



THE PANDEMIC A CONTINUING CRISIS

By Dr. Thomas Haney
HOPE LOOKS UP MINISTRIES

Our world including the United States is ready to be over the Pandemic. All you have to do is listen, watch, and observe what people are doing and you will see that is true. The younger American adults seem to almost deny that COVID is still here and the only adults I see realistically facing the reality of COVID are the seniors of our nation and they have grown quite weary of the pandemic.

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INTRODUCTION – Fear Does Not Need to Control You

Welcome to Hope Looks Up Bible Study with Dr. Tom Haney. This session is the first of four mini-series in this study titled ‘Fear Does Not Need to Control You’. These are four areas that are causing our nation and even many believers to live in fear. First, we will look at, “The Continuing Pandemic.” Our world including the United States is ready to be over the Pandemic. All you have to do is listen, watch, and observe what people are doing and you will see that is true. The younger American adults seem to almost deny that COVID is still here and the only adults I see realistically facing the reality of COVID are the seniors of our nation and they have grown quite weary of the pandemic. The first question of this series is: “Why is the Pandemic Continuing?” and we will look in depth at that question.

Why Is the Pandemic Continuing and Not Going Away? *Matthew 24*

I want to state a current event crisis even before we look at the Scripture or history as we study the continuing pandemic. We have a health crisis on our hands as a nation that people are trying desperately to turn to their political advantage. Conservatives have used the pandemic to stand as the defenders against big government in our nation and have made many decisions and cast many votes based on how it will affect their national image. Liberals have used the pandemic to tighten control over areas that were very independent and have successfully labeled many conservatives as anti-health and forced a series of mandates, restrictions, and forced vaccinations, by forced I mean, you must do them or lose your job. Because it has become a political football, the focus on the truth has not been to primarily control and eliminate the pandemic but to control the discussion.

Let me share an article from one year ago in Lamb/Lion magazine to show what I mean: this appeared in their March-April, 2021 edition of “The Lamplighter”.

“New York State has twice as many deaths from Covid-19 than any other state, and New York has accounted for one fifth of all Covid-19 deaths in the US, but we are told that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has handled the pandemic better than any other governor. But if we support policies of Governors whose states had only a fraction of the infections and deaths as New York, we’re called anti-science and want people to die. So, we ask ourselves, am I crazy? No, you’ve just being gaslighted.”

A term that grew out of the 1938 stage play “Gas Light” by Patrick Hamilton, where the victim is physiologically manipulated by her husband to believe that she is losing her mind. One of the main ways he does this is constantly dim the gas lights in their house.

Jan Markell, the founder and spokesperson for Olive Tree Ministries in her weekly program, ‘Understanding the Times’, wrote this in her November, 2020 newsletter,

“Government intrusion and ‘contract tracing’ abounded in 2020. People even had to ‘register’ for church so they could be traced. The goal lines for easing government restrictions,

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lockdowns, quarantines and even face masks kept changing. Clearly, society is being prepped for the Antichrist and the New World Order. Around the world, people are being turned into mind-numbed robots. Many are cowering in fear.”

Now we know that the fate of Governor Cuomo has changed drastically and he has resigned at least for now. We know that states, other than New York, have been featured in the news to show how well or poorly all are doing with COVID. We also know that Jan Markell was writing to her listening audience with her assessment of COVID-19 and what the government is doing; but the point is, the pandemic has become a political football and the discussions about it have produced a lot of heat and often little light.

Let’s look at the Scriptures: In a number of places in the bible, there is mention of plagues, pestilence or pandemics killing people. For example,

- **Leviticus 26:25** Israel falls into covenant violations, God says, *“I will send pestilence among you.”*
- **II Chronicles 6:28**, Solomon says *“if there is pestilence, famine or blight, may God hear from the temple the prayers of the people.”*
- **II Chronicles 7:13-14**, God says that if he sends pestilence, the people can pray and humble themselves.
- **Exodus 9:3-6**, Plague number four on the Egyptians is pestilence on their livestock, and as a result they all die as mentioned.
- **II Samuel 24:15**, God sends a pestilence that kills 70,000 Israelites because of David’s ill-conceived census.
- **Luke 21:11**, Jesus says that there will be plagues. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah speak of God sending plagues.
- **Revelation 6:8**, the ‘Pale Rider’ kills a fourth of the earth with the sword, famine, and pestilence.
- **Psalms 91:5-6** is a great psalm of protection, and it says that we will not fear the terror of the night, the arrow of the day, the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that comes at noon.

