

Answered by the Elders

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Is it right to cancel church? Aren't we disobeying the Bible?

Answered by Walt Williamson. Obeying God is at the heart

of this issue so let's look in the Bible for what God says. We gather together to worship God through reading his word, hearing what it means as it is preached, singing songs of praise to God, and for fellowship with other believers. This is so important that we are told to meet together. Be honest, how much time apart from church do you actually spend worshipping God. In addition, many people were not literate throughout history and the bible was not available in their language if they could read. They would not have had the opportunity to hear God's word apart from the worship service. It is God's word that shows us our depravity, the consequences of our sin, and the only remedy for sin through Jesus Christ.

There is a rich history of civil disobedience by Christians and those who love God. It is ongoing by Christians in many countries today. Let's look at two of these times that are in the bible and examine why.

- Daniel 3. Read the whole chapter and see that the Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego disobeyed King Nebuchadnezzar and refused to bow down to the golden image that he had made and worship it. They were obedient to God even though they got thrown into a furnace because they disobeyed the king. They knew God's laws that were given to Moses and obeyed God over obeying the King. See Exodus 20:1-5. God was glorified by delivering them from the furnace.
- Acts 4. Peter and John were arrested because they were

teaching and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. When they were brought before the rulers, elders, scribes, and Chief Priest, they were threatened and told to stop speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus. They said no, we will listen to God instead of you. After they were released, they went to other Christians and prayed and worshipped God with them. God showed his approval by shaking the place where they gathered filling all of them with the Holy Spirit.

In each of these biblical examples, the civil authorities are taking action to stop the worship of the true God to put in place worship of an idol or a system of works for salvation. In each case we see that civil disobedience that honored God was right. We need to be strong and courageous even to death and put God above all civil authority.

Now let's compare these examples with the actions taken by President Trump and Governor Inslee that required us to stop meeting together, including not meeting for worship. The intent is clear. It is intended to stop the spread of a deadly virus and in no way is there any attempt to target Christians or to stop the worship of God. The churches were not set apart for these closures. Many things are closed and millions are affected. As our leaders they have needed to make and communicate difficult and weighty decisions that they know will affect everyone so pray for them. Their actions are within their authority as leaders who are held responsible for the people they lead. So, what does the bible say about this?

- Romans 13:1-2 "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement."
- 1 Peter 2: 13-17. This passage also tells us to be subject to our leaders.

(Note that in the Romans passage that there is a penalty for resisting the authorities when they are acting in accordance with the will of God.)

We are obeying God by not meeting together and being subject to the civil authorities during this pandemic. I look forward to the time when we can meet together again face to face to worship.

Is the Coronavirus God's judgment on the world?

Answered by Bryan Krumdiack. Natural disaster, wars, death, tribulation and other difficulties are a result of the fall and sin entering the world in the beginning. (Gen. 3) The apostle Paul referred to this in his letter to the Romans. He said, *"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now"* (Romans 8:20-23). A study of history will quickly confirm this futility that the world has been subjected to. Floods, disease, plagues, pandemics, earthquakes, the list goes on. All show the futility this world has been subjected to.

In Luke 13 some men reported to Jesus about Herod killing some Galileans. Jesus used it as an opportunity to teach about tribulation and judgement. He said, *"Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:2-5). What Jesus is saying is that troubles and disasters occur in this fallen world. Those that die aren't any more deserving of judgement than the rest of the world. He's looking to the eternal consequences. *"...But*

unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

We don't know the mind of God in any specific incident (Rom 11:34). We cannot know whether a specific plague or pandemic is a judgement from God for some specific cause unless God has revealed that to us in scripture. God allows sickness, disease, and pandemics for His purposes, but this is a result of the fall and sin in the World. What we do know is that God is in sovereign control of the world (Rom 11:36, Isaiah 46:9-10)), that He has called upon all men to listen to Jesus (Matt 17:5) and He uses all things for good to those that love Him (Rom 8:28).

At a time when the unbelieving world is shaken up by a new pandemic and some are searching, we should be more like Christ in Luke 13. His concern was for His audience. *"...But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."* This should be our message to the world around us. We should take this time of upheaval to be more bold about sharing the gospel message with our neighbors, our friends, and the world because unless they repent and believe in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), they too will perish.

Is the Coronavirus pandemic from the book of Revelation?

