people need to start listening to God and pay attention to Him. God has set a high standard of living for humanity and had His prophets write it all down for us in the Bible. The Bible is God's holy manual for human life and currently the standard of life on earth is appalling. It only takes one dedicated person to turn an entire city back to God as we can read in the Book of Jonah when the city of Nineveh repented after hearing Jonah preach the message of repentance. On the opposite side of that, evil can only take a foothold when Christians do nothing.

We will look at the reasons why God is allowing so much strife to take place in our lives as Jesus warned us. Wise and sensible people (Christians) will listen and understand but the foolish and the wicked (unsaved) will often ignore what the Lord is saying (Daniel 2:21 & 12:10; Proverbs 1:7). If you are wise you will listen to what God is saying in the Bible (Proverbs 9:10). God is righteous and hates sin. When people refuse to act decently, He will in His time shake an individual, a household, a town, an area, a country, a nation or as in this case, God is shaking the entire earth. Prayer, the Bible and good ethics were once taught in all government and private schools, but God has been turned away from all but a few schools and universities. Ungodly people have protested about having 'religion' taught to their children and the school authorities were too weak to stand up for righteousness and say, "We are told by God to teach the children about God and so we will obey Him" (Deuteronomy 4:10). This weakening has resulted in millions of children from non-Christian households not knowing the truth about God and they go through to adulthood without knowing the truth of creation plus what He expects of people. All of this Godlessness is coming back to bite humanity. Some young people become confused. Some become bad spouses and parents. Look at the level of youth crime. Look at the way some teens speak to their parents. Look at the number of murders happening every day. Look at the level of domestic violence. Look at the amount of people suffering from mental illnesses. Look at the number of divorces. Look at the numbers of drug users and alcoholics. Look at the hundreds of suicides happening daily around the world. Look at the amount of sexual crime destroying hundreds of children. These things are happening because of Godlessness. Society is crumbling, it is broken, it is falling apart so people need to turn away from sin and ask God back into their lives. Christians can show them the way. Wickedness can only take hold when Godly people do nothing. It is time for Christians around the world to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Why has society broken down so dramatically? Not long ago, most people attended a church regularly but now the people would prefer attend football matches, bowing down to the players. Sport worship has replaced Godly worship. No sportsperson is a 'hero'. They are simply people who like to play sport. There is nothing wrong with sport in itself but when people worship their sports 'idols' that idolatry becomes sin. Religious idols are also hated by God and He has expressly stated, people are not to ever make idols, bow to idols, worship idols nor bring idols into the home (Deuteronomy 5:8 & 9; 7:25 & 26). God said to anybody who idolises anything at all, He would bring their sin back onto their own heads (Ezekiel 11:21). Many Western people like to have idols in their homes and many garden and plant nurseries sell them. There are many modern-day idols that are not related to any religion or sport. Some movie actors are idolised. Some people idolise their pets. Some people idolise their bodies by constantly wearing thick make up or having unnecessary cosmetic surgery. If anybody puts anything before God, that thing is an idol.

Other sins committed throughout the world are violence, homosexuality, changing ones natural gender, prostitution and in fact all sexual sin, same sex marriage, theft, slave-trading (yes, this still goes on), corruption, perjury, euthanasia, abortion and indeed the murderous IVF programme that kills more embryonic babies than has live births, and the list of sin goes on. Another wicked sin is the way ungodly people publicly vilify Godly people for speaking up for righteousness. There have been righteous people who have had the courage to challenge the wickedness of others and have lost their jobs, been attacked, threatened with court action, forced to flee their homes and towns, they have had 'trial by media', been mocked, their children have been threatened and other terrible things, just like Jesus warned. That behaviour is wicked. God can see what these wicked people are doing and He will judge them accordingly.

God is shaking the earth because of sin. God is capable of changing the times, the seasons or the weather (Daniel 2:21). What form God uses to shake the wickedness out of some people can be any way He chooses. God is in control of everything and is all-powerful. We can look at the various methods God uses to shake people to bring repentance. To shake people God can allow lung diseases like coronavirus or any other kind of serious illness, collectively like covid-19 or individually like heart failure (Deuteronomy 28:21, 22, 27, 28, 35). He can use mental illnesses to shake people (Deuteronomy 28:28; Daniel 5:21). Extreme weather events can be one form of shaking (Psalm 148:8). God can call for drought (Haggai 1:11), flooding (Genesis 6:17), storms (Job 37:3 to 11), hail, cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, tornados (Isaiah 30:30; Ezekiel 13:13) and other unusual weather events. God can shake the earth in the forms of volcanoes (Jeremiah 51:25), earthquakes (Psalm 18:7), tidal waves or tsunamis (Psalm 107:25), wildfires and bush fires (Psalm 83:14), death by animal attacks and venomous creatures (Numbers 21:6), farming strife like plagues of locusts (Deuteronomy 28:38), mosquitos or lice (Exodus 8:17) or plant blight and mildew (Deuteronomy 28:22; Amos 4:9). On the subject of global warming, God has allowed the sun to burn brighter and hotter (Isaiah 30:26; Revelation 16:8 & 9) causing the earth to heat up to bring people to repentance but most refuse to repent. Another incident God uses is unexpected sudden death (Psalm 55:15). It all comes down to fearing the Lord (Psalm 111:10). We need to have respect for God and by respecting Him, and if we love Him we will follow His commands (John 14:15). Christians can show people how to fear and respect God.

Is anyone really looking for the reason coronavirus broke out or are they just looking to blame? The above reasons have brought this form of global shaking. We cannot blame China or any other country for this virus. It is the direct result of rampant worldwide sin and the only thing that will stop serious shaking from God is repentance. Tragically, ungodly people out number the righteous on earth. Just as tragically, many Christians do not speak up when evil takes hold. We are speaking up right now to call on the ungodly to repent, turn away from wickedness, turn to God because He is calling all people to listen to Him. 'A voice came out of the cloud saying, "This is My beloved Son (Jesus). Listen to Him"' (Luke 9:35). This is where Christians can guide the ungodly to righteousness like a cloud of witnesses. 'Since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every burden and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of Faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising its shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God' (Hebrews 12:1 & 2). We Christians can help unsaved people find their way in this tangle of life and show them the way to salvation. That is our mandate.

The following verse tells us, God does shake people's lives because of sin but will be a stronghold and a shelter for righteous people. In God's vocabulary, wicked people are His enemies. 'God avenges and is full of wrath. He takes vengeance on His adversaries and He maintains wrath against His enemies. God is slow to anger and great in power but will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. God has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm ... He rebukes the sea and makes it dry and dries up all the rivers ... The mountains quake before Him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at His presence, yes the world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken apart by Him. God is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble and He knows those who take refuge in Him. With an overflowing flood He will make a full end of 'the sinners' place and will pursue His enemies into darkness. What do you plot against the Lord? He will make a full end of you. Affliction will not rise up the second time. Entangled like thorns and drunken as with their drink, the wicked are consumed utterly like dry stubble' (Nahum 1:2 to 10). Only the genuine repentance of a multitude of people turning to God will slow the shaking coming on the earth. God has said if people turn to Him He will stop the droughts, plagues, pestilences and other forms of shaking just like God relented and did not destroy Nineveh when the people repented. It is up to Christians to pray and to help bring people to repentance. 'If I shut up the sky so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land or if I send pestilence, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to their prayers' (2 Chronicles 7:13 to 15).

Amen and God bless you.

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