

STRAIGHTWAY

“AND STRAIGHTWAY THEY FORSOOK THEIR NETS, AND FOLLOWED HIM” (MARK 1:18).

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The World's Pandemic Mandate on the Coronavirus: What Does It Mean?

Dr. H. T. Spence

We have come to a most crucial hour in the history of the world that has overwhelmingly pressed upon humanity an unprecedented global panic. This consciousness now borders on mass hysteria fed by both the news media and the politicization of the liberal faction of government and “deep-state” powers. Transcending just a single nation, this consciousness is affecting all of humanity. We have been catapulted into a global aggressive takeover. What does this mean for the Christian? How should we then live as we face the world's mandate regarding the coronavirus known as COVID-19?

It must be remembered that coronaviruses have been common among us, contributing to both minor colds as well as severe respiratory diseases. This new coronavirus COVID-19 is a new strain of this common virus. But why the panic? Why the intense obsession over it? Much of the world's

fearful reasoning lies in the fact that so much is unknown. Only recently has a test been developed to even detect it, while many other viruses continue among us with no tests.

Doctors tell us that we do not catch the same viral cold twice because our bodies build up immunity to each unique cold. Each new cold we get is a new strain of the cold virus. Each season, new flu viruses arise; where is the hysteria over so many who die from these viruses? Politicians who know nothing about medicine have been convinced this is a strange phenomenon coming out of the abyss of the unknown. Such leaders stand before this nation as medical professionals (and news media) and influence their thinking about what the country should do at this time. Amidst this great unknown, these medical professionals have now been given unusual authority to run the country.

The Present Facts

I am not writing this article as an expert in the medical profession. I am writing as a Christian and a minister of the Gospel for over fifty years. My intent is to present a biblical observation of what seems to be the present concern.

Let us first note where we are statistically concerning this unknown strain of the coronavirus creeping in among the nations. At the writing of this article, the current statistics concerning the spread of this virus are as follows. The world was first informed of the virus from China on December 29, 2019. It seems the Chinese were struggling with it before then, but they finally made it public information on this date. As to the statistics, they vary depending on the source and the

acknowledgment that these are only confirmed cases. As of the writing of this article, 205,452 allegedly have contracted the virus; 8,248 have died; and 82,091 have recovered. China has had 81,102 with 3,241 deaths. Italy ranks second at 31,506 with 2,503 deaths. A great majority of Italy is an older generation, who are naturally more susceptible to the deadly effects of the virus due to lower immunity. Now, at the writing of this article, the entire country of Italy is on lockdown. Iran is third in the world with 17,361 and 1,135 deaths. Spain is ranked fourth, then Germany, South Korea, and France. The United States is now with 6,519 and 115 deaths.

There are 157 nations that have now been introduced to this new strain of coronavirus; however, most of these countries have 20 individuals or less who have been affected by it. We think of our brethren in Ghana, where, as of this writing, there are only seven reported cases in the nation including the two foreigners who brought it into Ghana.

However, as morbid as the coronavirus is being portrayed, we must remember it pales in comparison to the number of people who have died from the flu this year. For example, since October, influenza has infected as many as 45 million Americans and killed as many as 46,000 (CDC estimates). There is no panic over the flu

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O. Talmadge Spence, Founder

**H. T. Spence, Editor
President**

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crisis in our country. And then there are 647,000 who die from heart disease in America, marking 1 out of every 4 deaths in our country. Last year alone, cancer killed 606,880 in America. In our country approximately 39,000 people die yearly in automobile accidents, while an additional 4.4 million are injured in such accidents.

In the light of these sobering statistics, we once again wonder why the hysteria concerning this strain of the coronavirus has so consumed the media and the governments at this hour in our history. Once again it comes back to the unknown factors. How fast will it spread? Do we believe the fatality rate will be higher than the flu? Though we may say there is no known remedy for the virus at this time, yet there is also no known true remedy for the common cold.

The Pandemic Cry

The World Health Organization has now declared this event to be a pandemic crisis—an epidemic of global consequences. Although the term *pandemic* has been used for an epidemic over a large area of a nation or continent, this event is the first time the term *pandemic* has been applied to an event across the entire planet. Consequently, because of this magnitude of concern (and with the media feeding this panic moment of universal need), our governments are being forced to consider a *global* control of its people.

As we have observed, presently the highest number of cases in China totals 81,102. However, with a population of 1.5 billion, this virus has affected only 1 in 20,000. (If their propaganda is to be believed) they declare they have brought the curve of its progression down. To keep these numbers in perspective, 150 million Chinese would need to at least contract the COVID-19 illness to reach the same proportion of Americans who have contracted the flu this season (10% of its population).

But, dear reader, we must see beyond this medical scare of this so-called pandemic virus. We must consider what could come out of this event in the light of Scripture. As a Christian we must candidly back away from the panic and hysteria and ponder several questions:

1. Is this virus of the Devil to destroy the planet?
2. Is this of the Chinese government to control the medicine we buy from them (which they now have threatened to withhold from the USA)?
3. Is this being manipulated by the Democratic Party to destroy the presidency of Donald Trump in order to secure a socialistic takeover, where the government must step in to control our very existence for survival?

4. Is this virus of God?

As Christians we must acknowledge our country and the world are long overdue for judgment. Potentially this could be used as a prelude judgment upon the earth before the Great Tribulation Period. But whatever we conclude from the above questions, we must biblically acknowledge that God is ultimately behind this, permitting it for a reason.