Answered by Bryan Krumdiack

The book of Revelation describes the many judgements God will pour out on the earth during the time known as the Tribulation. This is a period of seven years during which God will judge the earth with all kinds of natural disasters, disease, death, and destruction. What this question is really asking is "Are we in the Tribulation yet?" The answer to that question is no.

The apostle Paul addressed a similar issue among the Thessalonians. Some false teachers had come into the Thessalonian church after Paul had left and were teaching "to the effect that the day of the Lord (the tribulation period) has come." (2 Thess. 2:2).

In response to that false teaching Paul tells the Thessalonians to "not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if

from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.” (2 Thess. 2:2). He tells them, “Let no one deceive you in any way. For it will not be, unless the departure comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of destruction, he who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself up as God. Don’t you remember that, when I was still with you, I told you these things? Now you know what is restraining him, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness already works. Only there is one who restrains now, until he is taken out of the way.” (2 Thess. 2:3-7). WEB

Paul has laid out events that must occur before the day of the Lord/Tribulation occurs.

- First, the departure, or some translations translate it apostasy, must happen.
- Second the man of sin, the antichrist, the beast of the book of Revelation, the lawless one, must be revealed before the day of the Lord/Tribulation begins.
- Third, the restrainer must be removed, “taken out of the way”.

All three of these necessary events are good studies on their own that we won’t go into here. The main point Paul was making and that I would reiterate, is that the three events have not occurred so we are not in the day of the Lord/Tribulation. The coronavirus is similar to some of the plagues in Revelation. So were the Bubonic plague, the Spanish flu, the Ebola outbreak, the earthquake and tsunami in south east Asia, and many more. It’s also similar to plagues in the Old Testament. But since we are not in the tribulation then the coronavirus is not from the book of Revelation.

As we go through troubles like the coronavirus be encouraged by Christ’s words, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

What if America is different after the Coronavirus passes?

Answered by Bruce Anderson. I don’t know what America will be like after the Coronavirus passes. I can only speculate. God knows. I believe that America was different after 911, as more people went to church and prayed and came together to defend our country. I heard Christians referring

to 2 Chronicles 7:14 “and 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, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” But the praying and going to church did not last very long. People seemed to go back to their own ways soon after everything seemed safer for them. I believe that God’s desire is that in times of sorrow and testing, that people would not perish, but to come to repentance. (2 Pet. 3:9)

I pray that America will be different. I pray that the people of America will repent of their sins, that it’s churches will get back to sitting under God’s inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16), not above it, where they pick and choose what fits into their watered down messages. That the pure Word centered gospel will be preached. That America’s Pastor’s would preach on God’s holiness and justice and man’s sin and repentance, and stop preaching empty, feel good, self help messages. That Pastor/Elders in each church would shepherd their flocks using Christ’s example, as He loves His church, and gave His life for us. I pray that revival would spread throughout our country and the world, even faster than the Coronavirus! That the fear and reverence of God would be back in our churches, so that we will be able to stand in His presence with pure hearts. That we would serve Him with all our hearts, and boldly share His glorious gospel throughout our great country and to all the world. (2 Tim. 4, Mat. 28:19,20)

If people in this crisis are prepared to meet God, if they have repented of their sins and put their faith in God’s Son Jesus Christ, who bore their sins in His body on the cross and made them righteous in God’s sight. And believe that He was buried and on the 3rd day and rose from the dead victorious, sealing our redemption, proving that He is God, all according to the Scriptures. Then their hearts will be right in His sight, and they will be ready to meet their God, if their conversion was real, shown by their walk with Him.

God knows what America will be like after the Coronavirus. He knows all things and His plan is perfect. He will use this virus for His own glory (Rom. 8:28) May His name be praised!

Romans 11:33-34 says; "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and unfathomable His ways! FOR WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNCELOR?" (Isaiah 40:13)

If America is different after the Coronavirus, God will remain the same. It says in Hebrews 13:8 that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." He is the only one who knows the future of America and His plan is perfect and right on schedule.

Where is your trust, if America is different after the Coronavirus?

Our ultimate trust should be in our unchangeable God and His Word. If our trust is in this country and ourselves, like a ship in a storm, the anchor could drag and we could end up on the rocks. But if our hope is in Him and His Word, His anchor and His chain, we will never be moved. We are safe and secure in Him! (Ps. 91:2)