For discussion, let us accept for this time that Covid-19 is really a plague. Some doubt this, noting that the percentage of people that die is actually quite small compared to the number of those who are diagnosed with it. On the other hand, the death toll in the USA is over 837,000 deaths from COVID 19 according to CDC officials. This does not account for preexisting conditions. Some point out that over one-half of the population of England died in the black plague in the 1300’s, one half of Athens died during the Peloponnesian War and Tacitus wrote that during the Poly-pogonia War, half of Rome died at the time of Nero. Our situation may seem mild compared to these, unless you are the one suffering from COVID or have lost family members. But it is a plague.

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Did God send this pandemic? Sometimes in the Bible, plagues are directly sent by God for a specific purpose of punishment, **Leviticus 26:25**, but other times they just come as **II Chronicles 7:13** as part of a world where death has a strong role. We do not have a prophetic word one way or the other in the current situation to be dogmatic on this.

How should the people of God respond? At a base level, there is the “*God will be with you, even in times of trouble*” approach. There is also a second level approach, “*Here are the skills you need to navigate this.*” Both are very limited because of collateral damage, such as job loss or economic collapse or the collapse of certain industries.

For the person grounded in the Bible, and “*rooted and grounded in Christ*” **Colossians 2:6-7** “so then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live our lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” There are several things already built into our life.

First, we know that we all go back to dust at some time, whether on day 1 or at 100 years. “*From dust you are, and to dust you shall return*”, God says in **Genesis 3:19**.

Second, life is uncertain in the best or worst of times. **Ecclesiastes 9:2** says it can be love or hatred, anything may await us. **Proverbs 16:9** says that a person plans his or her way, but God directs one’s steps. For instance, the people in WWII did not know, at first, that they were in WWII. Would Hitler stop with Poland or France? Could the Soviet Union defeat Germany on their own? No one knew for sure how things would unfold until they happened.

Third, our days are ordained by God. There is a time to be born and a time to die, and our days are written in God’s Book, **Psalms 139:16**. The sovereignty of God is supreme.

Fourth, Christians in other generations lived without anxiety medicine, sleeping aids, antidepressants, health insurance, or a pension. They had to trust God, cling to the Word, and be a part of God’s faithful people. They knew that life was hard and then you die.

So, how do we approach the current crisis? Perhaps a bit like Paul in the dark wet cell in Colossae when, with gratitude, he thanked God the Gospel was advancing:

Colossians 1:3-8; with prayer

Colossians 1:9-11; and thanks,

Colossians 1:12; staying firm in the faith and not losing our faith,

Colossians 1:23; asking God for more open doors,

Colossians 4:2-4; making the most of our time,

Colossians 4:5; and above all, living a Christ-centered, Christ-exalting, Christ-informed life,

Colossians 1:15-20; Right at the same time, the great apostle wrote, “*To live is Christ, to die is gain*”

Philippians 1:21. A Christ-centered and gospel-centered life is undaunted, but joyful and sees each day as an opportunity to live to the glory of God and make one more disciple.

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Did God Bring COVID-19?

