

376 “I will trust and not be afraid”

Each day that passes brings new headlines about Covid-19, the latest version of the broader generic term “coronavirus”. This particular virus is now growing exponentially and globally - people are anxious, media coverage is unrelenting, and governments are taking increasingly drastic steps to slow or delay its spread. Literally every aspect of what we regard as normal human behaviour is being greatly affected.

Is it not remarkable how such a virus, which has little effect on the great majority of people who catch it, should have such a rapid and massive effect around the world? (By contrast, apparently since 2010 flu has averaged between 9 million and 45 million cases per year, with 12,000 to 61,000 deaths per year).

Bible-believers are taking note, for the Lord God is clearly at work. Either He is simply allowing Covid-19 to take its natural course towards its natural consequences, it being one symptom among all the others of the fallen, sinful state of humanity; or He is specifically directing this project Himself.

For of course the Lord God our Creator remains wholly in charge of this world's affairs. He has every reason to be appalled at what He sees going on in His once-perfect, now sin-cursed, Christ-ignoring creation, with the list of deeply-entrenched old sins being too long and too familiar to have to go through again in detail here. A few current, prominent examples of sinfulness are worth mentioning though - mass abortion, vicious warfare, refugees in their millions, homosexuality on the march, and abuse in its various foul forms.

A final example on this matter of sinfulness, small in its way yet significant, is the announcement by the British Prime Minister that he and his current girlfriend are expecting a child, news evidently greeted with hearty congratulations from all sides. But there has been no mention, in this country still uniquely possessing a Protestant, Christian constitution, that God's order for such matters – the conception of a child to occur within marriage – has been blatantly flouted here by the nation's top politician. What sort of an example does this behaviour both reveal and set within the country? Is the Lord Himself just thinking, along with all the great and good apparently, “Naughty old Boris - he's such a lad isn't he?”.

No wonder then that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed [it] unto them” (Romans 1.18-19, KJV).

We can assume therefore that this Covid-19 virus serves under the Lord as a blunt warning that things need to change if impending, more severe, divine judgments, are to be avoided.

There are many scriptural precedents for such merciful warnings, followed, if necessary, by divine judgment. The Lord gave 120 years of grace, during the building of the ark, before the Flood was sent (Genesis 6.3). He forced the scattering of the people from Babel before their idolatrous wickedness could develop further (Genesis 11.1-9); we note that Covid-19 has some similarities with Babel, with the people being forced apart from one another. He sent the plagues in Egypt, which were ignored, culminating in the Passover, the destruction of the Egyptian firstborn, and the Exodus for His covenant people (Exodus Chapters 7-14).

The Lord eventually sent Israel and then Judah into exile after the warnings from His prophets had been repeatedly ignored (II Kings 17.1-23 & 25.1-17). He scattered the Jews from Jerusalem in AD 70 after their rejection of their Messiah (Matthew 23.37-24.2 / Luke 19.41-44). And, yet to come after the rapture of the true Church, the Lord has given fair warning of the “great tribulation ... the time of Jacob’s trouble” with its succession of dire global woes (Matthew 24.21 / Jeremiah 30.7 / verses from Revelation Chapters 8-12).

These various examples from Scripture demonstrate that God is no mere wimp, feebly wringing His hands as He surveys this fallen world and its Covid-19 virus. That frequent refrain in Ezekiel comes to mind, “They shall know that I am the Lord” (see Concordance) – and surely they will (eg., Philippians 2.9-11).

For the likes of us therefore in the midst of these virus fears, we live gratefully within the wonderful truth that NOTHING “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (from Romans 8.39). We “pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5.17); we serve as loyal citizens; we take sensible, practical precautions; we show concern for others around us; and we explain as appropriate the Good News of Jesus Christ, which shows that in eternal terms Covid-19 is but a tiny blip.

We close with this brief text, “I will trust and not be afraid” (Isaiah 12.2) – words of quiet resolve grounded in the hundreds of gracious promises set within God’s Word and applying to His Christ-redeemed people.

Thanks be to God, those promises stand firm, and in those promises we stand firm too.

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