



How Will the Coronavirus Affect Me?

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow."

James 4:13-14 (KJV)

A year ago it would have been unthinkable that we would be gripped by a disease that would literally shut down the nation. We tend to go through life taking everything for granted and assume that everything will go on as it has before. We get into our fixed routines, not realising how vulnerable we all are to sudden change.

There will be many people asking where God is in the midst of the coronavirus. When trying to answer such a question, we must begin on the basis that God is sovereign. If He were not sovereign, He would not be God. This means that nothing happens on earth that He has not decreed. Some people find this a difficult concept to grasp because God, who is holy, is never the author of evil. We know this from James 1:13, where James warns, "Let no

man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Therefore, the Scripture is clear that God can *never* do any evil.



So who is the author of evil? In order to understand this, we need only go back to the Garden of Eden. There we find Satan behind the temptation of Eve to break God's sacred commandment that neither she nor Adam should eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because God is sovereign, He could have stopped Satan from tempting Eve, but He did not because it was His sovereign will that man should fall. Yet God was not the author of the evil which caused Adam to fall: the devil is

responsible for tempting Eve, and Adam and Eve were both responsible for giving in to the temptation. God will judge all for their actions.

While God controls everything that happens in this world, "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Habakkuk 1:13).

As another plague sweeps our land, there will be many who are asking where God is in all this. As God is sovereign, we must as Christians say that He is *present* in this crisis. Amos 3:6 is a striking verse: "Shall there be evil in a city,



and the Lord hath not done it?" As we have seen, this does not make God the author of evil or sin. It shows His complete

control over everything that happens in this life, including the illnesses that people get. There is, therefore, a reason for this awful virus that has been sent into our city and our land.

We are so used to being able to do what we like and go where we please. Even as Christians, we can tend just to make decisions without seeking the Lord about them. We assume that if we put something in the diary that event or commitment will happen, and

in normal times it does. Sadly, we live in a society that has taken the future for granted. It now believes it quite unnecessary even to mention God, let alone to seek after Him. You may think it welcome news that President Trump announced 15th March 2020 as a National Day of Prayer in the US in the light of this world pandemic. What a sensible decision of President Trump! Can you imagine a politician in this country daring to announce such a day of prayer? The last time we had one was during the Second World War. There was the memorable Day of Prayer shortly before the miracle of Dunkirk on 26th May 1940 when unusual weather conditions and unexplained tactical decisions by Adolf Hitler enabled some



335,000 British and French troops to be brought

back to British soil. Sadly, since those days we have moved further and further away from our Christian moorings. Even if there were to be a national day of prayer in our nation, there would be disagreement about which God to pray to. Sadly, our politicians seem afraid even to mention God. You will recall Alistair Campbell's infamous quote at the time of the Gulf War: "We don't do God".

Sadly, that is the view of the majority in today's society: they don't do God. Too many live only for the things of this life. They make their plans for the future as if they are its authors.

We live in a city that for years has made its own way without God. We have a National Health Service that is the envy of the world. It gives people the confident expectation that they will live to a ripe old age. Most people in London have jobs and comfortable places to live. We can probably count the number of Britons going on foreign holidays in their millions. In our generation we have never experienced deprivation. When national disasters occur in the world, it is almost without exception many thousands of miles away so that people feel safe and secure. We have become distant from God: we are quiet and secure in ourselves, and because we have become distant from God and have turned our backs from Him, there is none to deliver us.

James 4:13-14 says:- "Go to now, ye that say, To day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? it is even a vapour, that appeareth for

a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Do we think of our lives as a vapour? If you go outside on a cold day and breathe out, your breath will appear as a vapour. You will see it for a few seconds and then it will vanish into the atmosphere or be caught away by the wind. The Bible says that is our life and that is just how fragile it is!

There is one thing that we can say about this coronavirus: it makes us realise our own mortality. The Prime Minister has warned that many families will lose loved ones: this is a crisis like no other in our generation. We are no longer able to rely on our National Health Service because this pandemic threatens to overrun it completely. We are no longer able to plan our business trips and many holidays in Europe face cancellation.

The lesson this passage is surely trying to teach us is that we cannot continue to live without God. There will be many who will just be wishing that it would all go away. They will see it as a bad dream and want to bury their heads in the sand for the next six months. And when life returns to normal they will forget all about what happened and learn no lessons from it. I do hope that will

not be your reaction reading this tract. Instead, I hope that this will give you cause for serious reflection. The first question I hope you will ask is whether you are right with God. Have we been living our lives away from him? If so, now is the time to put things right.

The coronavirus is a warning to us that death lies at the door for all of us because we are sinners. Romans 6:23 tells us that: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord".

Death is not the end. Sin does not just end in physical death as so many would like to think it does. The Lord Jesus warned us in Matthew 10:20: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy

both soul and body in hell". Hell, a place of unspeakable torment is where our sin will take us after death unless we repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ – God's only begotten Son who came into the world to pay the price for sin. We need to turn to Him now in repentance, accepting we are sinners and believing that Christ alone has paid the penalty of our sin. The Bible teaches that God "made him (Christ) to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Let this coronavirus plague be a warning to us all that time is short and we each need to make our peace with God today. Let us turn to the Lord Jesus, committing our whole hearts and lives to Him. Then we will be confident that whether we live or die, our souls are safe in His hands.

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