Since there is not a specific Biblical prophecy that would match COVID 19, my answer to the question ‘Did God bring COVID-19?’ would be, I do not believe that God sent the virus, but I believe that He allowed it for a specific purpose

Our world is in a place of adversity and affliction which has caused worldwide panic and fear. God is constantly witnessing our behaviors and our actions as many of us are in a state of rebellion against God. I believe that God has allowed this calamity to happen as a way of showing and reminding believers as well as unbelievers that He is God and God alone. Life is fragile and God is the supreme being and controls all things. So, we must be dependent on God. This calamity, regardless of base beliefs has caused many to look introspectively at their life, their actions, their beliefs and has even challenged the mindsets of unbelievers. It has caused many to change their way of life and thinking. It has caused some to lean on their faith even more and believe in God for themselves and for others. It has solidified their faith in God. *Isaiah 30:1-2* tells us that “*Woe to the rebellious children,*” says the Lord, “*Who take counsel, but not of me. And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit. That they may add sin to sin; Who want to go down to Egypt, and have not asked my advice. To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt?*” God has been trying to get us to listen to Him, to hear His voice and in our rebellion, we have turned our backs to Him and became a nation that despises and rejects His Word.

The Potter will break his creation if He does not like the way His creation is shaped. *Isaiah 30:15* says, “*For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, ‘In returning and rest, you shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength.’*”

Due to COVID-19, we are now forced to have more solitude, rethink the busy-ness of our life and seek God in a more meaningful way without as many interruptions.

As a rebellious nation, we are now, more than ever, needing to hear the Word of God.

Isaiah 30:21-21 says, “*And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore. But your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you saying ‘This is the way, walk in it.’*”

I love the fact that many have gotten closer to God, have renewed their faith and are living a life for Jesus Christ; but I feel the pandemic has also been a major set-back for America. In a nation that has been moving rapidly towards embracing “Humanism” as our national religion, we have made several strides in the wrong direction.

Strides In the Wrong Direction Toward Humanism

1. “**Just trust the science**”, one of the catch phrases of the pandemic age, has for many meant one thing, only man and his/her mental power can get us out of this health crisis. It is not just trusting science; it is giving all authority and leadership to those who approach every part of this crisis with the idea that the right people could and would allow this blight on the nation and world to be removed. When the devil first sought to deceive Adam and Eve, he did so by discrediting God. His sly twisting and contradictions

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of God’s clear instructions, allowed sin to settle in the human heart and was soon acted out in life. The result of these actions was a curse consigned to all creation of decay and finally death for all who live. When Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden at the command of God the generation that followed took them further and further from God. They relied more and more on their physical senses and less and less on their spiritual senses. Satan was behind every idol they crafted to bridge the spiritual gap that came because they rejected the advice and leadership of God.

In today’s upside-down world, there are men and women who profess to be Satanists. They laud the devil as lord and seek to purposely offend God Almighty. They assert their rejection of any belief in God. This is because they say they are enlightened and that frees them from belief in any God-like deity. Calling themselves humanists, they believe that mankind will elevate its collective conscious power, leading to a utopia without suffering, want or war. They are using the pandemic to further their humanistic goals.

2. **“Don’t expect God or spiritual people to solve this crisis.”** I do not think that most people know how far we have already slid down this slippery slope of the worship of the intelligence and problem-solving ability of humans. When asked about their religious affiliation in nationwide polls, more and more young people are declaring themselves to be ‘nones’, meaning that they refuse to affiliate with any religion, especially Christianity. One example of this quick and shocking change occurred when Harvard University elected an avowed atheist to serve as its head chaplain. Greg Epstein has been the humanist chaplain at Harvard since 2005 and at MIT since 2018. The New York Times reports that his focus is “teaching students about the progressive movement that centers people’s relationships with one another instead of God.” His book asserts his belief that people can be “Good Without God”, a pointed rejection of God’s testimony. Speaking of the sons of men the LORD said, *“They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is not one who does good, not even one”* **Psalm 14:2-3, 53:2-3.**

What is the progressive agenda of Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, and Greg Epstein: unlimited abortion on demand, socialist policies for the government, sexual revolution with particular support of LGBTQ issues; and condemnation of Israel. The unifying inspiration for this agenda is a strong rejection of God. These modern-day pagans consider the God of the Bible to be an oppressive, patriarchal, white-privilege relic of the past that must be rejected and opposed. They ascribe to humanism that false promise the devil made to Adam and Eve, . . . *“You will be like God”* **Genesis 3:5**

If part of the reason for COVID being allowed to continue is until America moves back following God and not worshipping at the feet of the intelligence and superiority of mankind, humanism; then it will just continue. It is very difficult for people who worship humanity as a whole to see how the solution will not be thought up by the next human who works on the project, whatever that project is.