Though we could give explanations for most of the calamities and crises of history, Scripture bears the infallible record that affliction, sickness, famine, pestilence, and drought recorded in biblical history were brought upon the nations by God Himself. There certainly have been unique dealings with individuals such as Job where Satan prompted his affliction. Nevertheless, God still had to give both *divine permission* for these afflictions as well as *divine limitations* to the extent the Devil could go. It must also be acknowledged that when Job spoke of his afflictions, he never mentioned the Devil; He always spoke only of God.

Yet, we must rise to a higher perspective which compels us to discern God's plan for the End Time. Before His Son comes to set up His kingdom, His plan necessitates that the Antichrist come forth to rule the world for at least a season. For Antichrist to come, something or some event must press him forward into the public consciousness.

A desperate world will welcome his solutions and unknowingly forward God's plan toward the "Day of Man" and the fulfilling of the "Times of the Gentiles."

The Powers of Dark Wisdom Arising

We must step back from the hysteria and panic of the moment and candidly consider what is happening at this hour throughout the world's governments. Though we respect Donald Trump and all that he is doing for our country in the light of this virus invasion, we are presently witnessing our nation, and all the nations of the earth, subtly manipulating mandates from the local, state, and federal levels as to how we are to live during these weeks (or perhaps months) of this crisis. These global mandates, under the guise of dealing with the coronavirus, are now globally closing both public and private schools and limiting worship services where attendance exceeds a certain number (in ranges from 100 to 10 persons). Even in Ghana, Africa, where we have several mission works, a mere four cases of the COVID-19 shut down the entire country. The government has closed all schools for thirty-days; attendance to churches, prayer meetings, and other congregant gatherings are now being forced to shut down.

Though we may certainly desire to be wise in these days, we must be

conscious of the biblical fact that we are living in prelude days of the coming of the Antichrist. Only a crisis of global magnitude will bring him to the forefront for world rulership. Yes, it will be in a global crisis so critical in the thinking of the nations that they will cry for such a “saviour” to rise and lead the nations through the crisis. It is becoming more and more evident, as governments exercise newer powers for control, that these preliminary days are preparing the world for state control which will be set in place before the Antichrist’s appearance.

The socialists running for president in the United States are calling for nationalization of the energy industry, of health care, and even of our financial markets in order to save the world from capitalism and the coronavirus. Back in 1986, President Ronald Reagan warned our country:

The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: “I’m from the government and I’m here to help.”

Crisis events are what permit the government to become more and more the controlling factor of our existence. Note New York Mayor Bill de Blasio’s recent words:

This is a case for a nationalization, literally, a nationalization of crucial factories and industries that could produce the medical supplies to prepare this country for what we need.

He also believes it is time to nation-

alize all the important sectors of the economy by taking over private industries and transitioning to a wartime economy. Already such mayors across America are mandating house confinement except for the imperative need of shopping for needed supplies. Curfews are being appointed for the sake of isolation of the virus. But in the throes of this present hysteria and fear of this virus, are all these mandates simply providing preliminary training for the implementation of a blueprint for mass manipulation by the governments around the world?

It is interesting to note that the decorated scientist Shiva Ayyadurai with four degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology believes the coronavirus pandemic is being used by the Deep State for its own purposes. Ayyadurai said on Twitter that “fear-mongering” over the outbreak is being used to push an agenda:

As an MIT PhD in biological engineering who studies and does research nearly every day on the Immune System, the coronavirus fear-mongering by the Deep State will go down in history as one of the biggest frauds to manipulate economies, suppress dissent, and push mandated medicine.

Ayyadurai said these words in response to President Donald Trump’s words of March 9, 2020:

The Fake News media and their partner, the democratic party, is doing

everything within its semi-considerable power (it used to be greater!) to inflame the CoronaVirus situation, far beyond what the facts would warrant. Surgeon General [has stated], "The risk is low to the average American."

Never did Ayyadurai say that the disease is a hoax; he merely noted that there are those in the government using the pandemic to frighten people into obedience.

Oh, dear reader, dare we contemplate what has happened in just the past week. What have we done?! We truly believe there is a crisis, and it is evident that this virus is spreading; furthermore, we truly sympathize with all who have been affected by this event. Nevertheless, this crisis will be used by the Devil's advocates to gain greater control of humanity and force an increased unanimity of the nations in the name of "health." We have handed the control of nearly everything in our lives to the government. They are telling us what to do with our children, where to go, when to go, how many can be present, whether we can or cannot worship our God in public.

Although the disease is certainly real, what does all of the intrusion of the government mean at this time on the eve of another election? Will this cause us to believe that for the sake of safety and health, a socialistic government is now our answer? Is this the way we will be caused to submit to

state powers? Although it may be that our President fears the intrusion of these governmental mandates, he also believes he will be viewed as a failure for not caring for America if he does not submit to the forces of socialism. We may have thought that the padlocking of our churches and schools would have been the way it all would have ended in our country. But a mutated virus has become a manipulative guise to restrain our public worship.

