

Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

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Confronting Our Coronavirus Fears

While the toll of the Coronavirus keeps on growing, we recall disease outbreaks of the past. An influenza pandemic in 1918 killed an estimated 50 million people. Other outbreaks include the SARS outbreak of 2002-03, the Swine (H1N1) flu outbreak of 2009, and the Ebola virus outbreak of 2014. All were eventually brought under control.

While the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a dangerous disease, the majority of the cases are mild, and most people recover from it. Still, over 200,000 Americans have died and everyone needs to take precautions to contain the spread of the virus, and to protect those who are most vulnerable to it. This means following the instructions made by our health professionals and local, state, and national leaders.

To combat the spread of COVID-19, we have seen many school, store, amusement park and business closing. Travel restrictions have been put into effect. Many have been told to work from home, if possible. American workers have been laid off at an unprecedented rate causing many to become anxious about their financial future.

How are we coping with this? As Jesus stated in Luke 10:29-37, we are all neighbors and therefore, in this situation together. If we want true peace in the midst of this experience, we find it in the Word of God, the Bible. To his disciples, Jesus said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled,

neither let it be afraid." Jesus was at peace as he faced his trial and crucifixion because he had God's peace abiding in his heart.

God's peace can help us overcome the chaos, sorrow and pain in the world BECAUSE this peace is based upon God's power and love towards us. We can find this peace if we focus our heart and mind on God and His promises. (Isa. 26:3) God's peace is based on our faith in the love, power and wisdom of God. (Isa. 46:10; Eph. 6:10) That same great power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead is now operating on the behalf of those who believe in Him and His son, Jesus—Eph. 1:19,20

God's plan for man's salvation promises peace to all mankind. Jesus died to take away the sin of the world and free all from the curse of death. (Heb. 2:9,14,15) The result is Jesus returns to establish his earthly kingdom that will bless all the families of earth. (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2; Gen. 12:3) The prophet Malachi wrote about this kingdom saying, "The sun of righteousness [Jesus] shall arise with healing in his wings." (Mal. 4:2) In that kingdom, God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." (Rev. 21:4) The current COVID-19 pandemic is an evidence of the nearness of that kingdom.

To learn more, see our offer for the free booklet *Why God Permits Evil* on the back page of this newsletter. ■

Amos (burden-bearer)

Amos came from a time when several prophetic figures would arise. His ministry occurred during the reign of Jeroboam II (c. 776-763 B.C.), who was the son of King Jehoash of the Jehu dynasty. During the reign of these kings, the Northern Kingdom of Israel enjoyed a time of great prosperity. The threat of war was removed, and a great cultural, social, and economic revival took place. People moved from the country to the city, and this prosperity led to nearly unprecedented social corruption. Drunkenness, violence, moral corruption, and idolatry were rampant. As a result, Jewish society collapsed. Amos came upon this scene and his words brought a stern denunciation to the people.—Amos 2:4-16

Through Amos, the Lord foretold of a coming time of trouble and retribution upon Judah, Israel, and the adjoining nations. These nations, Moab, Syria, Philistia, etc., had been subjugated by and incorporated into Israel under David and Solomon. Because of their close identity with Israel, they were made subjects of this prophecy. (Amos 1:2-15) The principle burden of the prophecy, however, concerns Israel, the ten tribes, and Judah, the two tribes. They were the Lord's covenanted people, the seed of Abraham.—Gen. 12:7; Ex. 19:5

Although Amos warned the people, he was not an inhabitant of the Northern Kingdom. He came from a small mountain village, Tekoa, which lay to the south of Jerusalem. (Amos 1:1,2) He was a herdsman of goats. (Amos 7:14,15) Amos protested against the luxurious and careless living of Samaria, and the elaborate offerings made at the shrines of Beersheba, and Gilgal. He asserted the moral jurisdiction of God over all nations and warned the Israelites that they should repent. He instructed them to renew their spiritual relationship to God, or they would fall victim to an invader from the east.