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Next, I want to address the results of pandemics and how the world recovered from them, especially the “Spanish Flu or Bird Flu of 1918. But, as we have studied what the Bible says about Pandemics or pestilences, here are some thoughts about **Matthew 24:4-5**. Jesus was with His disciples as they left the Temple of Jerusalem together and the disciples marveled at the beauty of the Temple building. Jesus told them that the Temple would be destroyed and all the stones would be removed or destroyed. The disciples were shocked, it was the most fantastic building they had ever seen so they asked Him how would people know it was the end of the age. The first answer of Jesus was the word would increase in deception: *“Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming ‘I am the Messiah, and will deceive many.’”* Only after that warning does Jesus speak of wars, rumors of war, famines, earthquakes, etc. There are eight types of deception:

1. **Religious deception**—focusing on acts or conditions of righteousness instead of focusing on being saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.
2. **Doctrinal deception**—leaving the simple truths of the Bible and adding man-made thoughts.
3. **Ethical deception**—claiming to be good but living in sin.
4. **Moral deception**—believing that if something seems good or feels good, you should do it.
5. **Intellectual deception**—believing that your ideas are superior to the ideas of God and His Word
6. **Mystical deception**—using telepathic visions and signs as proof that people should follow the new way and not the Bible
7. **Sexual deception**—a rejection of ordained monogamous sexual relationships between a man and his wife as the acceptable sexual relationships
8. **Spiritual deception**—the idea that the Bible needs to be updated, modernized and brought up to speed and therefore we must change it.

It is this tool of deception that worries me the most and without a doubt could cause COVID 19 to stay active here on earth. If the pandemic only causes more and more people to follow humanism and turn their backs on God, and God was permitting it just to cause people to come back to Him; we know who will win, but the period of suffering and torment will become longer and longer.

What can we do?

1. We need to get vaccinated and boosted.
2. We need to be careful and cautious in avoiding the virus.
3. We should help those who have it every way that we can.

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4. We need to pray and repent of any way we have failed to let God lead our lives and repent for our nation that God and His Word would be put in the proper place in our nation.

Now let's look at **“Does the Pandemic Have Spiritual Insights for Us?”**—What should we be learning from the Pandemic.

Does the Pandemic Have Spiritual Insights for Us? Luke 21

All who are listening would agree that our world and our nation are both ready to be over the pandemic. However, all plagues, pandemics, and pestilences never end when the people are tired of them, they end when something is done to end it or God Almighty stops what is happening. Previously, we explored the question, “Did God Send the Pandemic?” and I shared that I do not think He did. Here are several reasons:

1. Where it originated, the first people affected by it and the shadowy way it moved to humans, either from a laboratory or a wet market of insects, rodents, and amphibious creatures that are not usually consumed as food outside of very limited areas of the Orient.
2. It did not seem directed at any one people group or trying to accomplish any one purpose.
3. It has not been seen as a spiritual judgment or tool by any evangelical authoritative group in the world.

But I also said, “I do think that God permitted it” I feel that is true because I think God is sending a wake-up message with the pandemic that is intended to show people that we are not independent and cannot operate and defend ourselves the way we feel we can. This concept of all-sufficiency has been passed in our age by a majority of people from God over to humans. We call this ideology ‘humanism’ and it is literally the worship of the intellectual ability and problem-solving ability of humans. It is the belief that humankind is able to solve all of the problems of this world and instead of leaning on a spiritual crutch like faiths, beliefs, and religions. We simply need to believe in the ultimate and total power of the human mind. This belief is anti-Christian, anti-faith and dangerous.

I want to share some thoughts by Todd Mangum writing in the ‘Christianity Today’ magazine. He is the Missional Theology Professor at Missio Seminary, Philadelphia, PA. A seminary dedicated to taking the Christian Message to the entire world. I have put many of his thoughts into ‘layman’s language’ so we hear clearly what he is saying.