In this crisis, even prisoners are being released from some county and state prisons in order to prevent a catastrophe *in the event that* the virus were to reach their closed confinement. Such releases have been the vocal hope of the socialists running for president who have advocated the abolishment of the prison system. It is evident we are in the prelude of this socialistic potential. To slow down incarcerations, some municipalities are telling police not to arrest individuals for certain lesser crimes. This could include the looting of closed-down stores and even certain crimes against persons. There is the potential for a Pandora's box of evil to explode in some communities. Truly, this pandemic scare will plunge America into deeper liberated evil because of this judicial leniency permitted in the world of crime. God will have to have mercy on us. As a wicked, perverse nation we are without God, and thus we are without hope. May

Heaven have mercy in the light of our much-deserved judgment.

The Global Economy

In carefully observing prophecy describing the End Time, one of the greatest influential powers will be the global economy. This truly has become the number one burden of nations today. The Christian needs to discern that what is happening at this hour in world history will profoundly affect the economic powers of not only our nation but also the entire world. What will this media hysteria create in the realm of the recent victories by our President in lowering unemployment and the upswing of the economy in America? How will this pandemic profoundly affect the economy of the entire world? It is evident that the liberals and their socialist comrades are demonically bent to destroy what financial recovery the President has achieved. And with such a panic now, part of our country and the world could destroy what good economy seems apparent today. This may be the world crisis needed to radically change the whole concept of business, money, and the way we shop. The past conceptualization of business, employment, and government involvement may radically change overnight.

Let us note for a moment the powerful rippling effects of this global pandemic. Our President having closed all travel from Italy to America, over

90% of travel bookings to Italy have been canceled. Thirteen percent of Italy's net revenue comes from tourism, with 9% of that from America. The Italian economy is likely to falter even more than it already has over the rest of this year, given the long-term effect on their tourism industry. What will be needed to financially bail out Italy from this? Who will do so? What obligation will the more prosperous nations feel to assist in this mutual crisis?

Then there is the cruise-ship tourist industry that is now experiencing global cancellations months in advance. The airlines are registering massive cancellations, even within the continental USA. What will the overwhelming influence be economically on hotels, restaurants, museums, tours, etc.? What will small businesses experience when they are caught in the tidal wave of these cancellations and alterations of global life? Though perhaps companies like Amazon will no doubt increase their employment due to the increase of online shopping, massive layoffs of employees where jobs no longer need facilitating will be inevitable.

Congregant events are being shut down in all the compartments of professional sports, and tens of billions of dollars in revenue will be lost in the coming weeks. Stores will be closed because of the fear of public shop-

ping. And it has become evident that our President is under overwhelming pressure to underwrite all of this. The money will flow like a river, with the mocking response of many: "If you can do this for all of America, then we can implement all the social programs we want to provide for the country." Oh, the money it will necessitate to bail out all the businesses, including the personal income lost from this global crisis. This may be the time when a new economy concept will be introduced to eradicate the debt.

But another casualty is standing in the wings of our busy President. More and more the present crisis is forcing him to drop his administrative burden singularly for the country; he is now being pressed to speak from a global perspective. Our president's love for his country is one of the reasons why the liberals hate him. President Trump is not a globalist; he views the USA as his number one burden as president, not the world.

Nonetheless, this crisis may press him toward greater "global" thinking and governmental oneness. The previous administration was committed to a post-America, where we would become totally reliant on other nations in everything: energy, food, medicine, and even our very human existence. A post-America could easily be assimilated into a global governmental consciousness. The crisis we are facing is what

the globalists have been looking for. It is an ideal event to press all of the nations into global consciousness and economics where all come together for our very world survival.

A global crisis is needed for the Antichrist to be brought forth. Revelation 6 through 9 reveals powerful judgments that God will bring upon the whole earth. Only after these global events does the Antichrist appear. Though we do not believe we are in the Tribulation Period, we are fully persuaded by Scripture that this present unknown strain of the coronavirus is appointed of the Lord at this time. We dare not blame it on the Devil, or China, or Donald Trump. Though the Devil will always take advantage of any potential crisis found among humanity, a Sovereign God is bringing this to pass in order to accelerate the End-time plan for the culmination of the Day of Man, leading to the Man of Sin, which will then lead to the coming of Christ Who finally will set up His Kingdom. Will God use this crisis to bring the final overthrow of America with the last step leading it into a complete socialist government simply for survival? Will this be a final step when the government will become responsible for everything of man, including his physical and mental health, his postmodernist education, his food rationing, his appointed housing. All the nations being forced to such governmental control will lead

to authoritarian control, and finally, a coming one-world ruler.

The End Time (following the pattern of Genesis 6) will be consumed in the obsession of “the flesh” (6:3, 12, 13, 17). Note Satan’s words to God in Job 2:4, 5:

Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

By observing man for many centuries, Satan knew that this was true of man in general; if man is smitten to his bone, and he feels the fullness of pain, he will do anything. The great crisis of 9-11 in New York City and Washington D.C. pressed our government to take greater authority in overseeing its citizens’ security (especially regarding travel). Many times traveling through airports, they invade our luggage, our bodies, and our personal items. What will this present global crisis bring about concerning new government controls in our lives and economy? These changes by the government will be presented as the “need” for our health and homes. The closing down of schools will affect the breakfasts and lunches of children for whom the government provides. Will governments now take the meals to our homes, a further invading of our private lives?

We have also been alarmed to hear

of many public, influential leaders who have boldly denounced our President for calling a day of prayer recently. God is being denied, both in presence and in prayer. We must pray for the Lord’s soon coming.

