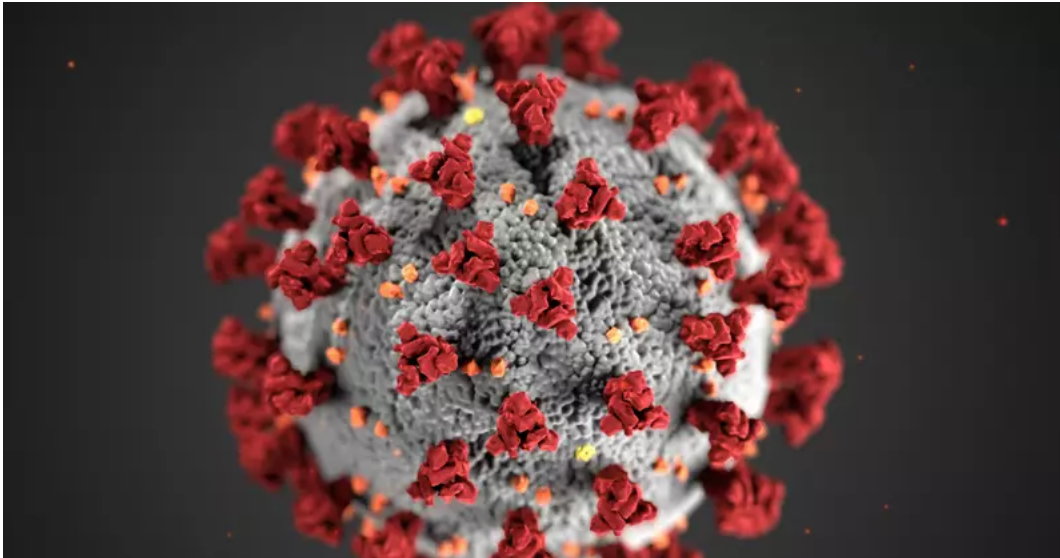


## God and Coronavirus: Is it a Sign of the End Times?

Dr. Roger Barrier  
Preach It, Teach It

2020  
12 May



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This article has become a resource for many seeking to understand if the Coronavirus pandemic is an End Times (<https://www.crosswalk.com/home-page/todays-features/will-christians-witness-the-second-coming.html>) plague. We hope it can direct you toward scriptural truths about plagues and a study of the Book of Revelation. In addition, the following articles may offer more encouragement for all to remember as we face the trials of COVID-19 together:*

- What Does the Bible Say About Coronavirus: Is it a Sign of the End Times? (<https://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/ask-roger/god-and-coronavirus-is-it-a-sign-of-the-end-times.html>)
- Did God Send the Coronavirus as a Biblical Plague from Revelation? (<https://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/ask-roger/did-god-send-the-coronavirus-as-a-foreshadow.html>)
- Prayers for Peace Amidst Pandemic Fear (<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/powerful-prayers-for-peace-amidst-pandemic-fear.html>)
- What Is the Mark of the Beast in the Bible? (<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/end-times/what-is-the-mark-of-the-beast-in-the-bible.html>)
- Who Are the Four Horsemen in Revelation? Their Meaning and Significance During Apocalypse (<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/end-times/who-are-the-four-horsemen-in-revelation-their-meaning-and-significance.html>)

Dear Roger,

*I've been so terrified about Coronavirus! Why would God let this happen? Is this a sign of the End Times? Sincerely, Jamie*

Dear Jamie,

I'm so glad you asked!

I grieve for those who have lost their lives from this disease. I also want to comfort those who have been traumatized by fear over coronavirus and its effect on our day-to-day lives and well-being.

However, we can learn much about God and our relationship to Him through this challenge. In our information age, we have global hourly updates about plagues, natural disasters (<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/hopeful-prayers-for-restoration-from-natural-disasters.html>), government coups, and economic volatility.

When the Spanish Flu killed 100 million people in 1918-1920, very few people had any idea what the disease was and how it impacted others.

The CDC estimates that 32 to 49 million Americans contracted influenza this past year and 20,000 to 50,000 died. That's fairly on par with a typical season, and well below the CDC's 2017-2018 estimates of 48.8 million illnesses, 959,000 hospitalizations and 79,400 deaths. Estimates on deaths are difficult to analyze because many inflicted had multiple health issues.

This is why Coronavirus is scary. It's scary because it makes us look at our own mortality.

If you know Jesus, you have no reason to fear that. That being said, my next-door neighbor is a virologist, and it's always wise to be thorough in following proper precautions. Be wise.

The Bible (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/>) has a lot to say about "pestilence" and our response to it! The word translated "pestilence" is often translated as "plague" or "disaster" in new versions of the English Bible.

God is calling us to Himself.

I'd like to offer answers to three questions.

- Is Coronavirus a sign of the End Times?
- What does the Bible say about God and disease, and how do we respond?
- How do we find peace and protection in the midst of the storm?