He begins, “Is this pandemic God’s judgment against us?” This is a difficult question to ponder. By asking it, are we saying that we are back under the blessings and curses of God-directed Israel or are we even in the end time apocalyptic curses of Revelation. Not necessarily, but, he goes on to say, I do see patterns of biblical teaching indicative of God’s ongoing interaction in the affairs of human life and his willingness to use extreme measures to accomplish His purposes.”

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Biblical truth: When confronted with disaster, Scripture calls us to look to God for both comfort and self-examination. Prophets from Moses to Malachi point to sin and the need for repentance as reasons behind various disasters. John the Baptist and Jesus both speak in the New Testament of prophetic warnings and calls for repentance. He goes on to share, Paul observes in **Romans 1:18**, “*the wrath of God is being revealed. . . against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.*” Paul taught in **I Corinthians 10:1-12** that the Old Testament is full of types or examples for us to heed. When he chastised the Corinthians for misusing the Lord’s Supper, Paul warned, “*Why are many among you weak and sick, and number of you have fallen asleep (died)*”, **I Corinthians 11:30** Paul even labels the sickness and death that came upon the church because of the way they conducted the Lord’s Supper as a judgment, verse 29, even for New Testament believers.

So, again he asks, “Does the coronavirus pandemic fit as divine judgment and discipline?” He then points out that it is important for us to remember that God’s wrath comes with mercy, **Habakkuk 3:2** and **I Chronicles 21:13**. We see God’s mercy in many ways. One was that God started with smaller catastrophes preceding greater ones, giving the chance for repentance sooner, rather than later. The ten plagues of Egypt increase in severity, partly because Pharaoh and his people did not listen but rather turned and went into their homes with no concern at all for what Moses said: **Ex. 7:22-23**. How quick are we to dismiss extraordinary acts of God as quirks of nature that we believe can be harnessed with enough fortitude and resources?

The Lord has raised up strong prophetic voices in our day, from Jeremiah Wright, Jim Wallis, Diane Langberg, John Piper, James Dobson, Dr. David Reagan, and that is hardly an exhaustive list. While none of them claims inerrant inspiration, each has sounded loud notes of Biblical warning, as Jeremiah says by unnamed but truthful prophets, **Jeremiah 25:4, 29:19**. This could certainly apply to today.

What Must God Do To Get Our Attention?

Then he asks the most poignant question: “What must God do to get our attention?” God can disrupt the human cycle of self-interest by strong and awful means and call us into account. Global pandemics are thankfully rare, but when they do occur, they usually spread through trade routes of prosperous powerful nations, inherently prone to prideful means to make all the money possible. They are often indifferent toward God, **Deuteronomy 8:10-14**. Is this pandemic part of a larger pattern? Consider other catastrophes that have struck North America over the past 20 years: 9/11; Superstorm Sandy; hurricanes Katrina, Maria, Irma and Harvey, California wildfires, Midwest tornado spikes, swine flu and now COVID-19. Have we hardened our hearts so as to write off these events, not as a warning, but merely acts of nature? Shouldn’t we rather ask; are we under divine judgment?

Reasons, look no farther than God opposes the proud and uses catastrophe to undermine arrogance. **James 4:13-17** points out the ‘sin’ of living life as functional atheists, operating as though God is paying us no real attention, presuming our security lies simply in planning and protecting our profits. **James 5** calls down severe judgment on the rich, in our day, we who put “In God we trust” on our money had better take heed of saying something we do not mean.

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God’s passionate concern is for the vulnerable, the orphan, the widow, the handicapped, the immigrant, the refugee. The Lord will not allow prosperity, devoid of such concern for the needy, to stand. He said it very clear in **Proverbs 21:13**; *“Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered.”*

It is at the end of his article that I found the most insight into our question of tonight, “Are their Spiritual insights for us to learn from the Pandemic? Is COVID more than just an evil arm of the Devil?”

