

REVIVAL NEWS

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*** MARCH 2020 **** MARCH 2020 **** MARCH 2020 **** MARCH 2020 ***

PESTILENCE

We are in the midst of a pestilence that is causing much disruption all over the world. It is a world-wide pestilence that has caused nations to shut down, economies are crumbling, thousands have died, people have been forced by governments to remain in their homes and multitudes are being overcome by fear, doubt, anguish and distress. People are panicking, hoarding and anxious. *“Men’s hearts are failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens are being shaken” Luke 21:26.* At a time like this, the question must be asked, *what should we do?* The wonderful thing about a life that is built on Jesus and His Word is that we have the Scriptures to turn to. We can look back through the written historical record of God and His people, *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” Romans 15:4.* As we search the Scriptures, we can hear God speak to us now and we will have hope!

Pestilence

The word *pestilence* in the Hebrew is *deber* which means *a pestilence or plague*. This word means a deadly and overwhelming disease that affects a whole community. There are many places in the Scriptures that refer to the *pestilence*. We are going to briefly look at seven and find out from the Word why pestilence occurs, what are we to do and how can we be delivered from it.

1. A WONDERFUL PROMISE

Psalm 91 we are given some wonderful promises. *“Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence” v.3.* What we can know assuredly in this time of pestilence is that God can surely deliver us from it! Hallelujah! This is conditional though. The ones who are delivered are those who, *“ dwell in the secret place of the Most High...abide under the shadow of the Almighty” v.1.* Through this time we can learn that God wants us to find the secret place and be found under the shadow of the Almighty. We are to be *“hidden with Christ in God” (Col.3:3)*, and be *“found in Him...” (Phil.3:9)*. This is the safe place. So what should we do when there is pestilence all around? Press into God, find ourselves in Christ, dwell in His Presence and come under His covering. We are to say of Yahweh, *“You are my refuge and my fortress; My God, in You I will trust” v.2.*

Delivered from fear of pestilence

Maybe even worse than the pestilence itself is the fear that many have come under due to the talk and word of this pestilence. If we find our abode in Him then the promise also extends to, *“You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day; nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday” v.5-6.* The reason fear is relieved in us is due to, *“His truth being our shield and buckler” v.4b.* When we abide in Him, we

stay in the truth of His Word. Do not spend time listening to the news. ***“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” Romans 10:17.*** Fear also comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of the news and media! Stay in the truth and be delivered from fear!

2. THE NEED TO WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

The first mention in the Scriptures of the word *pestilence* is in **Exodus 5**. Moses and Aaron tell Pharaoh, ***“The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days journey into the desert and sacrifice to YHWH our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword” v.3.*** Moses and Aaron were saying that if Pharaoh did not let God’s people worship God in the way He has told them and prescribed to them, than the result would be that pestilence would come upon them.

Our response

What can we learn from this? What is our response to this pestilence? Let’s return to a true worship of God, ***“in spirit and in truth” John 4:24.*** Maybe God is speaking to His people. We have all been stopped from congregating in buildings for the time being. There are no flashing lights, no smoke, no big band and no choreographed “worship time”. Maybe Jesus wants us to simply worship Him in our homes, from our heart, in the Spirit, according to the truth and reality of who He is. No matter if this has any correlation to why this pestilence has come, let us take warning, and use this awesome opportunity, to learn to truly be a people who can say, ***“For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” Philippians 3:3***

3. BREAKING THE PRIDE OF OUR POWER

In **Leviticus 26** God speaks of the blessings He will bring on an obedient people and then also the curses and judgements He will bring on a disobedient people. There are escalating levels of judgement God says He will bring if the people do not get the message and change, ***“And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power” v.18-19.*** There are many Christian voices today who speak against this as being “Old Testament” and that God is not like that these days. God is a Father. As a Father, He disciplines and corrects us for our own good. The purpose of the judgements is, ***“I will break the pride of your power”***. Is that a good thing? Yes, of course it is. If God does not do these things than we will not learn.

