

What God has Said Relative to the COVID 19 Crisis

Since I am a Christian, I know that God is, and has always been, sovereign over all things. I know this because God has said so in His holy Scriptures. This article is written based upon these facts. Since I was formerly an atheist, I fully understand that many people would object to the words “know” and “facts” that I used in these opening statements. In their way of thinking, these words are inappropriate since nobody can prove empirically that God exists. They can hold to their opinion if they wish, but God has a different opinion. He has declared that He has made Himself known through the creation and through written revelation and has warned that anyone who does not agree with this is without excuse.¹ Being happily enlightened by Him, I write this article knowing the facts that God has made known in His Word. As a result, I can say that I positively know what God is doing right now in the world. Let me now report some of them to you.

God is demonstrating that He is in charge and does whatsoever He pleases.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?" (Daniel 4:34-35).

At least on a subconscious level, human beings tend to think that they are in control of their circumstances. This is especially true during periods of their lives when things are “going well.” For most people, it usually takes a major injury or sickness to bring about a recalibration of their thinking. People who experience such life-altering circumstances are normally shellshocked when they learn that they really do not have the amount of control over their circumstances as they thought. I doubt that any person who experiences such upheaval would tell you that he was mentally or emotionally prepared for such an event. People do not tend to be prepared because they like being in control of their lives and do not spend much time thinking about what life would be like if they suddenly had no control over their circumstances.

The COVID 19 crisis is shining the light on this. It is breathtaking to watch the human response to the sudden change of circumstances that God has ordered for the world. Widespread panic has gripped the inhabitants of the earth. Suddenly, many people are waking up to realize that they are no longer in control of all of their circumstances. Some are becoming more aware of their mortality. The degree of panic varies from one person to the next. Why are some people panicking while others are not? Some of them appear to be poised and in control. For example, government leaders can’t afford to be in a state of panic because they are expected to remain calm.

Of all people, which ones are not at all panicked and at perfect peace? It is the people who truly know that God is in control and is faithful at keeping His promises. They know that absolutely nothing is happening at random in regard to this COVID 19 “crisis.” They know that everything is fully under His control. Also, they know that even if they were to contract the illness and die, that too is fully under God’s control and they are completely at peace with it. We know that this earth is not our eternal home. We are merely passing through in full expectation of a far better habitation promised by God to all those who are believing into Jesus. (While all this is true, we still sorrow greatly for those suffering from this illness.)

Knowing God is fully in control, I am amazed to watch the world leaders react to this crisis. There is an occasional mention of God’s name but no evidence that the leaders believe He is in control over all things. Instead, they consider it their job as leaders to “battle” this enemy until it is defeated. After all, they say, we have overcome other virus attacks before. They say that this too will eventually pass. So, they gather all the wise and intelligent scientists and together, they formulate a strategy. They gather all the statistics that they deduce should be factored

¹ “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:18-20).

into their calculations and formulate models that predict the outcome. Relying on these models, they create strategies and put them in place.

I doubt very much if any of these models factor in God's involvement. I doubt that the leaders wait for Him to provide specific direction. In reality, models are just that, models. By nature, a model is merely a human calculation based upon certain statistics that are fed into it. Various weights are placed on the different statistics used. If they were honest, those formulating these calculations would admit that there could be many other factors that the models do not even consider which could alter the outcome completely. The outcome might indeed follow their predictions, but then again, the outcome may end up being completely different. There is One who knows exactly how things will turn out but most of these "wise" people do not even factor Him into the equation at all. To do so would violate their "scientific" mindset.

Before going on, I must interject this parenthetical statement. This article is written from the standpoint of God's perspective and what He has revealed about the world and His control over it. As a result, the following paragraphs may come across insensitive. So, let me emphatically state as a fellow human being that I admire all the people who are working hard to save human lives. I marvel at the selfless efforts and abilities of the medical workers, the private sector workers and many government leaders, including President Trump. I wish to state as a fellow human being that it is a highly honorable thing to do the things they are doing. Having said this, I will now turn my attention back to God's perspective.

Try to imagine how all this appears to God. Knowing beforehand exactly how people and nations will react and what the final outcome will be, He sprinkles a pinch of COVID 19 into the world and then watches the response.² As people become aware of the virus, they immediately begin planning and battling. Most of them are so busy working to overcome the virus that they never realize that this entire event is fully under God's control and there is nothing at all random about it. Instead, this virus takes on a mind of its own. Though the scientists and leaders know in their mind that it is merely a virus with no intelligence, they almost seem to forget this fact. If they could somehow embrace the knowledge that it is God who has charge over this virus, they might stop and ask themselves, "What is God trying to say to us?" "What are His purposes?" "Has He been known to do this type of thing before and what did people learn from it if and when He did it before?"

I don't claim to know how all this is going to turn out and I am not one to predict doom. But any casual observer should be struck by how little effort it took for God to bring the entire world economy to the brink of destruction. There have been much worse worldwide calamities in the past that killed many more people than COVID 19. But this event has brought the world's economy nearly to collapse, even with significantly fewer fatalities. This reality demonstrates that God is capable of bursting our bubble whenever He pleases with less than the snap of His fingers, figuratively speaking. It is amazing to behold.

