

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO US IN THESE TIMES?

GREETINGS: We are so happy you could join us here today for our first internet-church. To all our regular church family ... we miss you all and we want you to know, we are still a family and we are here for you.

Also, for all our other brothers and sisters from other places who are logging-on, we also welcome you as we share together.

For the next few Sundays I'll be speaking on a series called, 'How to Overcome A Global Pandemic'.

Today I'm sharing a message called, 'WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO US IN THESE TIMES?'

GOD'S OMNISCIENCE REMAINS

The first point I would like to make is: **This pandemic did not take God by surprise - The Holy Spirit didn't come into Heaven in December 2019 last year and say, 'Father, you'll never guess what is happening there on the Earth ... There's a pandemic mounting and infecting hundreds of thousands and it's getting out of control ...'**

FRIENDS, GOD IS AWARE OF THIS GLOBAL PANDEMIC & YOUR PERSONAL SITUATION AT THIS TIME. IN FACT **GOD KNEW IT WAS COMING.** JESUS SPOKE OF IT 2000 YEARS AGO

Luke 21:11 **SLIDE**

*And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and **pestilences**; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.*

SLIDE Pestilences (*loimoi*) *a pestilent – infectious, contagious, diseased fellow. Something unknown and unfamiliar; a plague. An epidemic or fatal disease*

THIS IS NOT THE JUDGEMENT OF GOD

NB: This is NOT (as some people would have us believe) God's judgement against sin ...

- *People said the Aids epidemic was God's judgement*
- *People said the Christchurch Earthquakes were God's judgement*

THESE ARE THE DAYS OF MERCY & GRACE where God is patient with us ... *not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)*

THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED NOT REALISED

WE ARE TOLD THAT THE WRATH OF GOD HOVERS OVER ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE HEAVENS ... BUT THERE IT REMAINS ... REVEALED AS JUDGEMENT COMING.

IT IS ALSO ONLY REVEALED TO ALL PEOPLE ... IT IS NOT YET EXECUTED.

Romans 1:18

*For the wrath of God is **revealed from heaven** against all ... unrighteousness of men ...*

GOD'S JUDGEMENT BRINGS TOTAL DESTRUCTION

We also know this is not God's judgement because when God ever judged anything in the past ... He didn't mess around with an insidious virus or shake a few buildings ... **HE**

COMPLETELY DESTROYED EVERYTHING, for example SODOM & GOMORRAH ... THE FLOOD OF NOAH ...

SO GOD NOT ONLY KNOWS ABOUT THIS VIRUS ... HE REMAINS IN CONTROL.

SELF ISOLATING IS NO NEW THING

HERE WE ARE, BEING TOLD WE CANNOT CONGREGATE, BUT THAT WE MUST SELF-ISOLATE ... WE ARE TOLD NOT TO SOCIALISE ... TO STAY AT HOME ... & PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING ...

HOWEVER, LONG BEFORE THIS ... IT WAS PART OF GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE TO SELF-ISOLATE AND ENTER INTO PERSONAL PRIVATE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM ...

Matthew 6:6 **SLIDE**

*But you, when you pray, **go into your room, and when you have shut your door**, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

So now we have the Government and media unwittingly reiterating the words of Jesus and reinforcing the Will of God for the believer's life.

SELF ISOLATING FOR THE BORN AGAIN BELIEVER IS THE WILL OF GOD

James 4:8 **SLIDE**

Draw near to [approach] God and He will draw near to you ...

THIS IS NOT AN ANOMILY

Ephesians 2:13

*Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off **have been brought near** by the blood of Christ.*

James says to '**DRAW NEAR**'. Paul in Ephesians says, **WE'VE ALREADY BEEN BROUGHT NEAR ...**

Ephesians is speaking about OUR ESTABLISHED POSITION with God. **WE ARE ALREADY SONS OF GOD IN RELATIONSHIP TO HIM ... IN CHRIST WE ARE 100% ACCEPTED & FAVOURED.** (Ephesians1:6)

WE NO LONGER NEED TO PLEAD FOR HIS FAVOUR & ACCEPTANCE

But here, James is talking about our OUR PRESENT DAY EXPERIENCE – daily fellowship with God Himself ...

THIS IS FELLOWSHIP BASED UPON SECURE RELATIONSHIP.

Ephesians 2:18

... Through [Jesus] we ... have access by one Spirit to the Father.

THIS FELLOWSHIP IS A TWO-WAY THING ... YOU DRAW NEAR TO GOD ... HE DRAWS NEAR TO YOU

Remember when Jesus walked on water ... He approached the boat as if He was going past ... wanting them to respond ... and Peter got out of the boat (self-isolated) ... and though he sank ... Jesus saved him ... and he ended up returning to the boat in Jesus arms. He was closer to Jesus through this experience than he had ever been before ...

