

# The Corona Chronicle

West Worthing Evangelical Church Rugby Road.

**Sunday May 3rd**

[www.westworthingevangelical.co.uk](http://www.westworthingevangelical.co.uk)

Being Church while the Corona Virus emergency is on

## **“Not with a bang but a whimper”?**

Conspiracy theories are alive and well and if you heard David Ike speaking on the radio recently you will be in no doubt that the present situation in our world and our society provides a fertile ground for such theorists. It is always so easy for people to let loose their favourite obsessions in any time of upheaval.

It is a salutary reminder to Christians to be careful what conclusions **we** draw from the advent of Covid-19. For example, is this pandemic an act of judgement from God upon a world which consistently rejects and ignores him? Some would say so. But perhaps we should not be too precipitate in drawing that conclusion for there seems no evidence of specific targeting as one might expect but rather an unfocused, wide and indiscriminate outreach.

What we can certainly say is that this pandemic is a signal reminder to us all that we live in a ruined world caused by humanity’s original rebellion against God, which opened the door to all the ills and suffering that mankind experiences. In that sense it does remind us that we live in a judged world and we all need the love and mercy of God that we can only find through the Lord Jesus Christ who, in his death, plumb the depths of human suffering when he took upon himself all our rebellion and sin and paid the penalty for it. That same Jesus, who conquered not only sin but death itself, now stands powerfully able to pilot us through this life with all its dangers and into the next one.

Greta Thunberg, the young Swedish woman, has passionately warned against the possible destruction of the planet by our lifestyles which increase global warming.

(At the moment it would appear that the climate is doing rather better than humanity!) Similarly, some Christians too wonder whether this pandemic betokens the return of Jesus and the end of this present world.

Here, too, caution is necessary for history is littered with examples of believers who not only asked the same question about some great catastrophe occurring in their own time but made authoritative claims for their speculations only to find their hopes or claims dashed. Both the Gospel writers, Matthew and Mark, record the warning of Jesus himself that all sorts of fearful events and calamities will happen throughout time “but the end is not yet”.

In his work “The Hollow Men” T.S. Eliot wrote “This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper”. The Bible, however, shows the end not as a despairing failure but as a magnificent, transforming reshaping of this world into a glorious and perfect world, totally unspoilt by sin and disease, and peopled by all who have trusted in Jesus.

The best response we can make then at this time is to live a life of practical love and compassion and to share the only message that offers to all security in the mercy of God.

Dennis R. Read

## 2 Samuel 24.

**King David had a great Army and an extended Kingdom. In this final chapter of 2 Samuel we read that David commits an unspecified sin that may have been trusting in his military might rather than on God. We read that he orders a census of those who are able to bear arms.**

God by His nature is obliged to punish David's sin. is given three choices. Three years of famine. Three months of being chased by his enemies or three days of plague. David chooses the plague that kills thousands.

When the plague ends. God instructs David to buy a threshing floor on a hilltop overlooking Jerusalem. The place where later Solomon would build a temple.

To learn lessons for today from this story. It is a narrative account and bad doctrine can often come from looking at a narrative account and not comparing it with other scriptures. But there are certain principles that we can take.

**Disease, famine, pestilence have come into the world as a result of the fall. Sometimes we are sick because of our own individual sin but it is not necessarily so.**

**In the account although David wanted to suffer the consequences of his sin it was the 70,000 who died.**

**We live in a fallen world and whether Christian or not we shall never live this life without suffering.**

Another lesson to be learnt from this passage of scripture.

We can become too proud and depend on our human might, placing God as being irrelevant in the way we govern our nation. God in His mercy will expose our weaknesses. We must pray for the leaders of our nations. That God would bring them to repentance as I believe He is doing. That they might seek God's wisdom in dampening down the pandemic. In this story there is a balance between God's sovereignty.

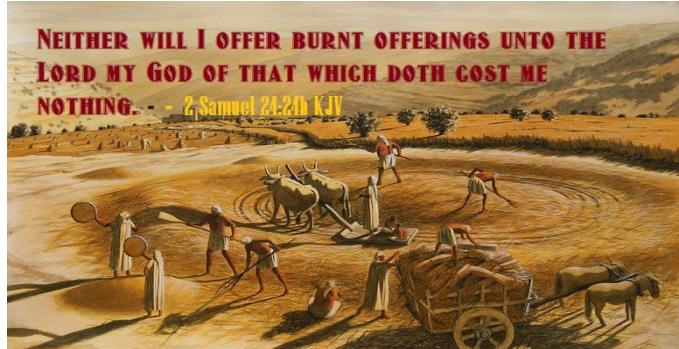
Nothing is outside His control and human responsibility. Governments and ourselves have a responsibility to not extend the virus and to care for those in need. David was concerned for all those who were suffering. David saw that he had done wrong, we read in 2 Samuel that he was a man of conscience. When he fell into sin he was stricken with remorse and humbled himself and repented of his sin asking God to forgive him. (Psalm 51).



As Israel has been a small nation over three Thousand years. She must rely on the Founder Almighty God. She had to learn to trust the living God who is the key to her survival. In this account God in His rich mercy would be her Teacher. God was training His people.