Conclusion

When the Cold War with Russia ended, there came a widespread thawing in hostilities. The nations and their economies began the process of trying to conglomerate the separate nationalistic entities for more of a global economy. But the United States is now caught in this economic web of perplexity with China, Japan, and Russia, and even with the faltering NATO alliance. This present distress that has come upon the earth is philosophically demanding the nations of the earth to come together as a new world order. Although this call has certainly been demanded for many decades, now may be the prelude season for the coming of Antichrist. This crisis could plunge, not only the United States but also all other nations into a global recession affecting every compartment of the economy. We could be standing on the edge of a global economy crisis in which no one economy, no one nation, no one union will be able to extricate the world from its perilous troubles. The Bible predicts that such an era is coming. Fueled by the world’s economic convulsions, the only answer will seem to be the unification of the

nations under one economic system and one world ruler. Ironically, the country of China, from which this virus has allegedly originated, manufactures the majority of America's drugs and vaccines.

The world has entered the panic and the hysterical cry to be saved from an unknown virus. Is this global crisis the act of God pressing the world to come to the brink of the globalism that will lead to the coming of Antichrist? Perhaps we may have thought that such a unification of the nations under one economic system and a one world ruler would have come about by a process of gradual consolidation of wealth and power both nationally and globally. But such a prophetic reality could happen with a rise of global urgency as we are witnessing at this hour. And such a man may be simply standing in the wings of present world history, ready to make his entrance onto the stage of a desperate world. When he appears, the world will embrace him; he will have all the answers to the problems of mankind. And when the whole world is lauding his praises, he will rise in global power and unveil his Satanic plan that will include the destruction of all who will not fall down and worship him. A global crisis amidst a global economy will be the key to bring him into prominence. In the final three and one half years of Daniel's last week, no one will be able to buy or sell without his permission;

this will include medicine, surgeries, and the basic needs of existence. He will control all the finances and businesses of the world. The technology at that time will be so advanced, he will be able to control it all, of every nation and every individual.

May God grant us discernment in how we should live in these dark, desperate, and perilous times. It was said of the tribe of Issachar, that they "had understanding of the times," which is so important in this crucial hour. But also, it was said that they had understanding "to know what Israel ought to do." This too, is equally important. May God grant us both insights for the hour.

Postscript

Perhaps a distinction should be made between the plagues God's past preachers faced in their appointed day and the global crisis of our present day. Drawing from a biblical perspective, these past faithful ministers addressed their local congregations about local and regional crises. Martin Luther had to address the black plague that swept through Wittenberg, Germany in 1527 just as Charles Spurgeon preached concerning the cholera epidemic that erupted in London in 1854. They faithfully ministered to the needs of God's people at those times. In contrast, this coronavirus should be considered somewhat differently. Rather than a regional or continental crisis, this

virus is sweeping the entire planet. As a result, massive shifts are occurring throughout world governments that are influencing the control of all humanity. Our concern is beyond the virus or

plague itself. This crisis has inspired and facilitated much preliminary work that will need to be established before the coming of Antichrist.

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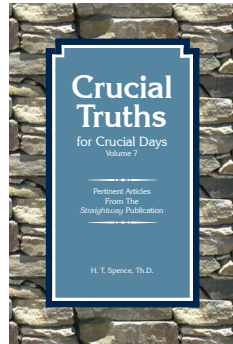
Crucial Truths for Crucial Days Volume 7

Dr. H. T. Spence

Crucial Truths for Crucial Days is a compilation of articles taken from "Straightway," the published voice of the Christian Purities Fellowship, an outreach arm of Foundations Bible College.

The word *crucial* in its primary meaning suggests something critical, severe, or trying. Its secondary meaning, "cross-shaped," actually stems from the Latin term for *cross*. The author believes we are living in the most crucial days of human history; these days are critical, trying, and severe.

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Our Present Night in History

Dr. H. T. Spence

The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come (Isaiah 21:11, 12).

Since the Fall, man has been in the night season of history; we Christians with anticipation are awaiting the coming day. There is a scriptural sense in which we as Christians are of the day (Rom. 13:11–14). This “day” is also found in the scriptural context of the second coming of Christ for His saints (2 Pet. 1:20) as well as in the context of Christ setting up His kingdom. Thus, though we are children of the day, we anticipate the dawning of the Day of Christ in history.

When the New Testament speaks of the End Time, it concerns three important aspects: (1) the End Time of the church, which the Rapture will resolve; (2) the End Time of the Tribulation Period, which the Battle of Armageddon will resolve; and (3) the End Time of the Millennium, which the Battle of Gog and Magog will resolve. Following these events, history enters into the Eternal Golden Age of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21 & 22).

Presently, we are living in the End Time of the church which will transi-

tion to the Tribulation Period. This season is my appointed generation, and I must discern my night without allowing its powers to affect my day life in Christ. Our present night season is preparing for the coming of two great figures for this earth—the Antichrist and the False Prophet. These men will be global leaders. Antichrist will lead political globalism for a season, and the False Prophet will lead religious globalism. Just before their appearance in history, there will be a generation of God’s saints living and preaching. It is therefore most important that God’s watchmen are in touch with heaven to give to God’s people the condition and the unfolding of their appointed night season and how they are to live in this night season. The saints do cry, “Watchman, what of the night?!” Although we know the morning is coming, we are presently in the deepening darkness of man’s fallen night.

