

GLOBAL LIFE CAMPAIGN™

What Makes Us Vulnerable to Plagues & Natural Disasters?

Plagues: What the Bible Reveals (Part 3)

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We know that plagues and natural disasters are a normal part of living in a fallen, sinful world, but what makes us more vulnerable or less vulnerable to these and to God's use of them or other means as judgments? We will discover that the same factors that made ancient nations vulnerable also make us vulnerable – and we are exceedingly vulnerable! This is what we will briefly examine this week from the Scriptures for the *GLC Series*. We could come forth as gold!

1. Plagues & natural disasters are normal in a fallen, sinful world. In the brief titled, "Coronavirus & Plagues: God's Redemptive Purposes & How Should We Respond?" (2020-03-18), I identified several possible sources of a plague: unclean animals; failure to keep unclean (or sick) and clean (or healthy) separate; sin; Satan; and God Himself. The world God originally created was perfect, but when the first man and woman sinned against God, "sin entered the world, and death through sin" (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12). Plagues and natural disasters are part of that death and corruption and self-destruction of a fallen world.

Famines are known to have occurred at least since the time of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 12:10; 26:1). Sometimes the LORD would reveal a forthcoming famine so that those listening to Him would take preparatory actions to survive and help others survive. For example, the LORD gave Pharaoh a dream that Joseph interpreted and then formulated a plan for the survival of the Egyptians, Joseph's family, and people from other nations (Genesis 41 – 47). In the New Testament it is recorded the prophet Agabus "indicated by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius" (Acts 11:28). In these instances, there is no mention of judgment for specific sins.

Jesus said regarding a tragic disaster, "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 13:4-5).

2. What made nations vulnerable to plagues, natural disasters & judgments?

Idolatry and child murder: After Egypt had murdered countless male Hebrew children at birth, the LORD judged them. "For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD" (Exodus 12:12).

Idolatry and immorality: "While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel joined themselves to Baal

of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel. The LORD said to Moses, 'Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.' So Moses said to the judges of Israel, 'Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor.'

"Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. Those who died by the plague were 24,000" (Numbers 25:1-9).

Idolatry and child sacrifice: "They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with the blood. . . . Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against His people and He abhorred His inheritance. Then He gave them into the hand of the nations, and those who hated them ruled over them" (Psalm 106:37-40).

Evil abominations (immorality, incest, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, bestiality [Leviticus 18]): "Thus says the Lord GOD . . . 'Because of all the evil abominations of . . . will fall by sword, famine and plague! He who is far off will die by the plague, and he who is near will fall by the sword, and he who remains and is besieged will die by the famine'" (Ezekiel 6:11-12).

3. What has made us vulnerable to plagues, natural disasters, & judgments, and how can we reduce our vulnerability? The same! Idolatry, immorality, incest, adultery, abortion and infanticide (child sacrifice), homosexuality and LGBTQ, and bestiality. And I'll add, child abuse, spouse abuse, divorce, pornography, pride, rejection of God, rejection of the Word of God, denial and rejection of the profound Judeo-Christian aspects of our nation's history and foundations, etc., etc., etc. These are all fruits of our sin, and cause us to be exceedingly vulnerable to plagues, natural disasters and divine judgments.

So how can we reduce our vulnerability? By turning to God, repenting of and turning away from our personal and national sins and wicked ways, and learning righteousness, that is, how to live in right relationship to God and people. Isaiah wrote: "At night my soul longs for You, indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; for when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9). And Proverbs says, "Stripes that wound scour away evil, and strokes *reach* the innermost parts" (20:30). And Job testified, "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23:10). Let's become gold!

SDG and for the sanctity of human life,

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