From the observations so far, we know that God is demonstrating that He is the Sovereign Lord over all things.

"Our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases" (Psalm 115:3). Let us humble ourselves before Him and beg for His guidance and mercy. Let us repent of all our godless ways.

God is teaching the inhabitants of the earth righteousness.

When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

The Bible says that human beings are ignorant of God's perfect righteousness and that they mistakenly think they can merit God's favor based upon their own righteousness.³ In this condition, they will not be able to understand

² This language is figurative. God's involvement and control over these things cannot be fully understood by the human mind. But the Bible indicates that other powerful, spiritual forces are always involved in calamities but all under complete dominion of God. To learn more of what the Bible says about this, see the appendix, **God's dominion over Satan and his forces.**

³ *"They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).*

that they are condemned before God because of all their unrighteous actions and attitudes. Therefore, they will not recognize their need for the salvation that God has made possible through the death of His Son. Because God does not desire that anyone should perish, He not only sent His Son to die,⁴ He is also always doing things that should cause people to learn their need for the salvation He made possible. Not only does He want people to learn from the trials and sufferings that come to them as individuals, He also brings about major calamities in the earth so that its inhabitants learn righteousness.

Human beings assume God is unconcerned about their behavior because they wrongly think that they are basically good. They never stop to consider what God has said about it because they don't like the thought that God will someday hold them accountable. But through God's judgments, He shows His displeasure for the rampant unrighteous behavior and attitudes of earth's inhabitants. Those who live through the calamity should learn to fear God but most don't. *"Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:10).* Those who live through the calamity should realize that except for God's grace, they would have died along with the many who did die. The fact that so many people do not learn does not detract from the fact that God is being merciful to keep many alive and that the calamity was intended by Him to lead them to salvation and eternal life.

God is being gentle.

Many people falsely assume that God is not involved in calamities. Their uninformed view of God prevents them from thinking that God would bring calamities on the earth. They think of God only in terms of His love and they don't think He gets angry about sin. Such people will probably not grasp what I am about to say. But for those who are open to learn what God has said about Himself rather than leaning on their own imaginations of what He is like, let me point out that in this COVID 19 crisis, God is being very gentle. Since this may be difficult for some to understand, let me explain how God is being gentle.

God is being gentle in that He does not simply wipe out the entire human race instantly. Most people do not understand that it would be perfectly just and fair if God were to suddenly destroy the entire earth because of the unrighteous behavior and attitudes of its inhabitants. He already did this once about five thousand years ago and it would be nothing at all for Him to do it again. In fact, this is precisely what He intends to do someday. According to the underlined words in the passage below, that day may be very soon!

*"Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.' For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **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.** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless" (II Peter 3:3-14).*

⁴ "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever is believing into Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

We keep hearing leaders tell us that this crisis will not last forever but will be over before too long. That may happen as they tell us but in reality, there is no guarantee that it will turn out as they say. Their models do not take into account the possibility that God could blow more wind into this virus so that it flares up with much greater intensity and kills most of the people on earth. God could do this without even lifting a finger, figuratively speaking. So, while it appears that this crisis may pass as the leaders say, human beings should let this calamity teach them that God is indeed displeased and that the only reason He does not wipe out the entire human race is because God is longsuffering toward us and wants people to come to repentance and be saved. (This is what the bold print says in the passage above.)

"Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:22).

What is God so displeased about that He would bring such calamities upon the earth?

Earlier in this article, I suggested that besides focusing on what we can do to help others during this crisis, we should also wake up and recognize that God is communicating through it. Since He is the One who is sovereign over it, it behooves us to ask ourselves some questions. If we neglect to do so, we are demonstrating to Him that we do not even acknowledge His existence, let alone His sovereignty over us as Lord of heaven and earth. So, let me encourage you to begin asking yourself some questions such as:

What is God trying to say to us?

What are His purposes?

Has He been known to do this type of thing before and what did people learn from it if and when He did it before?

What is God so displeased about that He would bring such a calamity on the earth?

This article references some scripture that answers some of these questions but the Bible contains much revelation from God that is even more specific. Following is a short passage that tells us several human behaviors that displease God. It says that anyone whose life is characterized by them will not inherit the Kingdom of heaven.

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, drug use and sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21).

This passage teaches us that God is displeased with these behaviors in the life of any individual. Using this information, we can apply it also to sins being committed and tolerated by any nation. So, if any of these sins (and others implied by them) are rampant in any culture or nation, we know that God is displeased and we should expect judgment to come in many forms, including one like the COVID 19 crisis. Here are just a few widespread sins that are tolerated in most nations on the earth, including the U.S.A.

