

WHO IS IN CONTROL ANYWAY?

Scripture: Matthew 10:21-31

INTRO: Have you ever wondered, when in such times as we are right now, who is in control anyway? Does God control the coronavirus? Did He send it? And if so, why do we spend effort on controlling it? Is man in control? Is God sovereign in the world, and everything that happens has been preplanned by Him? Has He predestined everything? Is God sovereign? And if so, what does that mean? Is He fully in control? Does He move us around like pawns? Or is He partly in control, and man partly in control? If so, of what is God in control and to what extent? Or has God possibly lost control? Who is in control anyway?

Well, I want to talk about three great areas. God's sovereignty; God's control; and God's omniscience.

I. GOD'S SOVERIEGNTY

Well, let's consider God's sovereignty. What does the statement that God is sovereign mean? Most of us would probably say God is sovereign, but whether He is or not depends on what one means by the word sovereign. You see, we don't all have the same thing in mind when we talk about God's sovereignty. It may interest you to know that the Bible never calls God sovereign.

So we must begin by asking, just what does the word 'sovereign' mean? Well, a king or queen is a sovereign person. They are royalty and as such, they are the head of some country. That means in their country there is no one who is over them. When we speak of a sovereign state or country that means it is a country that has no other country over them.

In that sense, God is sovereign over all of creation. There is no one over Him. He is the supreme ruler. So He is King of kings and Lord of lords. But God's sovereignty does not mean He controls all things. Sovereignty and control are two different things. A king or queen is sovereign over the area under their control. That is they reign over the

country or countries they have taken or that is theirs by succession.

But that does not mean the king or queen or a sovereign country control all that their subjects do. A country that has a sovereign head does not have control over those who disobey their laws, of which every country has plenty. They cannot control all things. Some countries try to control their people entirely, even as to what they may or may not believe. But even in those countries, or maybe especially in those countries there are those who do that which is contrary to the laws of the land. All sovereign countries have this problem. But, a sovereign has the authority to deal with all those that disobey the laws of the land if they can catch them.

God is sovereign over all of mankind, but He is not in control over all of mankind. If God determines and controls what everybody does, then He is also responsible for all sin. That is unthinkable. But God does keep a record of all wrongs. And as the sovereign over the universe, some day He will resurrect all those who have died, and he will judge them out of those books. That is what a sovereign has both the right and the authority to do.

However, any good sovereign will give freedom to their subjects in many things. The subjects of a good sovereign have the right to own their own property. On this property they are allowed to do many things that they choose to do of their own free will. The ruler may even encourage their subjects to consider choosing to do various things. Productive subjects means a productive sovereign. Sovereignty does not mean they make everyone do what they want them to do. Dictators who try that are not able to control all their people all the time.

It is interesting that the Bible never uses the word 'sovereign' of God. But we do find God as judge and being in authority over all mankind. Genesis 18:25 says, "Shall

not the judge of all the earth do right?" And the answer is, "Of course He will."

At creation God endowed man with an amazing capacity. It is that of free will. Without free will, man could not do the most important thing God made man for, which is to bring glory to Him. I cannot take time to explain this, but it is important beyond almost all other biblical truths. No free will, no glory. Any objective person should be able to think that through.

This free will is clearly indicated in Genesis 1:26-28. God commanded man to be fruitful and multiply and several other commands. A good God cannot command man to do something He did not create man with the capacity to do. That is self-evident to any thinking person. And when you have a command, now you also have the possibility of disobedience. God later commanded man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but man disobeyed. He did so of his own free will. God could not stop him without destroying his free will. Sin is disobedience by choice.

Does God control all things man does? Absolutely not. We'll look at that later. Does God have authority over everything man does? Absolutely. He has authority both to reward and to punish.

Turn to Revelation 20. You see, to be sovereign does not mean to control. It gives the one who is sovereign the authority to deal with those who do not submit to the laws set out. In light of that, when the time of God's testing of mankind is over, here is what will happen according to Revelation 20:12-15:

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

To conclude this point, we need to understand that to be sovereign does not mean to control. It gives the one who is sovereign the authority to deal with those who do not submit to the laws set out. However, any good sovereign, and God is a good sovereign, will give freedom to their people in many things. In the Garden of Eden, there was only one thing man was not to do. Everything else he was allowed to do. Any good sovereign will want their people to choose to do many things and be productive and useful to the country.