Rather than God's favor making Israel's heart loyal to him, they continually resisted his favor, and were unfaithful to him. Therefore, the Lord foretold the troubles he would bring upon Israel because of their sins and sought to make them understand that their judgments of the future were matters of divine providence.—Amos 3:1,2; 6:11-14 ■

The Awakening of Lazarus

The story of Lazarus is found in John 11:1-44. Lazarus was the brother of Martha and Mary and lived in Bethany, near the city of Jerusalem. His sister Mary would later anoint Jesus' feet with very valuable ointment and wipe them with her hair. (John 12:1-8) Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus as dear friends and his disciples.—John 11:5

Jesus had left their home and was across the Jordan, about thirty miles away when the sisters sent word to Jesus concerning the illness of their brother. "He whom thou lovest is sick." (vs. 3) Since Jesus was a special friend, they thought it proper to send the Master word respecting Lazarus but not proper to ask Jesus to heal him. They knew of Jesus' power to heal. They had faith that if Jesus would help strangers, certainly he would be glad to assist his dear friend. They also manifested their faith and submission as to how the answer would come—whether Jesus would simply send word or come in person.

Upon hearing their news Jesus responded, "This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God." (vs. 4) Jesus was not saying Lazarus would not die but rather *(Continued on next page)*

Envisioning New Life

With the uncertainty of the events taking place in the world today, and the fear of what tomorrow may bring, the thoughts of Christians should turn to Jesus for guidance. (Luke 9:23, Matt. 11:28) We remember Jesus' words, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," when he called Peter and Andrew to his service. (Matt. 4:19) They would go from fishing the literal sea for their living, to fishing the restless sea of humanity. This descriptive wording depicts the great call to truth seekers to leave the waves of ignorance, superstition, and degradation which have overcome mankind. These are called by the Lord to "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life."—Rom. 2:7

Our thoughts are taken from Ezekiel 47:9, which describes the events that will take place after the call to glory, honor and immortality is closed. (Ezek. 44:1) When the called out class, the church or bride of Christ is complete, the marriage of the Lord and his bride takes place. (Rev. 19:7,8) Then, the Lord shall enter into his heavenly Temple, sit upon the throne of his glory and the waters of life will flow from the throne of God.—Matt. 25:31; Ezek. 47:1; Rev. 22:1

After the earthly kingdom of Christ is established, the waters of truth and the blessings of refreshment and restitution (Acts 3:19-21) will flow to all mankind. These blessings should not be confused with the good news of the Gospel message which is being proclaimed now. (Luke 2:10,11) These blessings of Christ's Millennial kingdom will be for all mankind. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." (Psalm 46:4) This important part of God's plan of salvation is shown in the words, "Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem."—Zech. 14:8

This stream of the water of life will flow to cover all the earth, whose fallen condition is represented by the wilderness eastward from Jerusalem. Wherever the waters went, they brought vitality, refreshment, healing, and life. The "water of life, clear as crystal," (Rev. 22:1) represents the blessings of truth, refreshment and restitution which will issue forth from the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of Messiah, and bring life to mankind. ■

The Awakening of Lazarus *(continued from previous page)*

the end result would not be continuous death. Instead, Jesus knew that he would awaken Lazarus from the dead. After tarrying for two days, he announced that they would go to Judea. (vs. 7) When the disciples questioned this, he told them that Lazarus had fallen asleep [died] but Jesus would awake him from that sleep. (vs. 7,8,11) The disciples misunderstood Jesus' statement and so in verse 14, Jesus plainly said, "Lazarus is dead."

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. After asking that the stone covering the tomb to be removed, Jesus prayed to God, and then cried in "a loud voice, Lazarus come forth." (vss. 39-43) Lazarus came forth, and went home with his sisters.

The awakening of Lazarus from the "sleep" of death was a glimpse of the power and purpose of God for the liberating of all mankind from the curse of sin and death in his own appointed time through Christ and his earthly kingdom.—John 5:25; I Cor. 15:1-26 ■

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Calendar of Events

Orlando Bible Students Convention

October 24, 25, 2020

Convention on Zoom
Meeting ID 991 874 1914.
Meeting Password 1874

For further information contact:

Orlando Bible Students

Phone: (407) 695-6815

Or contact us at our website:

www.orlandobible.org

The Orlando Bible Students is a non-denominational group that meets for Bible studies and devotions on Sunday mornings at the South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL and in area homes during the week.

For further information call: (407) 695-6815

Special Offer

We would like to send you a complimentary copy of the booklet,

Why God Permits Evil

This booklet describes why God allowed man to disobey, reap the resulting penalty of death, and how He will ultimately teach man righteousness through Christ's kingdom.

For your **FREE** booklet, call (407) 695-6815 and request a copy, or fill in your address below and mail this coupon to:

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