Rise Up And Build

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"So They said, `Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18

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January 31, 2021

The Worst of All Pandemics

"Covid-19!" These two words are among the most oft repeated words in our language — not only in the U.S., but throughout the world! These words elevate our blood pressure, inflame our passions, and add much to heighten depression among people of all ages, locations, and situations.

"Covid-19" is now a pandemic; it has brought sickness, heartache, misery, financial disaster, and death throughout the world. To my knowledge, it shows no sign of diminishing its detrimental impact upon the world.

But what is a <u>pandemic</u>? It is not the same as an <u>epidemic</u>. An epidemic is defined as "the rapid spreading of a disease, so that many people have it at the same time" (**World Book Dictionary**). A pandemic is defined as a "spreading over an entire country, or continent, or the whole world" (*ibid.*). A pandemic can even be global in its impact, whereas an epidemic may be more restrictive to certain areas.

"Covid-19" is not the first pandemic, and probably won't be the last. A few of history's pandemics include the following: Antonine Plague (165-180 A.D.), Plague of Justinian (541-542 A.D.), Black Death (1347-1352 A.D.), New World Smallpox (1520 A.D.), Italian Plague (1624-1631 A.D.), Third Plague (1885 A.D.), Russian Flu (1889-1890), Yellow Fever, (late 1800s), 1918 Flu. Other pandemics include the Asian Flu, the Hong Kong flu, Sars, Mers, Hiv/Aids, Ebola, etc. Most of these pandemics cost the lives of millions of people, and adversely affected the societies exposes thereto.

There is no way to sum up the horror, Havoc, and misery heaped upon society as a result of these pandemics. But no one or them, or all of them combined, have brought as much heartache and misery, as "the worst of all pandemics," to which we are referring in this article.

By now, most of the readers of these words have probably already figured out the "pandemic" to which we are herein referring. Yes, I am referring to the "pandemic" **of sin**!

Sin is not an epidemic; it **is a pandemic;** it is global in its impact. And it is very personal, for no accountable person has been spared its effects. The Bible clearly and plainly

states that *"**all** have **sinned** and fall short of the glory of God*," Rom. 3:23. And the Bible also clearly states that "*the wages of **sin** is <u>death</u>…,*" Rom. 6:23. In fact the Bible further says that "*if we **say** that we have **no** sin, we **deceive** ourselves, and the truth is not in us,*" I John 1:7; it also states that "*if we **say** we have **not** sinned, we make Him a liar, and the truth is not in us,*" I John 1:10.

But what is sin? "*Sin,*" the word is from *hamartia* (Greek), and literally denotes "a missing   of   the   mark"   (**Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**, by Vine). God's word sets forth the "*mark*" or standard by which we must live our lives, and anytime we in any way fail to measure up to that standard or mark, we sin! Worded differently, we note I John 3:4 which states that "*whoever commits sin also commits lawlessnesss, and sin is lawlessness*" (NkJV), or "*the **transgression** of the law*" (KJV). Also in I John 5:17 we note that "*all unrighteousness is sin…*" "*Unrighteousness*" is translated from *adikia (Greek) which "denotes injustice," which* includes any "deed or deeds violating law and justice" (**Vine**). Anytime we perform any deed which "deprives another of what is his own (*ibid*), we are guilty of unrighteousness! Also in James 4:17 we read that "*to him who **knows** to do good and does **not do it**, to him it is **sin**.*" This refers to sins of omission. One can sin both by commission and by omission — doing what is wrong or neglecting to do what is right. Hence, in view of these scriptures, it should be evident that every person who both knows and believes the Bible has to be aware of sin in his/or her own life. In other words, sin is a pandemic. It affects **everyone**. No mask can cover it up!

What are some of the effects and consequences of sin? Please note the following:

Sin brings death! *"...through one man **sin** entered the world, and **death** through sin…"* (Rom. 5:12). The first couple (Adam and Eve) ate of the forbidden fruit; hence, God said *"in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return,"* Gen. 3:19).