Our Present Night

The year 2020 concludes the second decade of the 21st century. As a minister of the Gospel, we have been warning our dear people since the last half of 2019, that the year 2020 would be the most volatile year against our country, against the ministry, against the Christian home, and against

Christian individuals. We called them to prepare spiritually for this year. If we are not able to keep up with the footmen in our trials and testings of life, we will not be able to keep up with the coming horsemen. If we are failing in the land of peace, what will we do at the time of the swelling of Jordan? Such were the words of warning by the Lord to Jeremiah (Jer. 12:5). Having now entered 2020, we have already met the swelling of the Jordan nationally and, no doubt, in the testings of our families.

In 2016, God shockingly brought to America a president that even surprised the world. Since then, he has become the most hated man in our history by the liberals. It was strongly believed that Hillary Clinton would be the winning ticket; all the polls and news media predicted her the guaranteed winner. But God radically brought in Donald Trump, this non-politician, this non-politically correct businessman, who publicly declared he would drain the political swamp of Washington of its evil beasts and uncover the powerful deep state that behind the scenes was controlling our government and country. Mr. Trump was like no other man who had ever entered the presidency of these United States. Whatever one views him to be, he has been a contender for the Constitution of these United States and openly against globalism and a one-world government.

He has become the most hated man on the planet because of his natural ideology and presupposition in the old guard of capitalism, constitutionalism, and patriotism. Though he has been married three times, he has been one of the strongest presidents for the family and the dignity of the office of the presidency. He strongly believes in America's values. Yet this man has commenced his fourth year in office with the boldest global decision he has ever had to make. He knows it may be costly for America and even the world.

From one direction he has the liberals (who hate this country) rising up against him with intense, growing hatred, believing he has entered a mad career. And then, from another direction there are the Conservatives and those who love this country praising him for doing what previous administrations would not do. January 3, 2020, this president ordered the assassination of the leader of global terrorism Qasem Soleimani and within hours launched another strike against men of Soleimani's elite military. The world then waited to see how Iran would respond.

Over the past three years, we have declared three principles concerning where we are in history. The first principle is that according to Matthew 24, we are living in the *end* of the End Time. This is a unique time in history when it will seem all hell is breaking loose on this planet. The most radical

of changes will take place politically, religiously, and in nature. Although the evil of man is fully involved in these changes, Scripture is very clear that God is in absolute control of it all. As to the End Time (according to Matthew 24 as well as the patterns of weather recorded in the Old Testament), God is in control of the winds, the hurricanes, tornadoes, the snow, the ice, and every strange movement of weather occurring across this planet. There have been times when the Devil has stepped into our history to use weather movements for destruction against Christ and His saints. Matthew 8:26 speaks of Christ "rebuking" a storm: He would never rebuke a storm that the Father had directly sent. The Bible also speaks of the Euroclydon storm of Acts 27, which seemed to have been one through which Satan was desirous to destroy the apostle Paul. In the light of biblical truth, God's people must not be duped by the atheistic rhetoric used today concerning "global warming" and now the contemporary concept of "climate change." God is in control of the weather and the climate changes on the planet. Atheistic man refuses to acknowledge this truth.

The second principle is that God is in absolute control of governmental leaders. Daniel 2:21 states, "And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings." This principle also includes the

rise and fall of nations. If a person believes in God, and if a person declares himself to be a "biblical" Christian, that person must believe a Sovereign God placed Donald Trump into leadership and that God will be the one to take him out of office according to His time.

The third principle is that the *purpose* of heaven's appointment of leaders is only known by God. God may appoint a leader merely for a short reprieve for God's people delaying (in human terms) the inevitable. God may use a leader to intensify hatred among other nations against a nation such as America. Though Mr. Trump will not be the one to bring it about, God will be the one to do so through him, if this be God's choice. Though much in the natural has been accomplished by this president (the economy, employment, the black community, the Latino community, the Asian community, burdensome regulations and taxes), he also has been a great trouble to those who long to destroy Western civilization.

When the president ordered the assassination of Soleimani, he attacked an advocate of the Devil, a man who inspired and financed global terrorism. This presidential action was a bold step for him because leadership tends to fear the repercussions from such an act (and thus live with its evil even as it intensifies). Soleimani had

killed hundreds of Americans and tens of thousands of his own people. This man of darkness had boldly entered Iraq once again to continue work on overthrowing its fragile government.

We know the Bible declares violence will fill the earth in the End Time. And, no doubt it is true that to fight against violence will only increase violence. To stand against unrighteousness, error, and the apostasy in this generation will cost us the loss of friends and relatives as well as the increased difficulties for us as Christians. If John the Baptist would simply have kept his mouth shut before the court of Herod, would he have kept his head? Having kept his head, though, he may have lost his soul. It is becoming clearer every day as this generation deepens in sin that true ministers' messages, responses to inquiries, and crucial decisions are becoming more costly. These are not only difficult times; these are costly times. People may lose their jobs, their money, their possessions, their relatives, their tangible ministries, their reputation. These losses may be ahead; we are not exempt nor above God's people of the past.