Is God sovereign? Yes! What does that mean? It means He has authority over all of mankind. It does not mean He has made man in such a way that man does exactly what He wishes. It does not mean He has control over all mankind does, as we will see. It does not mean some are predestined to hell and some to heaven.

II. GOD'S CONTROL

A. God's Control of Mankind.

Our message title is, "Who Is In Control Anyway?" What I have said so far means that sovereignty does not mean control, and that is an error many Christians make. By sovereignty some mean that God has predestined some to be saved and most to be lost, and there is nothing anybody can do to change that. If someone is one of the elect, he or she will be saved and if not, he or she will be damned. That teaching is unbiblical and

ungodly. But the truth is, sovereignty has nothing to do with determining what will and what won't be done.

So we ask now, just what is God in control of? Well, we first ask, just what does the word 'control' mean? Check the dictionaries and you will find many opinions, or it may be used of various things. What I mean by control as a noun, is the ability to make that happen which one wants to happen. To control, as a verb, is to make that happen which I want to happen. So I might say, "I have control over my appetite." That means my appetite says, "More please." And I say, "No, you have had enough." I am in control over my appetites.

We just visited the man who was my boss at Bible school years ago. And he reminded me of something that happened in our family. We had gotten a cassette tape for our children called, "Self-control." One of our daughters, who was small at the time, was over at the neighbours visiting their little girl and our daughter said, "We have self-control, do you have self-control?" And the reply was, "Oh no. We have remote control!" How would you like that, when it comes to losing weight?

So control, in my definition, means one can make that happen which one wants to happen. For example, in a vehicle you have various controls. By these controls we can make the vehicle do what we want it to do.

Now according to that definition, let me ask, does God control all of mankind? The answer is a very simple; no He does not. As a matter of fact, He controls very few. Does He make everything happen in mankind He wants to happen? Listen to these words from 2 Peter 3:9:

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

What does God want to happen? Well, that everybody should come to repentance. That is dealing with sin and getting saved. But how often does God get what He wants? Very seldom, in this matter. Why not? Can He not control that? Answer: No! He can't. Why not? Because He made man with a free will. God wants man to glorify Him and that can only happen if man chooses to do what God wants him to do.

Does God let man get away with sin? Yes. Why? Because He gave man a free will. Will God forever let man get away with sin? No. He is sovereign and thus in authority and someday He will reckon with everyone. He is able to do that because He has the authority to do so; He is sovereign.

Earlier we saw that God made man with a free will. After God created man He commanded man to be fruitful and multiply and He gave several other commands. A good God cannot command man to do something He did not create man with the capacity to do. And when you have a command, now you also have the possibility of disobedience. God later commanded man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but man disobeyed. He did so of his own free will.

Could God not have controlled what Adam and Eve did? No, He could not. Why not? Because He would have destroyed man's free will and His own purpose for making man. We don't have time to look at it now, but God gave Adam and Eve the choice to be saved, and they did so. And in this way, as long as they chose to live for God, they brought glory to God. The greatest thing any lost person can do is repent of their sins and live a life of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what glorifies God.

So we ask, does God control any people? Yes. But consider now that there are two ways of controlling people. One can control some people by sheer force or

power. Many have tried to control certain Christians by persecuting them. They would do things like poke red hot rods into their bodies; stretch them on the rack; pull off their fingernails; put hot irons to the bottom of their feet, and many other things. That is an effort to control by force.

The second way of controlling people is that you can teach people the truth and give them the choice to follow. Recently in our Bible study we discussed the role of a pastor. The name 'pastor' means a shepherd. A shepherd teaches his sheep to follow. And when the sheep learn to trust the shepherd, they gladly follow. We compared that to the cowboy who drives his herd by sheer force. And how does God control His people? Psalm 23: the Lord is my Shepherd.

God's method of calling people is not control by force, but control by free will. God will have no other person than one who chooses to follow Him. The Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 5:18:

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit...

When one is drunk, the spirits in the drink control what one does. We call it being under the influence. People who are drunk do things they would never do when they are sober. The problem? They are filled with something that controls them. But Paul says the believer is to be filled with the Spirit. What is that? Well, when we submit ourselves to God and we read the Word of God and we walk in His ways, the Spirit takes control. But He never forces. He woos us to follow.

So Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me." The true believer submits himself to God and follows Him. Now God is in control over this person's life. God will only receive worship if it comes from a

free will. That is the only thing that will glorify Him.

So does God control all people? No! He is in control of only a very small percentage of mankind. Who controls the rest? Satan. There are only two masters. Jesus said of many religious Jews, "You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44).