### Is Coronavirus a Sign of the End Times?

Jesus often described the End Times as being "birth pangs." Just as labor pains grow stronger and closer together, God will allow escalation in trials of all kinds to bring men to Christ. In fact, the purpose of the Tribulation itself is to bring pressure for men to surrender to Jesus and find salvation.

Jesus describes End Time events in Matthew 24 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/matthew/24.html>), Mark 13 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/mark/13.html>), and Luke 21 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/luke/21.html>). Here's what Jesus said in Luke 21 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/luke/21.html>):

*"Master!" they exclaimed. "When? And will there be any warning ahead of time?"*

*He (Jesus) replied, "Don't let anyone mislead you. For many will come announcing themselves as the Messiah, and saying, 'The time has come.' But don't believe them! And when you hear of wars and insurrections beginning, don't panic. True, wars must come, but the end won't follow immediately— for nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be great earthquakes, and famines in many lands, and epidemics, and terrifying things happening in the heavens." ESV*

The passage further describes persecution of Christians (and Jews in context).

Christ encourages us four ways: don't be deceived or surprised, don't panic, be patient and witness (verse 13). "This will be your opportunity to bear witness." Jesus is coming.

For more details, read my article (<https://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/ask-roger/how-to-prepare-for-end-times.html>) on preparing for End Times.

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### Why Does God Allow Coronavirus and Other Catastrophes?

The world is broken. We are sinful. Because Adam sinned, we are in mortal bodies. Death is inevitable. But we need not fear. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:21 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/1-corinthians/15-21.html>):

*"For since [it was] by a man (Adam) that death *came* [into the world], it is also by a Man (Jesus) that the resurrection of the dead *has come*." AMP*

We live in a fallen world. If we know Christ, we can have hope and joy.

**Let's look at seven reasons God sends disease and trouble in the Bible:**

#### 1. To Accomplish His Purposes

God used plagues to deliver the enslaved Jews from their Egyptian overlords. (Exodus 9:8-11 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/exodus/passage/?q=exodus+9:8-11>)).

God will also pour out plagues during the Tribulation to bring God-rejecters to faith in Christ. The way coronavirus spreads quickly from person to person is a foreshadowing of the way God will pronounce judgment in Revelation.

Revelation 9:15-19 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/revelations/passage/?q=revelations+9:15-19>)

"By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent."

How does God accomplish His purpose in our day? Through Jesus' death and resurrection. Isaiah 53

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/isaiah/53.html>) tells us Christ bore our sins and diseases on the cross. We receive grace and not judgment when we believe in Him.

## 2. To Teach Obedience

Moses proclaimed the blessings of following Jehovah and the consequences of forsaking Him to teach obedience to the Israelites. In Deuteronomy 28 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/deuteronomy/28.html>), Moses promises children, wealth, food and safety. He warns that if Israel refuses to listen and obey, He will curse them instead.

Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered, and so can we!

Hebrews 5:8 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/hebrews/5-8.html>) ESV

"Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered."

## 3. To Oppose Pride

God called King David "the man after God's own heart." But the consequences of David's sins didn't only impact his family. David proudly counted his army, defying God's strict warning to humbly trust Him. So, David had three punishments from which to choose to pay for his pride: three years of famine, three months of defeat from enemies, or three days of plague. (2 Samuel 24:13 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/2-samuel/24-13.html>)).

God relents when we humble ourselves.

James 4:10 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/james/4-10.html>)

"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you."

## 4. To Abolish Idolatry

God hates idolatry (Exodus 20:3 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/exodus/20-3.html>)). Idolatry in our day usually revolves around money. Ezekiel 7 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/ezekiel/7.html>) prophesies the destruction of the Jewish economy (buying and selling) to call His people to put away idols.

Jesus said "You cannot serve two masters: God and money. For you will hate one and love the other, or else the other way around." (Matthew 6:24 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/matthew/6-24.html>)) TLB

God is our provider. Jesus said God cares for sparrows and flowers. Of course He cares for us! We must trust Him and not rely on our own intellect or strength.

Time and time again, God relented when His people learned to put Him first.

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## 5. To Teach Gratitude

The Jews complained to Moses about manna. They demanded meat. God answered their ungrateful prayers and sent them quail. He also punished them with a poisonous plague. (Numbers 11:31-33 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/numbers/passage/?q=numbers+11:31-33>))

Those who worship with thankful hearts receive God's blessing.

Psalms 103:2-3 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/psalms/passage/?q=psalms+103:2-3>)

"Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all of his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals your diseases."

## 6. To Defend His Holiness

The Philistines captured the Ark and sent it to Ashdod instead of returning it to Israel. God taught them a lesson by sending them rats and hemorrhoids! (1 Samuel 5:6 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/1-samuel/5-6.html>)).