The Night Season of the End Time

But Christians must also be aware that the hour in which we live is not only the end of the End Time but also the night season of history. Note Matthew 24:15:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:;) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

We know this prophecy is dealing with 2 Thessalonians 2:4, when Antichrist enters the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem during the Tribulation Period and declares himself to be God. But from another aspect, the End Time will also give witness (according to Rev. 3:14–22) that this is what has happened in the end of the Church Ages: Christianity has been polluted, mongrelized, and apostatized. True Christianity now is found only in God's remnant. True Christianity is increasingly viewed with disdain and animosity by the world and the contemporary church. And people are getting bolder in their despising attacks.

The question rightfully should be asked, "Have we entered the final world-age that precludes the coming of the visible Antichrist?" If the answer to this question is in the affirmative, we can expect fewer churches to even desire what God's remnant believe and what they possess in their personal walks with Christ.

Likewise, we will witness the intense, aggressive hatred expressed from the world governments (including America) against Christianity. The shutting down of our schools, our ministries,

and our churches will become more prominent in public discussions of political leaders. Finally, governmental powers will invade the private sanctum of our homes.

Conclusion

Amidst the term *End Time* and the end of the End Time, there is also another principle found within Scripture designated as the “night season” of history. We must remember that God’s biblical remnant throughout church history have always anticipated that great day to dawn and the day star to arise in their hearts. Our generation may be the one to witness this glorious event at the very moment when the world is poised at the threshold of the prophesied Man-of-Sin’s world rulership. Could our generation be the one in history to bear up under the world’s and the Church’s climax of hatred against the Lord and against His anointed?

We may witness that which God’s men of the past have only anticipated. We may witness the resolve of times as presented in 1 Corinthians 10:11:

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

The “end” of every previous generation will collectively come upon that generation which will prepare for the coming generation of the Antichrist.

At the same time God’s remnant is to be a part of the hindering force mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7:

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way.

This context concerns the rapture of the saints, who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit as restrainers in the End Time. There is also the witness of this in Revelation 12:5, when the “manchild” will be caught up to heaven. Some believe that the man-child is Jesus Christ coming out of the Woman of 12:1, which they would say is Israel. But from a New Testament view, this woman is the Visible Church, and the true saints are those who will come out of her. Though Christ is presented in Revelation 19:15 as one Who will rule “with a rod of iron,” this phrase is also used of the saints in Revelation 2:27. The Devil will do everything he can to devour this man-child birthed by the woman (the institutional church) before it is taken in what we believe to be the Rapture. That final season (when the unborn child is coming to full term) will be the world’s darkest hour in history.

The Bible speaks of the night and the day from two perspectives. There is first the perspective of all humanity born in the night, the darkness of sin, and who through the Lord Jesus Christ have been brought into the

day. We observed this at the outset of this article in Ephesians 5:8 as well as Romans 13:12. But the second biblical perspective of the night/day according to history and God's timetable is the Second Coming of Christ (2 Thess. 2:1, 2 and Matt. 24). The night season has been a long one, with the unfolding of the Body of Christ in the various seasons of the night.

We truly believe we are nearing the "Day of Christ," the Rapture. And it will come to an hour in the night season about which Christ warned in Matthew 24, when God's saints will be hated of all nations; and (in Matt. 10:22) when we will be hated of all men.

We are in the culmination of the night season; strange things happen in the night. We read of disciples sleeping in the night in a garden when they should have been watching and praying. Betrayals under the guise of a kiss take place in the night season (yes, betrayals are coming). Disciples scattered at night when the Lord was betrayed. Disciples denied their Lord in the night season, as did Peter. We can expect to see more and more offenses to come. Eyes wax dim in the night, as did Eli's. Warnings came to Joseph in the night seasons as they did to Joseph, Mary's husband. Imprisonment is known in the night season (Paul and Silas).

But, thank God, there is the hope of

the Rapture to take place in a night season. And there is the hope, aboard our boat in the storms of life in the night season, that Christ will come to meet us (John 6:15-21), where we will *immediately* be found with Him at the shore of heaven.

Let us pray, at this late hour, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." S

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Spring & Summer of the Foundations Ministries 2020

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April 5-12

Day of Recitals
April 24

Commencement
May 14

Foundations Day
June 7

Summer Camp
June 23-27

Men's Prayer Conference
June 11-13

Marriage Conference
July 25

Ladies Prayer Fellowship
August 7-8



Our Present Faith and Hope

Dr. H. T. Spence

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit (Jer. 17:7, 8).

No God, No Hope; Know God, Know Hope—these words were once seen on a bumper sticker. Similarly, the apostle Paul writing to the Ephesians declared:

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:12, 13).

Without God there is no hope for humanity; only in God can humanity have hope. For humans to have hope, we must *know* God through faith in Christ Jesus the Lord.

In global crises, the world places its faith in its governments without the consciousness of God. Even in our present viral crisis, irrespective of the means or methods of this pandemic, God sovereignly is in full control of all events. When mankind is not conscious of God in these events, then there will be no true hope.

In contrast, the biblical Christian is a person with hope, no matter how difficult life becomes either in his personal life or its relationship to global life on earth. The Psalmist declared, “My times are in thy hand” (31:15), and the firm belief, “The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me” (138:8). *In faith we know God, and in knowing God we know hope.* Dear reader, in this present global distress, we must have a complete, full trust of faith in God; He knows all that He is presently ordering.

Faith and Hope in God

But what is faith and what is hope? Hebrews 11:1 declares, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is the initial companion at the crisis of the Christian’s new birth. Faith is the same word as believe. Faith is a firm persuasion. I am persuaded that something is true; I am willing to commit my life to that truth because I am persuaded that truth is for me.