B. God's Control of Nature, coronavirus...

But that brings us now to the subject at hand. Does God control nature? Does He control epidemics and viruses and earthquakes etc... Before we look at that let me say that there is a view among Christians and also in the secular world that says all things have been preprogrammed or predetermined and man does not have a free will. That is simply wrong.

The view among Christians that teaches that, known as Calvinism, also stresses the sovereignty of God. Somewhere in eternity past, in the secret counsels of God, He decided who would be saved and who would be lost. There is nothing man can do to change that. Man does not have a free will. God is sovereign and He will do whatever He wants to do.

First, sovereignty is not related to predetermining anything. Nor yet does the bible teach such a view of predestination. For those interested in further studies on that you might listen to our messages on sermonaudio.com/mecl on predestination and election.

So according to this view, how does this sovereignty affect the physical world? Does God make everything happen exactly as He want? How does this relate to the coronavirus, for example. I read this from John Piper, who is an ardent Calvinist:

"Jesus said that the minutest event in nature is under the control of God. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground

apart from your Father' (Matthew 10:29). He said this to give hope to those who would be killed for his name" end quote.

<https://www.puritanboard.com/threads/how-does-calvinism-view-the-tsunami-disaster.5380/>

So at least according to Piper, God controls all of what happens in nature. Let me read Matthew 10:28-31 to get the context of the verse he quoted:

28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

29 *"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.*

30 *"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

31 *"Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.*

In Piper's quote the verse is given like this: "And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father." The KJV says, "...apart from your Father's will." The word 'will' is not in the original and has been supplied for the purpose of clarification.

But the question is, what does it mean that no sparrow falls to the ground without your Father? Is it without the Father's will? Is it without the Father's sovereignty or control? Is it without the Father's predestination? We are not told. I personally think it means that no sparrow falls to the ground without God knowing it. When it says, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Does that mean He determines when each hair will fall out? I don't think so. It means God knows about it. If we take it to mean that He has predetermined when each hair will fall out, that

can easily lead to fatalism, and that is the farthest from the truth.

So we ask, does God control all of nature? Well, I do not know if I know the whole answer but I give my opinion. When God created the heavens and the earth, He put in motion all the laws of the universe. We might call them natural laws, or the laws of nature. You see, God created the sun in such a way that it would keep burning. Recently I saw a picture of the fires of the sun from close up. It is breathtaking. If that sun moved a little too close to earth, true global warming would happen and we would not survive. If it moved away, we would freeze. These laws all lie in God's control.

I am asking, what control does God exercise over nature, in order to answer if He sent the coronavirus. Well, we can go back to Genesis 3 to begin to answer this question. Turn to it. You see, man's sin affected, not only mankind, but all of nature and the coronavirus comes from what we call nature. Unless, of course, it was produced in a lab as some think. If it was produced in a lab, it is part of the sinavirus.

We will look at verse 17, which is after God had dealt with Satan, regarding leading man into sin. He had also dealt with Eve. And now in Genesis 3:17 He addresses Adam:

17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

Note the words, "cursed is the ground for your sake." Why did the ground suffer because of man's sin? Why do weeds grow? Why do the things we make break down? Why does animal eat animal? Why are there viruses? Why do cells not always do what they should do? Why? Because

God cursed the ground. And listen to this, God said, "Adam, I cursed the ground for your sake." And we could say, "Mankind, I did it for your sake." And we will automatically ask, how can cursing the earth be for man's sake or for his good or his benefit?

One of the things I have observed over the years has amazed me over and over. Very few, if any people ever get saved because things are going well. Very few recognize their own need of salvation from sin, if any, for whom everything is going well. But when some accident occurs, maybe the loss of a loved one, or any other tragedy like the twin towers going down, all of a sudden God has man's attention. The first thing that comes to mind for many is, "Oh my God!" I have asked this in many places: How many of you realized you needed to be saved because things were going very well. I have never seen a hand yet. Then I say, "How many of you turned to God in a time of tragedy or something went very wrong?" And what is amazing, is that it is through this curse God is able to get at least the attention of some.

So God said to Adam, "Adam, I have cursed the ground for your sake, for your betterment, for your good." And included in that curse? Coronavirus!

Turn to Romans 8. Paul touches on this subject here. We begin in verse 18:

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (us is saved man).

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

God subjected nature to futility, and He did it in hope. Hope of what? Hope of delivering it back out of that corruption into the glorious liberty of those who will be saved because of that subjection to futility! Oh that I might tell you here what is coming! It will be glorious for all those who get saved in this time!

