

## ISAIAH 26:20: WISE COUNSEL FOR THESE LAST DAYS

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast" (Isaiah 26:20.)

I am convinced we are in the beginning stages of the last days as prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24. The current coronavirus pestilence has caught the world by surprise, and woefully unprepared. The last time a pestilence paralyzed the world population to the extent seen today was the Spanish flu of 1918-1920, a hundred years ago. But, comparatively speaking, the coronavirus is ten times worse than the flu according to Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Coronavirus is more subtle than the seasonal flu (influenza) in that an infected person can be asymptomatic (showing or experiencing no symptoms.) Unaware they are carriers of this virulent virus, asymptomatic people can innocently infect others such as family members, co-workers, and friends and acquaintances.

The draconian measures city, state, and federal governments have been forced to enact remind me of the 1950s Sci-Fi movie "The Day the Earth Stood Still." It tells the story of an alien who came to earth to warn governments that their constant wars and violence pose a threat to alien civilizations. In order to demonstrate that he has the ability to destroy the earth, he devised a global, but harmless catastrophe. He stopped all machines, vehicles, and devices. In like manner, a microscopic virus devoid of intelligence has brought the globe to her knees. States such as California and New York have ordered nonessential workplaces to close and workers to remain at home. Many other states have imposed curfews. (The curfew in New Jersey where I live is from 8 PM TO 5 AM.) All stores with exceptions such as food stores and pharmacies have been closed. The president has advised gatherings no larger than ten people. Broadway, movie theaters, gyms, fast food restaurants, except for delivery and take-out, have been closed. Professional sports agencies like the NBA (National Basketball Association,) NFL (National Football League,) and soccer have canceled their seasons. Many churches have closed their doors opting instead to Livestream their worship services.

The coronavirus pestilence has been sent by God, or at the very least, allowed to inflict mankind because humanity has forgot God (Psalm 9:17.) Man has determined to go his own way and make his own decisions as though God does not

exist. What God has condemned such as homosexuality and transgenderism is openly embraced and actually celebrated and encouraged. This devastating pandemic has been sent to remind humanity God is not pleased and He is in control. Despite our best efforts, many are suffering and dying. And like earthquakes and tornadoes, man is powerless against coronavirus despite his advanced technology. This pandemic should serve as a wakeup call to the ungodly. It is but a relatively mild foretaste (judgment) of what is to come as foretold in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation.

Isaiah 26:20 echoes what our government has advised all individuals to do - hide. It reads "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." But why should people quarantine or isolate themselves in their homes in the midst of this pestilence? Verse 21 answers that question. "For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." As He did in the Egyptian Passover, God is moving through the land in judgment today. The best protection is isolation. What about the overly spiritual who say that believers should just trust in God with respect to church gatherings? Satan tried to tempt Jesus to throw Himself from the pinnacle of a temple (Matthew 4:5-6.) Jesus responded by quoting the Old Testament (Psalm 91:11-12.) "...Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7b.) There is a time for saints to gather themselves in a building for corporate worship ("church.") And there is a time to refrain from such physical gatherings. This is such a time. God has given his people common sense and wisdom. Physically gathering ourselves together in these last days is tempting God.

Additionally, believers who are naive and ignorant of Scripture do more harm than good. Despising good counsel such as that given by Isaiah 26:20 cannot be justified by answering "trust in God." A believer trusts in God by obeying Him and "rightly dividing" all Scripture. In regards to the coronavirus judgment sweeping through the land today, trusting in God means taking the counsel of Isaiah 26:20 personally. To neglect this is nothing short of selfishness. How so? This deadly pestilence can be caught without displaying any symptoms. Ignoring isolation means putting the most vulnerable of us such as the elderly and those with compromised immune systems and underlying health issues at risk which could be fatal to them (our children and parents and grandparents.) No Christian would ever just think of himself and neglect the welfare of others.

Isaiah 26:20 is for today. It is counsel to isolate ourselves against the deadly coronavirus. As important as isolation is, to view this pandemic as a judgment is

also important. No evildoer will escape the wrath of God. Therefore God is calling for the nations to repent of their sins. As I stated earlier, worse is yet to come. No one will escape. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" (Acts 17:30.)