

# *The Pestilence - Judgement of God*

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2 Samuel 24:10-15 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

The sword, famine, and pestilence. Jeremiah said 15 times.

Luke 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

- I. God's judgement generally comes in three forms.
  - A. The sword, the famine, and the pestilence.
  - B. Sometimes included are the wild beasts that are sent in to devour the people, or the locusts to destroy their crops, or no rain for long periods of time.

Leviticus 26:22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 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; 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.

- C. The forms of God's judgement are each one more severe, more frightening, and more effective in bringing a people to their knees.
- D. The punishment offered to David to chose from by God was either seven years of famine, or three months of the sword, or 3 days of pestilence.

**Pes"ti·lence**, *n.* [F. *pestilence*, L. *pestilentia*. See Pestilent.]

1. Any malignant, contagious disease; noxious to health and life
2. Specifically, the disease known as the plague; hence, any contagious or infectious epidemic disease that is virulent and devastating.

- E. So we can see that the most effective means of bringing a nation to their knees is the pestilence.
  1. It is the fastest way to humble a people and cause them to look to God.
  2. People can endure war and killing easier than they can endure a pestilence.

3. People can long endure a famine without turning to God or repenting of their sin.
- F. So it would be logical to assume that the pestilence would be the first means God would use in judgement to humble a proud nation.
1. If the pestilence does not humble them, then the long famine and the sword may follow.
- II. The pestilence is the fastest working means of humbling a people because we have no defense against it.
- A. We cannot hide from it, and there is no place safe from it.
  - B. It is transmitted from person to person, and no matter how many precautions we take, we are still vulnerable and likely to get it.
  - C. It is an unseen thing and therefore we do not even know when it touches us until it is too late.

[Psalms 91:6](#) *The pestilence that walketh in darkness.*

- D. We cannot fight against it or do it any harm to try and stop it, as we might if it were a sword used against us.
- E. We have no means to resist it or remedy it, so we are entirely at the mercy of God concerning the pestilence.
- F. We wonder how this COVID will ever end – it will not unless God has mercy on us and hears the prayers of his people who have humbled themselves, sought his face, and turned from their wicked ways.

[2 Chronicles 7:13-14](#) *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; 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.*

- G. If this does not happen there will be more to come that will include the sword and famine and wild beasts and maybe fire and brimstone from heaven.
- III. David told Gad that he was in a great strait.
- A. Your sin will always put you in a great strait.
    1. When you realize that your sin is going to hurt other people and cost them their very lives, and you must decide how they will die, you are indeed in a great strait
  - B. David did not want the sword on his people.
  - C. He had protected them from this all his life and it would be hard to bear and a great reproach, if now in his old age and in the finale of his reign, the sword devoured the people he had fought for all his life.
  - D. He did not want to fall into the hands of men, neither did he want his people to fall into the hands of men, but he wanted God to be in control of this chastisement.
  - E. The famine does not touch everyone – David and his house would be exempt from this.
    1. Kings and leaders always are spared from the suffering that their people are forced to endure.
  - F. But the pestilence can reach even to the king's palace and his family – so David was as vulnerable as anyone else under this judgement.
    1. After all, it was his sin that brought about this judgement of God.

2. David was just not the kind of person who could sit safely in his house while the people all around him were being killed by the sword.
3. Neither was he the kind of man who could sit down at a full table while his people did not have anything to feed their children.

IV. So the pestilence it was that fell upon Israel.

- A. The mercy was that it was only for 3 days.
- B. Some think it was less than 3 days because David cried out to the Lord for it to stop and asked God to punish him and his house instead.

2 Samuel 24:17 And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

- C. But even though it was for only 3 days the cost was great – 70,000 men died in that short time.
- D. David's numbers were reduced very quickly by the hand of God, which was a sobering thing for one who so recently put so much confidence in numbers.

V. Since we are under the pestilence right now we should consider very well all that it means.

- A. First of all, that it is the strongest measure God uses to humble a nation, or even an individual.
- B. Next, that we are completely defenseless and helpless against it and therefore we must cast ourselves totally on the mercy of God in the matter.
  1. In spite of all our efforts to avoid it, resist it, cure it, it will not go away until God makes it go away.
  2. Where did the Spanish flu go? Where did it come from? Same question for all other pestilence?
- C. While we are blaming it on other people we must remember these facts.
- D. The devil imitates God and so it would be no great wonder for him and those who follow him to release a pestilence on purpose on the people.
  1. If it was not sent by God then why would He stop it?
  2. If it was not sent by God it is not going to accomplish what it would if God had sent it.
- E. And so far, that appears to be the case.
  1. No one is humbled, or praying, considering their ungodliness, or crying out to God.
  2. Everyone is confused, angry, scared, and blaming other people.
  3. Everyone is looking to the doctors and the politicians to solve this "problem."
  4. And it is all about a disease that causes death less than 1% of the time and then almost exclusively in those who are elderly or have other serious health issues.
  5. That sounds just like what the devil's work is about.
  6. Since everyone has made these doctors and leaders "gods" maybe God is going to sit still and let them try to take care of it.
- F. Here is what the Word of God tells us plainly about what our attitude and outlook should be concerning all of this:

Psalm 91:1-16 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in

him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.