Then Paul says:

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

What is this thing for which God cursed the ground and the creation was subjected to futility? The salvation of man! So now I ask, who controls nature? Well, it seems to me that God loosed nature from some of His laws after man sinned. And now we have fierce winds and uncontrollable fires and water and earthquakes and volcanoes and pestilences, such as viruses of which the coronavirus is one, and other calamities. And the purpose of those? To turn man back to God!

But we ask, does God plan these things? Did God plan the coronavirus and send it? I give my opinion. When God cursed the earth it would bring about all such things as we are experiencing right now. When man does certain things, it brings about certain other things. For example, if I smoke cigarettes, through a natural progression I may get cancer and even die from that. Did God plan for me to die like that? No. I brought it about. So it is with many things. If we had not smoked we might not have gotten cancer and died prematurely.

Viruses can start because we might do something that causes them to happen. The laws of a cursed earth do that. We do not know yet how the coronavirus began, but it is most likely through something man did.

A little while ago a tour boat stopped by a certain volcanic Island. While the people went to explore, the volcano erupted, and many died. Did God wait for them to get there and then He set the volcano off? I don't think so. It was the outcome of a cursed ground. I have heard that there were warnings before, of the danger of an eruption.

But let me be quick to say that God can use nature for His purposes. When He does so, it is a miracle. A miracle is when God sets the laws of nature aside and by His own power He brings about what He wants. This happens very seldom. It happened in the flood. It happened when the Lord rained brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. It happened when a big fish swallowed Jonah and later spewed him out.

Here is what God said to Israel in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14:

13 "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,

14 "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.

Let me say further that God can allow Satan to do certain things with nature to kill people. You might wish to read the book of Job to see this.

Now, such phenomena as the coronavirus will greatly increase in the tribulation. In Matthew 24, just before Jesus was crucified, He predicted various things that would happen just before the 7-year tribulation begins.

Among those are such things as cause health epidemics and pandemics. For those who wish, they might read Matthew 24:3-8.

What Jesus speaks of there are precursors to the tribulation time. They are only the beginning. We are there now. But there is much more to come. If you read Revelation 6-19 you will see a seven year period filled with many things much worse. Many of those will be miraculous. Yes, God can set the laws of nature aside and do what He wants. But mostly, things like the coronavirus happen by the natural laws of a sin cursed earth.

III. GOD'S OMNISCIENCE

But let me come to a final point, and that is God's omniscience. Well, just what is that? It is *omni*, which means 'all', and *science*, which means knowledge. So it is omni-science, or all knowledge. God, the God of the Bible, and the only God who has actual existence is an all-knowing God. He knows everything. I want you to listen to a few passages:

Isaiah 46:9-10:

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

God declares the end from the beginning, and He did not say the coronavirus would be the end. So it won't be. He not only knows what the future holds, but He has shown to His servants all the big things that lie in the future. Let me tell you this, based on the Word of God, this earth will never end. But it will be renewed. The curse will be removed, the earth will be renewed, and God will come to dwell on it with man forever. Read the book of Revelation, that is what it tells us. God has told us many of the

bigger things that lie in the future. It is all in the Bible. Today we are seeing a precursor of the tribulation.

Then listen to Psalm 147:5

*5 "Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; **His** understanding is infinite."*

Well, just how much understanding is infinite understanding? How far does it go? Far enough for us to put our full trust in Him!

Then listen to Hebrews 4:13:

13 "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

This is the God of the Bible. We are very briefly looking at only one of His attributes and there are many more.

Then listen to Matthew 10:29-31,

*29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And **not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.***

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

You see, when I comb my hair in the morning and some leave my head, God knows. I have entrusted my life and my soul to this God. Now, do you know why Jesus gave these words? He had just told His disciples that they were not to fear those who can kill the body but can't kill the soul. He was forewarning about persecution to come. I think persecution lies before us in North America as well because of the sinavirus that has become a pandemic in America. But Jesus said they were not to worry about those who can kill the body. Why? Because they can't kill the soul.

If we need not fear godless men when they threaten to kill us, or when they do; need we fear the coronavirus if it kills us? Oh, we will do what we can to avoid it, but if it should take a believer, for the believer it is only the beginning of something much better. God is omniscient. You see, when God cursed the ground He knew what that would bring about.