Sin brings this-world hardships. Because of sin, women *"in pain...bring forth children,"* the ground produces "*thorns and thistles,*" and one is forced to earn his living by the *"sweat"* of his face (Gen. 3:16-19).

Sin is responsible for murder. Cain did not worship God according to His instructions, so God "*did not respect Can and his offering,*" whereas He "*respected Abel and his offering*" (Gen. 4:4-5). In consequence, Cain became angry with his brother and "*rose up against Abel his brother and **killed** him*" (Gen. 4:8). Hence, the first born son of the first couple murdered his own brother! Murder is sinful (Ex. 20:13; Rev. 21:8), and sin often results in murder.

Sin separates man from God! Note Isaiah 59:1-2: *"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But <u>your iniquities</u> have **separated** you from God; and your sins have hid his face from you, so that He will not hear."*

Sin causes indescribable pangs of guilt. Adam and Eve, at first were innocent, but they sinned when they ate the forbidden fruit. After that "*they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord among the trees of the garden,*" Gen. 3:8. Feelings of guilt prompted them to try to hide from God! David sinned grievously when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed in order to cover up his sin (2 Sam. 11). But note his feelings of guilt as set forth in Psa. 38*: "For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me."* Because of sin in our own lives, we have all experienced feelings of

guilt and, indeed, those feelings are *"like a heavy burden!"*

Sin produced the worst "climate change" in history! Prior to the Genesis flood *"the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,"* Gen. 6:5 Hence, God, by means of a universal flood, took the lives of every person alive on the earth — with the exception of Noah, his wife, their three sons, and their wives. Modern, highly learned scientists have produced amazing, irrefutable evidence of there having been a universal flood in the past, as well as the great changes it brought about. Henry Morris in his book, **Scientific Creationism**, states that there were *"two great worldwide changes imposed by God on His original creation. The first was when He cursed the ground for man's sake* (Gen. 3:17). *The second was when He was forced to say, '...behold, I will destroy them with the earth*' (Gen. 6:13)." Referring to the flood, he stated that it *"changed the structure of the earth's atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere, as formed in creation week*." Morris also stated that *"the flood was the greatest visitation of actual death the world has experienced since time began*." But let us not forget, the flood was God's judgment **against sin**!

Because of sin, multitudes will "spend eternity" in hell! Jesus said *"do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body **in hell**"* (Matt. 10:28). Referring to both heaven and hell, concerning heaven Jesus said *"there are **few** who find it,"* whereas with reference to *"the way that leads to destruction,...there are **many** who go in by it*," Matt. 7:13-14.

Every person, by the example he sets, can influence others to sin! Regarding this point, the apostle Paul said, *"Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits,"* I Cor. 15:33. Multitudes have "blood on their hands," because their behavior influenced others to sin! In a real sense, sin is vastly more contagious (and deadly) than the Corona Virus ever could be!

Conclusion: Much more could be said about Sin as "the worst of all pandemics;" however the irony of it all lies in the fact that multitudes are paranoid with regards to COVID-19, which <u>might</u> affect them and of which over 99% of the ones infected will recover, but are **indifferent to sin** which they have <u>already contacted </u>and because of which they will be eternally punished unless they seek the forgiveness which only Jesus can provide! God has complete knowledge of sin, its causes and its consequences, so He, in love, sent His *"only begotten Son"* (John 3:16), who died upon that cruel cross to pay our sin debt, Who was buried and raised from the dead, thereby providing the *"gospel"* (I Cor. 15:1-4), the good news that sinners, upon obedience thereunto, can be cleansed of sin, redeemed, forgiven, and even adopted into His Own spiritual family! Friend, have you obeyed the gospel? If not, let us study with you, let us encourage you to "come to Jesus," so that you can be rescued from "the worst pandemic" in human history!   —B. Witherington

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