First, he says, “If this pandemic is a judgment from God, our response should be more than point a sanctimonious finger at others. We must lament, repent and pray like Daniel in **Daniel 9:2-19**, where the person of God owns and confesses “our sins” and pleads for God to “forgive us”. In those moments, we are most in sync with prophets like Habakkuk and Jeremiah. Sharing their lamentations, we also are put in position to observe, *“And yet, your mercies are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness.”* **Lamentations 3:23**

Second, he goes on to say, “Human sin in such times can be redeemed by God for greater purposes. Besides instilling fear of the Lord, plagues historically have prompted people to prepare for the afterlife.” Jesus addressed the fleeting notion of material things and the foolishness of building one’s life on such sand, **Matthew 7:24-27**. Christians need not fear death. Confidence in Christ and eternity has led many to give their own lives to minister to the sick and dying, a sure sign that they believed in the reality of the resurrection.

Third, he tells us that “followers of Christ are not called to pronounce God’s condemnation but rather to examine themselves.” Our own repentance serves as one aspect of our larger mission to relieve suffering, mourn with the grieving, care for the sick, encourage the weak, and comfort the afflicted even as we plead for God’s mercy over what is causing all the sorrow and death.

Fourth, “With this pandemic, I see the seriousness of God’s demand for repentance and feel we will receive any discipline God may intend as coming from the hand of our Loving Father, God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Since we label the Pandemic as an extension of the evil arm of Satan, is it possible that we will not consider that God may be calling us to repentance and change based on the fact that the Pandemic has not left.

What Can Be Learned from the 1918 Pandemic, the Spanish Flu?

I want to retrace what happened in 1918 to cause the Spanish Flu or as some call it, the bird flu to stop. How did the world recover from a Flu that took so many lives? The normal historical explanation is that the Spanish Flu virus became less and less contagious and it disappeared. It was the worst plague in history. It killed at least 50 million people and because the world was at war and not wanting to admit how many died in their nation, some believe as many as 100 million died. So, this flu that struck down primarily people in their 20’s and 30’s, that killed more soldiers in 1918 than World War I, and spread across major cities in days, how did the deadliest pandemic ever recorded come to an end?

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Over time, those who contracted the virus and still lived, developed an immunity to this novel strand of influenzas and life returned to normal by the early 1920's. That was the report of government historians and medical experts. The reports at the time suggest the virus became less lethal as the pandemic kept moving around the world.

But the strand of the flu didn't just disappear. It continuously mutated and passed through humans, pigs and other mammals. Most all strains that we fight today of the flu are later generations of the 1918 H1N1 virus. In that sense, the flu is still with us. It never went totally away. It is not totally known where the flu started and how it morphed from birds to humans, but the disease became known as the Spanish flu because Spain was neutral during World War I and did not censor their news. When the leaders of Spain caught this flu and it was reported to the world, the world named it the "Spanish Flu." The Spanish always have called it the "French Flu", which is probably more accurate. (We know that China, France, and the United States already had unreported cases, when Spain announced their first victims.) The virus was more potent and deadly when it first struck and it became less deadly as it stayed or was brought back into the area. '

By 1920, the influenza virus was still a threat, but fewer people were dying from the disease. Some scientists at the time started to move on to other research. William Henry Welch, a famous pathologist from Johns Hopkins, who was studying the virus, found it "humiliating" that the outbreak was passing away without experts truly understanding the underlying cause of the disease. But it never completely went away and the pandemics of 1957, 1968, 2009 all have common derivatives with the 1918 influenza. COVID-19 lasts longer and is often asymptomatic. It acts more like Polio than influenza.

The basic historic response then is that by the summer of 1920, the Spanish Flu pandemic came to an end, as those that were infected either died or developed immunity. The Spanish Flu started in 1918, spiked the last time in 1920 and by the end of 1920 was no longer considered a pandemic threat. The medical answer again was, "When you get enough people who get immunity, the infection will slowly die out because it's harder for the virus to find new susceptible hosts." In that short 3 years over 1/3 of the world had caught the Spanish Flu compared to COVID-19 that has infected less than 1 % of the world population. The medical world says: "Doctors expect the COVID-19 pandemic won't really end until there's both a vaccine and a certain level of exposure in the global population. Dr. Markel states in the Journal of the American Medical Association: "We're not certain but we are pretty darn sure those will both have to be in place."