SO IN THIS GLOBAL PANDEMIC, GOD IS NOT FIGHTING IT & NEITHER SHOULD WE ...
NOT LIKE SOME HYPER-PENTECOSTAL PEOPLE I HEARD ABOUT WHO ARE DEFYING THE BAN TO NOT CONGREGATE BUT ARE CLAIMING INVINCIBILITY & TRYING TO DEFEAT THE DEVIL ...

NO FRIENDS ...

GOD IS USING THIS SELF-ISOLATING ORDER AS A PART OF HIS PLAN.

MAYBE YOU HAVE NOT YET MADE SELF-ISOLATING A PART OF YOUR NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE ...

MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN TOO CAUGHT UP IN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES ... IN SOCIALIZING ... OR CHURCH FELLOWSHIP ... OR EVEN MINISTRY ...

NOW'S THE TIME TO ADOPT A NEW HABIT IN YOUR LIFE, WHERE YOU WILL GET TO KNOW THE GOD OF YOUR SALVATION ...

SLIDE

**THE CHRISTIAN DOESN'T SELF-ISOLATE TO GET AWAY FROM A VIRUS THEY FEAR
THE CHRISTIAN SELF-ISOLATES TO GET CLOSE TO THE GOD THEY LOVE ...**

JESUS HIMSELF EXPERIENCED FORCED ISOLATION

Mark 1:45 Berean Study Bible

*... Jesus could no longer enter a town in plain view, but **He stayed out in solitary places.** Yet people came to Him from every quarter.*

JESUS HIMSELF ALSO OFTEN SELF-ISOLATED TO PRAY

Luke 5:16

*... He Himself **often withdrew into the wilderness** and prayed [worshipped].*

Mark 1:35 Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

*Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and **slipped out to a solitary place** to pray.*

Matthew 14:23 Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

*After He had sent them away, He went up on the mountain **by Himself to pray.** When evening came, **He was there alone.***

Luke 6:12 King James Bible

*And it came to pass in those days, that he **went out into a mountain to pray,** and continued all night in prayer to God.*

DAVID HID IN GOD DURING TIME OF TROUBLE

Psalm 57:1

To the Chief Musician ... A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul *into the cave*. *1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!* **SLIDE** *For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.*

Psalm 27:5 King James Bible

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

SO GOD'S INSTRUCTION TO US AT THIS TIME IS **NOT TO FIGHT** WHAT'S HAPPENING BUT TO **USE WHAT'S HAPPENING** FOR OUR GOOD ...

Isaiah 26: 20 Christian Standard Bible **SLIDE**

[Come] my people, enter your rooms and close your doors behind you. Hide for a little while until the wrath [the trouble] has passed.

'Wrath' is not necessarily God's wrath but (ya-ʿă-bār-) ... a passing over of trouble. The prophet advises his people to put themselves under cover during the tempest. His meaning, probably, is that they should retire into the privacy of communion with God, withdrawing from public affairs and the distractions of a worldly life. (Pulpit Commentary)

**WITHDRAWING TO PRAY DOESN'T MEAN WE START WRESTLING WITH THE POWERS OF DARKNESS TO DEFEAT THE CORONA VIRUS ...
NEITHER DOES IT MEAN TO PLEAD FOR GOD TO CHANGE THE CIRCUMSTANCE TO SUIT US ...
IT MEANS ENTERING INTO A PERSONAL, OPEN & INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD.**

**WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS PLACE OF ISOLATION?
HERE WE HEAR OUR ADVOCATE JESUS CHRIST
SPEAK TO US PERSONALLY, PRIVATELY & INTIMATELY**

Hosea 2:14 Berean Study Bible **SLIDE**

Therefore, behold, I will allure her; and lead her to the wilderness, and speak to her tenderly.

GOD ALSO KNOWS ABOUT YOU & YOUR SITUATION IN THIS VIRUS ... As the old song says, '**... HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW AND I KNOW HE WATCHES ME**'.

HE KNOWS & CARES ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE PERSONALLY GOING THROUGH.
HE KNOWS & CARES ABOUT ALL YOUR DOUBTS ... ABOUT ALL YOUR FEARS ... ALL YOUR DISTRESS ... ANGER ... ANXIETY ...

JESUS IS OUR GREAT HIGH-PRIEST NEXT TO THE FATHER WHERE HE FEELS ALL OUR DOUBTS
& FEARS, YET HOLDS US IN LIFE & RIGHTEOUSNESS ...
HIS LIFE & RIGHTEOUSNESS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN THE DOUBTS & FEARS YOU FEEL.

Hosea 2:15 Berean Study Bible

There I will give back her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor [trouble] into a gateway of hope ...

Song of Songs 8:5

*Who is this coming up from the wilderness, **leaning upon her beloved?** ...*

Isaiah 40: 27-30

*Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God'? ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. ³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. ³¹ But **SLIDE** those **who wait** on the LORD Shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

CANOPY OF GRACE

Underneath the banner of Your love,

Mysteries are unfolding from above.

Lord you hold me so closely,

Speak to me intimately ...

Underneath the banner of your love.