Reformation

The means by which God will break the pride of our power are numerous and on the third escalation of judgements He says, ***“And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you...and I will bring a sword against you...when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy” v.23-25.***

God wants reformation! He wants our lives changed. He wants us living for Him, in Him, through Him and by His Word! He wants His church to be everything she is called to be! He is shaking all things so that ***“the things which cannot be shaken will remain” Hebrews 12:27.*** This may be painful, but it is necessary. He will give us the victory when we submit to the reformation. God is reforming His church. He is making us all realise tangibly that the church is not a building, it is not an institution, but it is a people. And the church that Jesus is building, ***“the gates of Hades will not***

prevail against” Matthew 16:18. Let us return to the Scriptures and come back to the pattern of the church given in New Testament and experience personal and household revival at this time!

4. UNBELIEF AND REJECTING GOD

In **Numbers 14** the people of God are in disarray. Only two men, Joshua and Caleb, have come back from the land believing God through them can take the inheritance. The people of God are scared, stagnant, looking back to their old life in Egypt, not wanting to go forward. God speaks, **“How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me with all the signs which I have performed among them? I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they” v.11-12.** God was going to bring a pestilence on His people due to their continual unbelief and rejection of Him. They were not willing to trust and obey God to move into their inheritance and destiny.

Intercession

However, the pestilence in this case was averted. Moses stood in the gap for God’s people and appealed to God’s mercy saying, **“YHWH is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty...pardon the iniquity of this people I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy” v.18-19.** God’s response was to pardon them at the word of Moses and then God declared clearly His eternal purpose, **“but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of YHWH” v.21.** We can intercede at this time and stand in the gap for God’s people and for our regions and our nations. We can appeal to God’s mercy. But in doing that we must remember that because of unbelief and rejecting **“the will of God for themselves” (Lk.7:30-31)**, many have been missing what God’s purpose is. God’s purpose is not our comfort, our desires and the success of our plans. God is calling for us to intercede so that His church can fulfill His purpose, **“all the earth shall be filled with the glory of YHWH”.** It is time to enter the inheritance. It is time to move on from Pentecost. It is time to enter maturity, fulfilment and all of God’s promises, no longer doubting and rejecting God and His Word!

5. IF MY PEOPLE...

When Solomon dedicated the house of God and God came and filled that house with His glory and appeared to Solomon in a dream saying, **“I have heard your prayer...When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 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 heal their land” 2 Chronicles 7:12-14.** Many of us know **verse 14** of these verses but it is rarely mentioned about **verses 12 and 13.** In the event of pestilence coming this is what God’s people are told to do!

Four things we can do

When pestilence comes we can do four things:

1. **Humble ourselves** – this is always a good first response to anything! Humility is the key to receiving grace, **“God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble” 1 Peter 5:5b.** When we humble ourselves before God, then He can lift us up and show us what to do (**1 Pet.5:6-7, James 4:10**). We need to realise some things are too much for us and all we can do is **“come boldly to the throne of grace, that we might obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” Heb.4:16.**

2. **Pray** – We are to pray. We are to talk to God. We are to listen to Him. This is all prayer. We need to release the burden of our heart and then wait for His voice and His answers. We are to pray as Jesus instructed us (**Matt.6:9-13**).
3. **Seek His face** – We are to look for His face, His Presence. We are to be the generation of Jacob, the ones who seek His face, ascending the holy hill of His Presence (**Psalm 24:1-6**). When we do this the gates will open for the King of Glory to come in to our situation! (**Psalm 24:7-10**)
4. **Turn from our wicked ways** – We are to repent. Change our mind. Do not be too quick to try and find repentance points. Do the first three instructions first. Once we have humbled ourselves, prayed, sought God’s face, then it will be clear what we need to repent of and change. So then we take action and make the changes necessary!

God will...