Maybe someone listening to this message is not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe fear has struck because of the present pandemic. Maybe you know what conviction of sin is. Sin is a monster. It is a most horrible, and deadly spiritual virus. We all have that virus. It is %100 fatal. We will all die. So the Bible says, "It is appointed to man once to die, but after this the judgment."

And having considered this virus and your own life, maybe you say, "It is time I look for truth about life after death." Well, you can read many books and many opinions and I challenge you to read the Bible and compare it to others and you will find nothing that compares.

But maybe you say, "I know the God of the Bible is the one true God. I know I am a sinner, and I know I am lost. What must I do?" Well, I forewarn you, what you must do requires a life-time decision. You may never back out once you make this decision. If you do you will be doubly damned. Few realize how important this decision is.

But if you are willing to commit for life, the very first thing you must do is repent of your sins. You must repent before God; that is you must change your mind about all the things you have done that are wrong. This requires confessing known sin and asking forgiveness. If the Lord then points out where we have wronged others and our conscience speaks to us about it, then we must take care of those sins before others (1 John 1:9).

When that is done, then we acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and receive Him as our Saviour (John 1:12). And from

there on one must live one's life for the Lord. One needs to find a good church and read the Bible and begin to grow spiritually. And from there it must be a life of faith.

CONCL: So in conclusion let me ask, what does it mean that God is sovereign? Well, it means He is the supreme ruler of the universe. It does not mean He has foreordained all that will happen and that it will happen no matter what decisions we make. It means there is no one over God. He is sovereign. He is over all. And as the supreme sovereign, He has set out those things that ought to be done and those that ought not to be done by all mankind.

And then He has given us a free will to choose which we will do. And if we do that which He wants for us, we will bring glory to His great name, and we will be fulfilled. And if we do not do what He has set out for us, in the end, when resurrection day comes we will stand before Him in judgment. And as sovereign God He will judge each believer and the believer will receive or lose rewards according to what he has done in life. The lost will receive judgment and punishment according to what each one has done. And all the judgment will be 100% just.

Second, what do we mean by God is in control? What is He in control of? Well, He controls the universe. The sun obeys God. All in the universe obeys Him. But of all the people on earth, He only controls a small percentage of them. That small percentage are the true Christians. True Christians are not all those who profess to be Christians. True Christians believe right, walk right, do right and live right, or learn to live right. When they fail, they repent of their wrongs and move on.

But because of sin, God cursed the earth, and now we have things like earthquakes, viruses, volcanoes and more. And natural laws, because of the curse on the earth, bring about all these things that cause pain and trouble us and which we view as bad. So many people say, "If there is really a God and He is a good God, why is there so much suffering? Why are there famines? Why are there accidents? Why, why, why?"

Well, the answer is no secret. It is because that is one of the only ways God can get man's attention. And through all these things we view as bad things, some get saved. And if it were not for these bad things, I am fully convinced, nobody would get saved.

Last, what is God's omniscience? God's omniscience means He knows everything. For believers, this is a huge encouragement. God knows what each one is going through. The second Person of the Triune God became man, and was tested in all points as we are, and He understands us. He cares for us. He loves the true believer with the love experienced in a personal relationship. The Bible says that.

God loves the unbeliever too, but He has no relationship with them. His love for them is not related to feelings, it is related to truth and righteousness. And in His love for them He sent Christ to die for them. That is His love for them. That is agapee love. But He has no relationship with them. He desires for them to be saved so that He can love them by having a personal relationship with them. The unbeliever is right outside of the love of God. If he dies without repenting, that very moment he goes to hell. If he lives until the tribulation starts, he will experience the wrath of God. He is no friend of God. But if such a person repents and puts his faith in Jesus Christ, that very moment he will experience a relationship with the Lord.

We are in need of an awakening. Can such things as coronavirus bring man to repentance and faith? Yes it can, and may it do so for many. Are you praying for the coronavirus to end? Why not change your prayer? Ask that the Lord may get the attention of many among a world of lost sinners. Ask that God might be able to remove the blindness Satan has been using to keep the lost in darkness. Ask that that, for which God cursed the ground might happen and that many would get to see how sinful they are and where they will go if they die.

Then, are you a Christian and you are caught in the grip of fear? That means you cannot trust the God who knows everything.