Even if we are in the end of times, we need to realize that Jesus said, pandemics, deceptions, wars and rumors of wars are the beginning of the birth pangs, not the end of them. He then instructed His disciples in **Matthew 24** to be more diligent and work even harder at spreading the Gospel to others.

As I read the history of the time, 1918-1920, the reliance on God, the call for prayers in our nation and the call of the preachers of the day to join them in repenting of the sins of the nation were common. These are hard to measure, as to over-all effect, so the government officials and the

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medical historians wrote about the medical and demographic facts as they saw them through their eyes.

I want to share what one pastor wrote in 1920 that I think has strong guidance for today: “However, one cannot be truly prepared to experience the end of days without knowing the Ancient of Days **Daniel 7:9**. This means placing one’s trust in God, believing in the resurrection of His Son, and confessing Jesus as Lord, **Romans 10:9-13**. Even in the face of calamity and persecution, the believer has hope in the coming of Christ in His glory and spending an eternity with Him in a way that the non-believer does not. In order to be free from the power of sin and death, be made in the newness of life, and hopeful of the resurrection to come, we must first take Jesus at His word:

Matthew 24:35 *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*

One last thought that I think helped remove the Spanish Flu from the scene. The Word of God caught fire in the United States and the Pentecostal Movement was birthed. It became a time in which the Holy Spirit and the fire of Pentecost began to move in Churches across the nation. The Holiness revival took root and many strong evangelical movements like the Nazarenes, the Pilgrim Holiness Church, the Wesleyan Methodist and others became the backbone of the Midwest and spread a very Biblical based faith across our nation. It was not enough to stop the economic collapse of the Great Depression but I feel that it was enough for God to lift the plague off of the world and allow the world to go back to a more regular way of living.

I do not see any major group in the United States moving forward in outreach and revival now, but instead I see most Churches trying to navigate the Pandemic and still hold onto their Church buildings and congregations. I have not seen a great cry for national repentance and revival except by the prophetic voices that I listed. I would ask all of us to examine through prayer, if God is speaking to you about something, that you are to do to help lift this curse off of the world.

What Does Jesus Say?

I have taken **Luke 21** as the base foundational scripture for this study and I want to point out three things that Jesus said in that great sermon, and each should become a magnifying lens for us to look at and examine the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1. **Confusion:** Jesus said there would be a great amount of confusion in the years that lead up to the End Times and we need to watch how that works. Confusion can lead to better answers; confusion can be the precursor to new understanding; but mostly confusion seems to be a cover-up for what is really happening. God wants an army of His followers who clearly see what is happening, and through prayer, seek to bring our nation’s leadership back under the direct control of God.
2. **Stand Firm:** Jesus said, standing firm on what God wants and listening to what He is saying to us will come with a price. It will not be what those who do not follow God and have become humanists want to happen. They will not be kind or helpful to those who are calling our nation back to the Lord, even if that is you.

HOPE LOOKS UP BIBLE STUDY

“THE PANDEMIC, A CONTINUING CRISIS”

3. **Not Alone:** Jesus said you are not in the skirmish alone. All you have to do is allow God to give you the right words for your defense, and He will supply them. You do not have to always be “the brightest light bulb in the room”, but you do have to allow God to speak through you.

The Lord focused over and over on the need for “preparation” as the end days approach. Prepare as the bridesmaids did before the groom came to the wedding. Prepare as you see the prophecies unfold before your eyes and come into actuality. Prepare so that the signs you see in the heavens and upon the earth will excite you to know that Jesus will soon be here. Prepare that you will not be surprised.

The second session in the mini-series titled ‘Fear Does Not Need to Control You’ will look at “Finances and Our Times.” The study will look at Scriptures and take the fear out of the financial situation. God is not silent about what was to happen in the end times with the money and the wealth of the world, but what about now? Will the world go bankrupt? Will nations collapse from economic crisis? How should a Christian handle their finances in such times?