However, *not all faith is true faith.* The Bible describes three kinds of faith. First, James 2:19 clearly declares that the Devil and the demons believe in God. Though such spirit beings promote polytheism and demon worship, they know there is *only* one God. But to believe in the existence of God as a

fact is not enough. Mere belief is not saving faith. The demons believe and tremble as they contemplate the day when they must face God in the final judgment of the wicked dead and of the fallen angels. Such belief has no saving value to it.

Secondly, there is a “dead faith” as presented in James 2:17–26. James 2:26 declares, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” As the body without the spirit is dead, faith without works (of the spirit) is dead. Biblical faith requires a personal commitment of the soul to Christ. Abraham was justified by faith; the “work” manifestation of that faith was his willing sacrifice of his son, Isaac. Abraham had a faith that obeyed.

Thirdly, there is living faith. Saving Faith (as seen in Ephesians 2:8, 9) is faith for the believing for the crisis of salvation. However Hebrews 11 reveals that faith must be part of the moment by moment living of God’s people as well. The Greek word for *faith* is *pistis*, meaning “a firm persuasion in something.” *Pistis* comes from the Greek word *peitho*, meaning “to persuade.” Therefore, faith is “to believe, to be persuaded, to place confidence in, to trust completely.”

What is the source of biblical faith? Romans 10:17 reveals that God must create the faith of belief directly through His revealed Word that leads

to obedience to that Word. But faith must not only be for a *work* of grace for the soul; faith must be for the *life* of the Christian. This is the true revelatory purpose of Hebrews 11. Faith must ever be present in every aspect of life. This chapter commences with Abel in worship; faith must be the key element in worship to God. From that context the chapter unfolds the implementing faith in every aspect of life.

When we view the simplest conception of faith, it must include a personal confidence in God and His Word. Faith is when the individual has come to know God to some degree of real experience in his life. Initially, faith is taking God at His Word, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” But the longer a Christian lives with God in Christ, the deeper the knowledge will be of Him. Matthew 11:27 declares that no one knows the Father, except the Son, and those *only* to whom the Son may reveal Him. But then we read that Christ gives the invitation to come unto Him and to learn of Him. There is no other way.

Christians tend to view faith in the context only of things or workings they need from God. For these needs we have faith that He will work it out for us. As a result, Christians tend to compartmentalize faith for the realm of physical or monetary needs. In contrast, Christians tend not to have faith

concerning imperative spiritual needs in their lives. Abraham was the first Old Testament character to exemplify the details of a life of faith. In fact, he is known as the “Father of the Faithful,” or the forerunner, the beginning of those who live by faith. Whereas the Old Testament gives his life events, the New Testament tells us about the principle of faith that was part of his life. Especially in Romans 4:5, 9–23, Paul clearly outlines his being “justified” by faith.

But, again, what is faith? Hebrews 11:1 reveals that *faith includes hope*. Do we believe that God exists? Do we believe that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him? The apostle Paul was very emphatic in his statement, “For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Faith is the “substance” of things hoped for, and faith becomes the evidence of things not seen.

Hope is the handmaiden to faith. Just as faith is for the present moment, hope is sight for the future. The heart of faith believes for the present while also leaning into the future with hope. We are to live in the present with this posture of faith, maintaining our confidence and our trust in God and His Word. *Faith cannot be grounded upon itself; it can only exist on the foundation of what saith the Lord.* In this it becomes the firm ground upon which we pres-

ently reside, while leaning with great expectation toward the future.

The Christian may say, “I am expecting God to do this!” In such a statement, we must be careful to place our faith in the Word of God, and not an abstract belief we have fabricated ourselves. God has promised to meet all our spiritual needs; therefore, I do not need to doubt God meeting these needs.

Note an example in Romans 7:24, 25, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” In this cry of Paul, the answer is very clear: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” This is a promise—God through our Lord Jesus Christ will do this for me! I dare not doubt it!

However, in any situation where the will of man is involved, we cannot have a similar hope. God is not willing that any should perish; it is His will for all men to come to repentance. But this truth does not mean that all men will repent. We may have human hope for a relative to be saved, but because it involves the will of man, this hope may not become a reality.

It is for this reason we must make a distinction between the word *hope* in the English language and *hope* in the Greek language. I may “hope” that something will happen, but I may not have the “guarantee” that it will. In contrast, the biblical hope is

tied into the Word of God as a term of “great expectation.” The Word of God has promised this, and therefore I am expecting it to be so with great expectation.

Note the words of Daniel 3:16–18:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image, which thou hast set up.

Clearly, these three companions believed in God, and their hearts were settled in God about this matter. Nevertheless, there was no guarantee that God would deliver them from the fiery furnace. While their faith was present, only God knew what He would do in this crisis. They believed with hope that God would deliver them from the king, and God’s will would be done. When it comes to the future of this earth and the Messianic life and principles that will govern it, we have immutable words from God that it will be so. Therefore, I must have faith for the present; but I also must have hope for the future. Yet, *our hope is a firm hope, a true hope that is founded upon the Word of God.*

Amidst the reality of this world’s

complex governments and systems, we may wonder if there can be any hope. But God is the one ruling the planet, not the Devil. I believe in God and in His capabilities. He *will* bring all of history to a glorious end, despite man and all his vain plans. The Devil may believe he is in control of humanity working out his own diabolical plan, but God is working *His* perfect plan while even using the Devil’s plan for His glorious end!

