

God's Love in a Pandemic

These are momentous days when we find ourselves in the midst of a worldwide 'discipline' or warning from God, calling us to acknowledge and seek Him. And although we shrink from the thought, this is the reason for all unexpected catastrophes, whether epidemics, floods or vast fires. The Bible says these things will come more often in the 'last days', when atheism abounds and people generally have no thought or prayer to their Creator.

A warning from God is not like the last judgement, because it is an expression of God's love, urging people to turn to Him, whereas the last judgement will finally close the door of mercy for those who turn away from Him. A warning is not permanent, and God has also given mankind the skill to control it, eventually. But a warning catastrophe pulls us up and humbles us, reminding us that we are only people, and that we are in God's hands and accountable to Him.

Coronavirus has certainly shaken us more than any other catastrophe of recent generations. The relatively gentle approach of our UK scientific elite soon gave way to radical measures as the virus defied all predictions. Mighty China shook with alarm; the grim regime of Iran was stunned: Europe was soon sent scurrying to lock-down, and the all-powerful USA was brought to cower like everyone else.

As the pandemic proceeds, significant features become apparent. It is the elderly who are most at risk - those who have had a lifetime of opportunity to honour their Creator (and may have refused). The virus seems to say to younger generations - 'you have some opportunity left: don't despise the longsuffering of the Lord.' Remember that while God is love, He is also holy and just.

This may not be the last warning or discipline, although its full 'indignation' has possibly not yet unfolded. Christians are praying for relief and healing for those suffering, and we are witnessing many acts of kindness among people, but it is crucial that we heed the message and meaning of this pandemic. Its purpose is to call us to forgiveness and reconciliation with God, by coming to the Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord, who has opened a way of salvation by suffering and dying for sinful people on Calvary's cross. To trust in Him, repent of sin, and yield your life to Him, is to receive from Him a new and eternal life.

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