If you are a believer, He not only knows all about you, He loves you with a love the unbeliever knows nothing about. He cares for you. If the coronavirus or any other thing should take your life, and someday it will, He is waiting for you. Your chance of dying in a car accident or from the flu is higher than dying from the corona virus. Are you afraid to drive on the highway now? That God knows everything does not assure us we won't die. It means He knows all about it and He cares. He longs to have you in glory with Him. Scripture says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Put your entire trust in Him. And when you find yourself fretting, say: "I'm sorry Lord. I was going to trust you and now I am trusting in myself, and I am out of resources. Forgive me. Once more I place my trust in You. I pray that you may be glorified whether it be by my life or by my death. I entrust myself to You, the One who knows everything."

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World Israel News has an article titled: "Nearly 3 in 10 Americans say coronavirus is 'wake-up call from God' and sign of biblical 'last days'"

A word before the message:

We are in the midst of a time in which we do not know what to believe regarding the coronavirus which is put forth as being a health issue of pandemic proportions. What is true? What is not true? Is this some broad scheme with no real substance? Are we missing factual information from which we could make proper decisions.

Here is what I do know. This is not the end of the world. It may be the end of the world as we knew it, but it is not the end of the world, rest assured about that.

Second, if this is a real issue and you get the coronavirus and you die, and you are truly saved, you have just left for a much better place.

Listen to these words of Jesus Christ to you, if you are truly saved:

Joh 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

I also know this, that if you are not saved, and you leave this world through this, whatever it is, you will go to hell forever. And it needs no coronavirus to end your life. There are many much more dangerous things.

Here is a quote attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr: **God, grant me the serenity** (peace and calmness) to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

Then, if you are a Christian and you are living in sin, here is a word for you from the Lord:

13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

I heard of one person who spent years in SS and he said he had never learned as much as he had from the coronavirus. That is not because the SS was necessarily not helpful. It was because without some problem that might affect you directly, you could not hear the Lord, not even in SS or church.

Today is a day to rejoice in the Lord and walk in close fellowship with him. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

[[After the virus hit Israel there was an Israeli man who thought it would be the end of the world. It put the fear into him. And what is the first thing that came to mind? A sin he had committed. Let me read part of an article from the Jerusalem Post:

“A religious Israeli Jew who believes we are in the end times and is no doubt wary that we will all soon stand in judgement before God sought to clear his conscience by returning something he stole 15 years earlier.

That something was an ancient Roman ballista stone used during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The unidentified Israeli man had swiped it while visiting an archaeological exhibition as a youth.

Now married with children, he turned to a go-between named Moshe Manies to return the artifact while avoiding possible arrest.”

I won't explain it all but this man did not get saved. But he shows the power of conviction and guilt and how cursed nature got his attention. May God, if it does not happen through the preached word, be able to use nature to awaken the conscience of millions and turn them to Christ.

<https://www.israeltoday.co.il/read/its-the-end-of-the-world-says-repentant-israeli-antiquities-thief/>

What is God's Word for us through this present period of darkness? Repent! But it is not repent only. It is, put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn to Him and study His Word

PHOTO: While Israel's infection rate has been relatively low, the coronavirus has resulted in apocalyptic scenes like empty restaurants and malls.

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Manies posted about the ordeal on Facebook:

“One of the boys took one of the stones home. Meanwhile, he married and raised a family, and told me that for the past 15 years the stone is weighing heavily on his heart. And now, when he came across it while cleaning for Passover, together with the apocalyptic feeling the Coronavirus generated, he felt the time was ripe to clear his conscience, and he asked me to help him return it to the Israel Antiquities Authority.”

That got the attention of an inspector with the Israel Antiquities Authority, who contacted Manies and retrieved the ballista stone.

The true believer has a personal relationship with God. In John 15:13-15 Jesus said this to His disciples:

13 *"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*

14 *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*

15 *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

There we have a relational love. Jesus calls believers His friends. And because God is omniscient, even when the believer

may have to give his life for his faith, he can rest assured God knows every bit of what he is going through, and God can hardly wait until he comes home. So Scripture says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." But of the non-believer He says He does not want his death. He wants him to convert and become a believer and if he dies that can never happen. So God's omniscience is a great comfort to the believer.

999[[[Many people have been troubled over Isaiah 45:7 where God says:

7 I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things.'

The KJV says, "I create evil." Does God create evil? Well this word is translated as 'evil' most of the time, but it may also mean, according to the onlinebible, that which is bad; disagreeable; malignant, unpleasant, that which gives pain and brings unhappiness etc... Well, coronavirus is all those things. It is bad, it spreads, is disagreeable, and it brings pain and unhappiness. And what is the purpose of those? It is to turn man back to God.

[[[1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.