When Hope Is Lost

Can a Christian have present faith in God amidst a lost hope for his future? Perhaps the answer to this enigmatic question can be found in the words of Job:

And where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it? (Job 17:15).

A careful reading of the Book of Job reveals moments when Job lost hope while maintaining faith. We must always be careful when observing Job and the trial he went through. Three times the Scriptures reveal that Job was a man who “was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (1:1, 8; 2:3). Two of these recorded times were God’s declaration about him.

Job’s only problem was that he did not know why he was suffering. Why do the righteous suffer? We must remember that without a Bible, Job could not understand the reason for

the devastations that had come upon him. He knew God was behind it all, but he did not know why. Amidst it all his faith never wavered in God.

Nevertheless, there were times when he lost hope, a loss of hope concerning his future. In this passage (Job 17:15) Job spoke of a darkened hope. For the moment, all he could see before him was the grave. In his sickness, he believed he was making his bed in the darkness. He declared that no light came from the dark shadows of death he believed he was facing very soon. Because he did not see any hope *before* his death, he wondered if there would be hope *in* death. He believed his present situation was his final lot and there was nothing beyond.

It seems that Job lived in the generations just before Abraham. Though much light concerning God was evident, there was little understanding of the world after death. The Old Testament *Sheol* (or Hades in the New Testament) was very little understood by God's people. Had God revealed any concept for their future or the afterlife? Did they know there was to be a heaven ultimately for them? Although *Sheol* was a place of peace, rest, and tranquility, it was not the thrill and joy of heaven. Though those in upper Hades had faith in God, did they have hope of what was beyond? Did such hope come to them when Christ entered upper Hades during

those hours when His Spirit was departed from His body?

Whatever may have been known, in this crisis Job had lost hope concerning his future. The crisis of his deep afflictions brought him temporarily to a lost hope. Not only did Job believe that his purposes were broken off, but also his hope was lost.

In such situations a person may try to create a hope; however, what he hopes for is not real and will not come to pass. In trials there is the danger of creating an illusionary or false hope. There are many people today who are so convinced that what they have created is truth, that they are willing to base their faith upon it, even their future in hope. They are convinced they can cheat God in overcoming the fact of the Judgment. There are also those who believe in the hope of succeeding in life without God. Others believe they do not need God for their life to exist; therefore, they have created a hope of worldly sufficiency. *A true hope is singularly based upon God Himself and what He has promised.* And yet it is possible to have a true faith in God while losing or leaving hope in God for one's future.

God's truth is ever in His Word, and His will is revealed in that Word. And a person's faith can rest upon that Word. Yet, there is a possibility that one could leave hope's manifestation in the life. Psalm 42 speaks of the

overthrow of the soul's hope amidst adverse circumstances in life. Faith, the anchor in Christ, may be present while the soul ceases to lay hold of the hope for faith. The Psalmist cries out to himself:

*Why are thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted in me?
Hope, thou in God; for I shall yet
praise him for the help of his coun-
tenance.*

Where is now my hope?! Does the blindness of grief cause the soul of faith to lose hope? Yes, it is possible! Circumstances may become so overwhelming that hope of faith for the future is lost.

Conclusion

Perhaps the absence of hope amidst living faith may arise when our soul does not permit the expectation of the Word to be present. Although there may be many causes for discouragement, there are far more reasons for hope to be lost. Every generation since Adam has faced calamities. Within the crucible epochs found in Scripture, there is recorded a long history of wars, plagues, famines, corruption, depravity, and suffering. Still God was always in control! He has had a plan that has included all the destructive forces man may witness. Through it all, the Bible has been given as a book of hope.

When we walk in fellowship with God,

we find ourselves lifted by the irresistible updraft of biblical hope. Sometimes we must learn to preach to ourselves, like the Psalmist in Psalm 42. Even in the darkest hours, we have good reason for hope. Psalm 71:14 declares, "But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more."

When the powers of darkness were swirling around Jeremiah, the Lord told the prophet:

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Note Jeremiah's own words as he witnessed the burning destruction of Jerusalem!

This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD (Lam. 3:21-26).

Another Scripture calls us to hope at this hour in our history:

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. 15:13).

Although hope is a part of faith, it also has an anchor:

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 6:19, 20).

Oh, dear reader, this is where our hope is anchored, within the veil of heaven!

At this crisis hour of a global pandemic, we have submitted ourselves to the higher powers of the government while yet praying to God for the best amidst the unknown to us. As Christians we should never place our hope in the systems of the world.

The real hope is that Christ has called us to partake of His effectual work on the cross and that we have the present reality of His prayers in our behalf before the Throne of Heaven. Thank God! Our future does not depend on the shifting sand of empty humanity. Our hope for our future is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Let us trust God for today and hope in Him for tomorrow. To deny Hope is to cast aside the helmet of the believer (1 Thess. 5:8–10); to deny hope is to take away the be-

liever's consolation (2 Thess. 2:16).

May God grant us faith through His Word and Spirit for these present days! And whatever our future may be, may our faith in God have the evidence of things hoped for in Him. May our "faith be the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."

*But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and **the rejoicing of the hope** firm unto the end (Heb. 3:6).* S

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What Is Our Hope Today?

Dr. H. T. Spence

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