Widespread murder

Widespread murder of human beings who cannot even defend themselves (abortion)

Widespread adultery

Widespread fornication

Widespread homosexuality

Widespread use of narcotics

Widespread drunkenness

Conclusion

While some human beings might scoff at this, I can assure you that God is very serious about these things. He is so serious about them that He sent His own Son in order to die. He did this not only to make a way of deliverance from the coming judgment, He did it so that those who believe into Jesus would have life from above that results in actual righteous living by all who believe. Jesus' blood is precious in God's sight. How dangerous it is to ignore what He did in order to bring about righteous lives. He obviously is very concerned about righteousness so let the reader be warned. Take heed to what God is saying and bow the knee to Jesus before it is too late.

*"His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden. ⁵ Before Him went pestilence, And **fever** followed at His feet" (Habakkuk 3:4-5)*

Thomas Bear, 4/1/2020

Appendix: **God's dominion over Satan and his forces.** (Additional information for those who want to learn more.)

God's involvement and control over these things cannot be fully understood by the human mind. But the Bible indicates that other powerful, spiritual forces are always involved in calamities but all under complete dominion of God.

Satan is fully under God's control: The first two chapters of the book of Job provides very important information about Satan. From the first two chapters of Job, we see how God brought about His ultimate purposes in Job and used Satan in the process. We get a glimpse of Satan's great power, including the creation and control of a tornado. But we also learn that he can do absolutely nothing without prior approval from God. In other words, he is on an unbreakable leash. Though Satan's intentions are always and only evil, he is actually nothing but an agent that carries out God's divine purposes.

There is another event worth noting that has similarities to **the current COVID 19 crisis**. In the latter years of David's life, God is said to have moved David to sin by taking a census of the armed forces in Israel. *Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah"* (II Samuel 24:1). On the surface, this seems odd in light of James 1:13b: *"God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."* But I Chronicles helps us understand how God's will was accomplished. The II Samuel passage says that God moved David to number Israel. But I Chronicles 21:1 says, *"Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel."* For reasons we cannot begin to fully understand, God had purposed to bring about the destruction of 70,000 Israelites and accomplish it through David's sin. The record of this historical event does not specify how all these Israelites died but there is no indication of bloodshed. This may have been accomplished by a virus such as COVID 19.

We know that God is righteous and does not sin. But He uses Satan to bring about His ultimate purposes. The story of David's sin and the story of Joseph has a similar ring to it. Joseph's brothers committed great evil against Joseph by selling him into slavery. (Though it does not say, Satan was undoubtedly at work behind the scenes.) Near the end of the story, Joseph's brothers told him that Jacob, their father, wanted Joseph to forgive them. Joseph had already forgiven them but he assured him with the following statement. *"You meant it for evil....but God meant it for good"*

(Genesis 50:20). So, we see this dynamic at work. God, who is righteous and never sins, is working all things together (including the sins of humans and evil forces) to accomplish His good and righteous purposes.

God uses the sins of humans and Satan to accomplish His grand purposes. When we factor in Satan's evil intentions with God's divine and ultimately good purposes, we can better understand verses like Isaiah 45:7: *"I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things."* The King James Version uses the word "evil" in place of calamity.

Several years ago, a tsunami killed about a quarter million people living on the coast of the Indian ocean. Many people said in response, "If God is good and sovereign over all things, how could He let this happen?" One thing we can suggest is that Satan was involved and his intentions were evil. He wanted to kill as many people as possible. But God is good and He has purposes for everything. Nothing is happening outside His control.

Someone might ask, "What can He possibly accomplish that is good by arranging for such a horrific event?" Isaiah 26:9 tells us of at least one purpose: *"When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."* Unless the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness, they will perish and spend eternity in hell.

The second chapter of Peter's second epistle says that the great flood and the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah teach mankind that *"the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment"* (II Peter 2:9). To summarize, Satan desires to kill and destroy. He is extremely powerful but fully under God's control. Satan's intentions are always evil but God is accomplishing His good and righteous purposes through it all. Below, other information from the Bible is provided which teaches us about Satan's involvement under God's sovereign control.

Some of Satan's tactics: He blinds the mind of unbelievers so that they end up in hell.⁵ He snatches the Word of God from the hearts so that they end up in hell.⁶ He is always whispering into people's mind that judgment is not coming and that God does not really care about sin.⁷ Being called the tempter, he is always tempting us to disobey God and renounce our allegiance to Jesus. He often transforms himself into an "angel of light" in the form of false teachers in order to deceive them.⁸

Satan is given authority to cause us harm when we harbor pride and sin: On the night Jesus was betrayed, Jesus told Peter that Satan had demanded to sift him as wheat.⁹ We read in the context that Peter was harboring pride. The Apostles were arguing with each other as to which one of them was the greatest. Also, Peter boasted that he would never forsake Jesus. It seems from Luke 22:31 that due to Peter's pride, Satan had some sort of legal standing to demand or request permission to sift him as wheat. Pride attracts Satan and his demons because all pride is aligned with the kingdom of darkness. All presumptuous sin has its root in pride since the individual asserts himself as boss in his heart. Pride and sin always gives Satan an opening for attack. This is why we read, *"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (James 4:6 NASB).

⁵ The "god of this age has blinded those who do not believe" (II Corinthians 4:4a).

⁶ "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart" (Matthew 13:19).

⁷ "Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

⁸ "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

⁹ "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat" (Luke 22:31).