David's repentance and his subsequent buying a threshing floor to build an Altar that would later in Solomon's temple prefigure a Greater Altar. The coming of the Messiah the Lord Jesus who would die for our sins and bring in the New Covenant and eventually the New Heaven and the New Earth without the result of the fall suffering and disease.

David Page



## **Although we may not appreciate fully what God is seeking to teach his people during this time for years to come, it is already possible to suggest some lessons we are learning:**

- As we are unable to gather physically as churches, God is perhaps training us to appreciate the vital importance of the church community and making meeting together a priority;
- As we feel our individual weakness and vulnerability, God is perhaps training us to repent of our self-dependence and to learn to live by faith and prayer;
- As the vulnerable are in self-isolation for a long period, God is perhaps training us to care for others and put their needs ahead of our own;
- As we find ourselves restricted in our homes and communities, God is perhaps training us to gain a renewed evangelistic heart for our neighbours;
- As we find ourselves confined at home with spouses and children, parents, or other relatives, God is perhaps training us to deepen our relationships and put right any unresolved tensions or distance that may have damaged them;
- As we find ourselves unable to do many of the things we have taken for granted, God is perhaps training us to value what really matters in life and forcing us to give up our consumerism and idolatry;
- As we find ourselves threatened by something that is affecting the whole of society, God is perhaps training us to value the government he has placed over us to ensure order and protect us;
- As we find ourselves with time on our hands, God is perhaps training us to regain a habit of daily prayer and bible reading;
- As we find ourselves in awe of the dedication and sacrifice of healthcare workers and those who are performing essential jobs that sustain life, God is perhaps training us to re-evaluate who we regard as heroic and freeing us from our adulation of over-paid celebrities and sports stars;
- As we feel the fear of death and frailty of life, God is perhaps training us to appreciate the assurance of the gospel hope of resurrection and liberating us from the unconscious fear that prevents us from living life for him to the full with joyful confidence in the future that awaits us;

- As we sense that the lock-down is going to last longer than we first imagined, God is perhaps training us in the virtues of patience and long-suffering;
- As we begin to understand the devastating impact that the virus will have in less developed countries of the world, God is perhaps training us to regain our passion for world mission and to care for our poorer brothers and sisters around the world.

**No doubt there are many other things that God is teaching us and our church. We need to have faith that God is acting for our good, and that he is confirming his love to us through these afflictions. If we understand this it will change the way that we respond to this crisis.**

John Stevens  
FIEC Resources

## **BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WORD SCRAMBLE**

1. XOEUDS: \_\_\_\_\_
2. EINEGSS: \_\_\_\_\_
3. TICLEVUIS: \_\_\_\_\_
4. EAEHNIMH: \_\_\_\_\_
5. HTSREE: \_\_\_\_\_
6. CTSESEECLIAS: \_\_\_\_\_
7. ASIIASH: \_\_\_\_\_
8. SUOHJA: \_\_\_\_\_
9. ICAMH: \_\_\_\_\_
10. IODBAAH: \_\_\_\_\_
11. EPIZNHHAA: \_\_\_\_\_
12. GAGAHI: \_\_\_\_\_
13. ZEAR: \_\_\_\_\_
14. BUMRNES: \_\_\_\_\_
15. OUMENOETDRY: \_\_\_\_\_
16. HUTR: \_\_\_\_\_



## 1 Samuel 24.

The Lord as our Teacher in times of suffering.

### Prayer

Prayer of Bishop Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which you have given us, for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us. Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

### Hymn

Teach me Thy way, O Lord,  
Teach me Thy way;  
Thy gracious aid afford,  
Teach me Thy way.  
Help me to walk aright;  
More by faith, less by sight;  
Lead me with heav'nly light,  
Teach me Thy way.

When doubts and fears arise,  
Teach me Thy way;  
When storms o'erspread the skies,  
Teach me Thy way.  
Shine through the cloud and rain,  
Through sorrow, toil, and pain;  
Make Thou my pathway plain,  
Teach me Thy way.

Long as my life shall last,  
Teach me Thy way;  
Where'er my lot be cast,  
Teach me Thy way.  
Until the race is run,  
Until the journey's done,  
Until the crown is won,  
Teach me Thy way.

## Bible Reading 2 Samuel 24

### Pray to God with each sunrise.

"Father, thank you for this new day. Though I don't know all the challenges I'll face, I know You will be with me and You are my hope. You are my strength. You will give me wisdom as I seek Your perspective in Your Word. I pray for those who are hurting or lonely today—that you will comfort them. I pray for those who are ill—that you will heal them. I pray for those who are concerned about what may come in the next uncertain hours—that you will grant them peace as they trust You. Thank you for being our safe haven and solid refuge because of the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit working in us. Amen."

### Pray to God before falling asleep.

"Dear Father God, thank you for being my help today—perhaps in ways I have not seen. You have guided and protected me, cared for and comforted me. In this crisis and in every struggle in life, You have shown Yourself faithful. You are the God of Hope, and I'm thankful tonight for joy and peace in Your presence. I pray again for my family and friends in need, and for others who are also hurting or lonely tonight. If they know You, please be their refuge and strength, Lord. And if they don't know You, I ask You to use their tough circumstances to draw them and show them their need for salvation in Jesus. I am confident You will abide with me in the days ahead and will ultimately take me to live with You forever. You are sovereign, good, loving and kind, Lord, and I praise Your worthy name. Amen."