But Jesus reconciled us to God by His death on the cross. He has made us holy:

Colossians 1:20-22 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/colossians/passage/?q=colossians+1:20-22>)

"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation."

## 7. To Reveal His Power

God permitted Satan to inflict disease upon Job so that He could reveal His majesty and power Himself to His faithful servant (Job 42 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/job/42.html>)).

Paul assures us that He reveals His power through our weak bodies.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/2-corinthians/4-7.html>) TLB

"But this precious treasure—this light and power that now shine within us—is held in a perishable container, that is, in our weak bodies. Everyone can see that the glorious power within must be from God and is not our own."

## How Do We Find Peace and Protection amidst Pandemic?

Philippians 4:6 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/philippians/4-6.html>) TLB

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers."

Turn off the news. Focus on Heaven. Pray specific, honest prayers and live with a thankful heart. Here are three positive things you can do right now:

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## 1. Pray with Others

Solomon's classic prayer for Israel is still effective today.

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/2-chronicles/7-14.html>). (Note: God calls us to pray *together as well as independently*).

God even spared the brutal, pagan people of Ninevah when they repented, fasted, and prayed in the days of Jonah.



## 2. Patiently Ask God for Wisdom

Don't be foolish. God can show you a specific plan to follow during this time. (James 1:2-6 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/james/passage/?q=james+1:2-6>))

Don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.

James 1:4-6 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/james/passage/?q=james+1:4-6>) TLB

If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not resent it."

## 3. Rest in God's Care

My daughter has a compromised immune system. Every week, a nurse arrives to administer her 8-hour infusion. She suffers migraines, nausea, and intense pain for the next two days. Today she has contracted yet another respiratory infection. The doctor called this morning to tell her she also has two other painful complications.

But Brie lives her life with a happy heart. She prays honestly about her fear and grief, but she continues with faith and joy. She continues in ministry and cares for her family.

How does she cope with the fear of yet another infection? Psalm 91:2-14 (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/psalms/passage/?q=psalms+91:2-14>) has been her favorite passage since childhood. She sees God has her loving, powerful protector:

*"God alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I am trusting him. For he rescues you from every trap and protects you from the fatal plague. He will shield you with his wings! They will shelter you. His faithful promises are your armor. Now you don't need to be afraid of the dark anymore, nor fear the dangers of the day; nor dread the plagues of darkness, nor disasters in the morning.*

*Though a thousand fall at my side, though ten thousand are dying around me, the evil will not touch me. I will see how the wicked are punished, but I will not share it. For Jehovah is my refuge! I choose the God above all gods to shelter me. How then can evil overtake me or any plague come near? For he orders his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will steady you with their hands to keep you from stumbling against the rocks on the trail. You can safely meet a lion or step on poisonous snakes, yes, even trample them beneath your feet!*

*For the Lord says, "Because he loves me, I will rescue him; I will make him great because he trusts in my name. When he calls on me, I will answer; I will be with him in trouble and rescue him and honor him. I will satisfy him with a full life and give him my salvation."* TLB

God loves you. He is watching. He is in control!



**Dr. Roger Barrier** retired as senior teaching pastor from Casas Church (<http://www.casaschurch.org/>) in Tucson, Arizona. In addition to being an author and sought-after conference speaker, Roger has mentored or taught thousands of pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders worldwide. Casas Church, where Roger served throughout his 35-year career, is a megachurch known for a well-integrated, multi-generational ministry. The value of including new generations is deeply ingrained throughout Casas to help the church move strongly right through the twenty-first century and beyond. Dr. Barrier holds degrees from Baylor University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Golden Gate Seminary in Greek, religion, theology, and pastoral care. His popular book, *Listening to the Voice of God*, published by Bethany House, is in its second printing and is available in Thai and Portuguese. His latest work is, *Got Guts? Get Godly! Pray the Prayer God Guarantees to Answer*

*Editor's Note: This Ask Roger article features insights from Roger's daughter, Brie Barrier Wetherbee (<https://preachitteachit.org/author/briebARRIERwetherbee/>), a sought-after Bible teacher and conference speaker, author, analyst, and Christian theologian.*

Pastor Roger Barrier's "[Ask Roger \(http://www.preachitteachit.org/about-us/the-team/roger-barrier/ask-roger/\)](http://www.preachitteachit.org/about-us/the-team/roger-barrier/ask-roger/)" column regularly appears at **Preach It, Teach It** (<http://www.preachitteachit.org/>). Every week at Crosswalk, Dr. Barrier puts nearly 40 years of experience in the pastorate to work answering questions of doctrine or practice for laypeople or giving advice on church leadership issues. Email him your questions at [roger@preachitteachit.org](mailto:roger@preachitteachit.org) (<mailto:roger@preachitteachit.org>).

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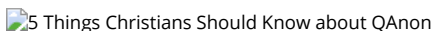
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