

# PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS

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## Looking Back

As of March, 2021, COVID-19 killed more than 538,000 Americans. The loss of lives saddened many. Lifestyles were affected. The workplace, businesses, schools, churches and many other functions had to restructure with new formats. Zoom communication took the place of in person conversations. Job losses caused personal financial crises. The many unpleasanties, adjustments and worrisome concerns took some doing to get used to.

## Looking Ahead

Vaccines recently developed offer hope for an end to the virus and a brighter future. But when? What will post pandemic life be like? Ted Anthony, in an article for the Washington Post, wrote: *"No one is sure just what that ending will look like or when it will arrive - or even if we'll know it when we see it."* The Black Death (Bubonic Plague) took its time fluctuating from 1346 to 1353 claiming over 200 million lives. Smallpox in the 20<sup>th</sup> century didn't end overnight. The current outbreak of the coronavirus variant in the U.K. now accounts for 26% of outbreaks in the U.S. The variant may be 40% to 50% more transmissible and more deadly.

## Changes

Much advice is being given and actions underway to meet future changes. For example, medical research, coupled with IBM Quantum Systems One, is currently seeking treatments and vaccines to fight any future public health threats. When future changes occur, be personally prepared to make proper decisions to insure a better, brighter future for yourself. *"Stop, look and listen"* is not only good advice before crossing railroad tracks. It's also good advice before crossing dangerous tracks on the road to future change. Scrutinize, sanitize and prioritize with the wisdom of God's word. Then move ahead confidently with the compass of Scripture and the power of prayer.

## Spiritual Renewal

Crises, troubles, tragedies and pandemics often cause some to reevaluate themselves spiritually. However, tribulations do not in and of themselves produce spiritual renewal. Sometimes they do the opposite. They can turn hearts into a bitter rejection of God.

***Tribulation cannot create faith. It sometimes does the opposite producing bitter unbelief.***

I once met a man who was ill and in great pain. Disgruntled, he exclaimed: "Why am I suffering? If there's a God, why is there so much trouble in the world? There is no God!" I tried to share some Scripture. "Don't give me that stuff!" he shouted. "Get out!" His behavior reminded me of the anger of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, when the prophet Jeremiah presented him with a scroll of Scripture. Angrily, in a rage, whenever three or four portions were read, *"the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and then threw them into the fire pot until the entire scroll was burned."* (Jer. 36:23)

## Conversion

Tribulation cannot create faith. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. *"No one can say: 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit."* (1 Cor. 12:3) The words, which the Holy Spirit authored in the Scriptures, transcend sinful human reason to create the miracle of faith. Hebrews 4:12 declares Scripture's awesome power: *"Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow."*

God's pipelines to people are Christians. During the COVID-19 crisis many have become receptive to what Christians have to say. Recently I experienced the joy of two commitments to the Gospel by simply sharing my faith. The process is called *"Personal Evangelism"*. Anyone can do it. You can do it. Do it! Swing the Sword of the Spirit! Become His mouthpiece. Be a rainbow of God's promises of love, grace, mercy and deliverance.



*The Rainbow - A Covenant Symbol of God's Deliverance and Preservation. (Gen. 9:13-17)*

## Personal Pandemic Prayer

***O, Holy Spirit, during these troublesome pandemic times, use me to lovingly share your word with others, so that those in darkness may see the blessed, joyous light of the Gospel of Christ. Amen***