Then God promises that He will:

1. **Hear from heaven** – we will have confidence in going forward. We have rightly submitted to God and so now we are in a place of authority, knowing God has heard us! From this place, we can begin to resist the devil (**Js.4:7**)
2. **Forgive our sin** – Hallelujah! We will know that what God was not pleased with is dealt with, He has forgiven and removed our sin and reproach and we can go forward!
3. **Heal our land** – we can say goodbye to the pestilence! It will have to go! God will heal the land, the people, the nation from the pestilence, the plagues, the drought or whatever it is!

6. GOD DEALS WITH LEADERS

King David at one time was moved to take a census of God’s people. God allowed the devil to **“stand up against Israel and moved David to number Israel” 1 Chronicles 21:1**. This was an act of pride for David: numbering the people; seeing how great his strength was; seeing how great his army was. Even Joab tried to discourage David from doing this (**1 Chron.21:2-3**). There can be a pride in leaders to look at outward measurement to view their own success. We are in a time where big gatherings are not allowed! Is God teaching us something? The big meeting, the big church, the big everything. Is God showing us that success is not measured in those ways? Obedience is success.

Serious consequences but a land prepared!

There were serious consequences for David’s actions. Seventy thousand people fell by a plague, a pestilence (**1 Chron.21:14**). David, when he realised what he had done and the sin of his own heart, repented and asked to fall into the hand of YHWH, because He knew God’s mercy was great (**1 Chron.21:8-13**). The pestilence still came but as David, as a leader of God’s people, cried out, God gave directions of what to do and David made a sacrifice on the land which was to become the place where the house of God would be built in the days of Solomon. From the place where the pestilence was stopped, the house of God would be built! (**v.18-27**). God may be speaking to us as leaders. It is time to get back to humbly serving with God. We may have been successful in some things but we are not to let pride enter our hearts. Come back to the foundational sacrifice and call on Jesus! The plague will stop and the house of God will again be built on the right foundation of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified!

7. PESTILENCE BEFORE REVIVAL

The earth made silent before Yahweh

In the midst of Habakkuk's prophesying judgement on the wicked, again God declares His eternal purpose, "*For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YHWH as the waters cover the sea*" 2:14. Then Habakkuk prophesies about the folly of idols and says, "*But YHWH is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silent before Him*" 2:20. We are in a time where the noise of all the false gods has ceased. Sporting matches, stadiums, worship centres, temples, bars, pubs, night clubs, strip clubs and all manner of entertainment industries are empty and closed! Is it not an amazing thing!? *Let all the earth keep silent before Him!* It is time and a God-given opportunity to listen to Him and not be listening to all the clamour.

Prayer for revival

In the midst of this prophecy then Habakkuk begins to pray, "*O YHWH, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O YHWH, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.*" 3:2. Many of us have been praying for revival. But what have we been expecting? What a prayer this is of Habakkuk! *Revive Your work!* What is God's work? *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YHWH as the waters cover the sea.* How is that going to happen? A revival of discipleship! A revival of personal and household discipleship. Every person, every member of the Body being disciplined and equipped!

How will the knowledge of His glory cover the earth? "*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations...baptising...teaching them to observe all that I commanded*" Matthew 28:18-20. It is time for this true work to be revived and restored to the church. It is not about building big church meetings. It is about making disciples who come to the "*knowledge of the glory of YHWH*", who "*come to the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man*" Ephesians 4:13.

Pestilence prepared the way

In response to Habakkuk's prayer "*God came...*" v.3. He came with glory, praise, brightness, light and power (v.3-4). Then interestingly it says, "*Before Him went pestilence, and fever followed at His feet*" v.5. Before God came in awesome revival, revealing His glory, pestilence came.

I believe we can be mightily expectant that this world-wide pestilence is preceding great revival and a release of the knowledge of His glory into the earth through His church! The revival is on the way! Pestilence goes before Him! Let's be ready! Let's listen to Him at this time. Let's draw close to God and make all the necessary adjustments. This is a time like no other! Let's heed His Word and cooperate with Jesus and see great revival come to our nations!