

LESSON 1 of 2

It's no secret that the sudden onset of COVID-19, caused by the coronavirus ... has become the central focus of the whole world, making many fear the uncertainty of what's ahead. Everything feels chaotic and uncertain. When life feels out of control and anxiety seems to overwhelm you, where do you find your hope, peace, joy and stability?

What does the Bible teach about plagues, pestilence and pandemics?

While the term "***pandemic***" is a modern term and never used in the Scriptures, the Bible does use ancient Hebrew and Greek words for pestilence and plagues at least 127 times. Throughout the Bible, we see repeated examples of God using diseases to accomplish His divine and sovereign purposes. There are also Biblical prophecies that warn us that God intends to use terrible, infectious diseases to accomplish His divine and sovereign purposes in the future.

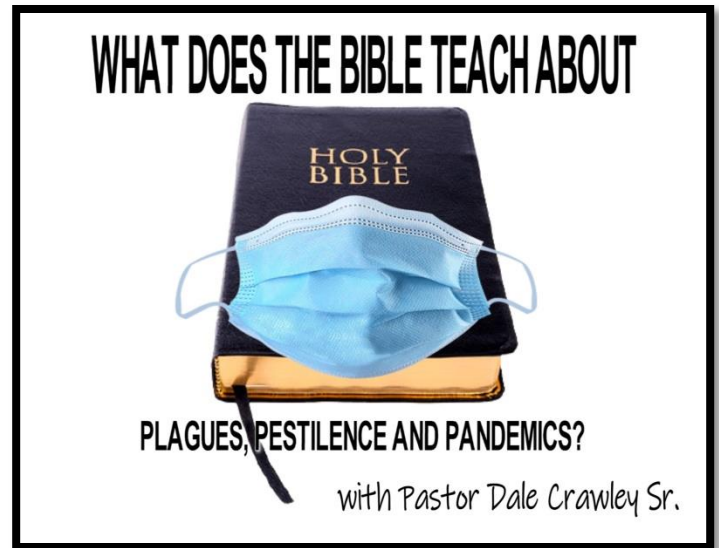
What are God's sovereign purposes for using such terrible diseases?

- Executing divine judgment on an individual, a nation, or many nations for chronic, unrepentant sin.
- Warning other individuals and nations that they, too, could face divine judgment for chronic, unrepentant sin.
- Shaking an individual, nation, or many nations so that they will wake up from spiritual slumber or rebellion, repent of their sins, and turn in faith to a holy, personal, Biblical, healthy relationship with God.

Repeatedly in the Bible, God explains that in His mercy He will shake individuals and nations in a desire to get our attention and draw us to Him.

- In Amos 9:9, the Lord God says ... ***"I will shake the house of Israel among all nations."*** (NASB)
- In Haggai 2:7, the Lord God says ... ***"I will shake all the nations."*** (NASB)
- In Hebrews 12:26, we read ... ***"And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN."*** (NASB)

In the Gospels, the Lord Jesus Christ warns His disciples that "***pestilences***" will be one of the signs of the "***last days***" of human history ... ***a time of shaking the world to wake up and realize that Christ's return*** to judge and reign over the earth is increasingly imminent! (Matthew 24:3-8, Luke 21:10-12)



The Bible also gives us other examples of how God uses diseases to accomplish His purposes. Examples of: Individuals Inflicted with Terrible Diseases ... Nations Inflicted with Terrible Diseases ... and Prophecies Concerning Future Pestilences and Plagues.

1. Examples of Individuals Inflicted with Terrible Diseases

- In the Book of Job ... we read that Job was afflicted with a terrible disease. The Scriptures make clear that this was an attack by Satan that was allowed by God (see chapters 1 and 2). The Scriptures also make clear that this was not a judgment for Job's un-repentant sins, as he was **"blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil."** (Job 1:1).

Satan uses the illness (and other attacks on Job and his family) to turn Job away from God. Yet God uses these traumas to draw Job closer to Himself.

- In the Book of Numbers ... we read that Miriam – the sister of Moses – was inflicted with a terrible, infectious disease as a judgment because of her unrepentant sins against God. The text tells us that **"the anger of the Lord burned"** against the disobedience of many Israelites, including Miriam, and that Moses had to intercede in prayer for their healing. (see Numbers 12:1-15)
- In 2 Kings chapter 5 ... we read the account of Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army. When he gets a terrible, infectious disease for which he knows of no cure, he decides his only hope is to turn to the God of Israel. Therefore, he sends a servant to ask for the urgent help of Elisha, the Hebrew prophet. When God miraculously heals Naaman, the Syrian commander humbles himself and turns to faith in the God of Israel, saying, **"Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel."** (2 Kings 5:15, NASB)
- In Matthew chapter 8 ... we read the account of the Lord Jesus Christ miraculously healing a man with a terrible, infectious disease (in this case, leprosy). **"When Jesus came down from the mountain side, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, 'See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'"** (Matthew 8:1-4, NASB)

- In Luke chapter 17 ... we read the account of the Lord Jesus Christ miraculously healing ten men with a terrible, infectious disease (leprosy), yet only one of them is grateful to God and humbles himself to worship Christ.

“Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, ‘Jesus, Master, have pity on us!’ When he saw them, he said, ‘Go, show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, ‘Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?’ Then he said to him, ‘Rise and go; your faith has made you well.’” (Luke 17:11-19)

Other examples of individuals afflicted with terrible diseases to turn their attention to God abound in the both Old and New Testaments.

(To be continued ...)

2. Examples of Nations Inflicted with Terrible Diseases