



Coronavirus and Christ

‘BEHOLD THE KINDNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD’



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It matters little what we think about the coronavirus. But it matters forever what God thinks. He is not silent about what he thinks. Scarcely a page in the Bible is irrelevant for this crisis.

Our voice is grass. His is granite. “The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever” ([1 Peter 1:24–25](#)). His words in Scripture “cannot be broken” ([John 10:35](#)). What he says is “true,

and righteous altogether” ([Psalm 19:9](#)). Listening to God, and believing him, is like building your house on a rock, not sand ([Matthew 7:24](#)).

His voice is not only true; it is perfectly wise for every situation. “He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom” ([Isaiah 28:29](#)). “His understanding is beyond measure” ([Psalm 147:5](#)). When he gives counsel about the coronavirus, it is firm, unshakable, lasting. “The counsel of the Lord stands forever” ([Psalm 33:11](#)). “His way is perfect” ([2 Samuel 22:31](#)).

God’s words in these times are not only true and wise; they are also precious and sweet. “More to be desired are they than gold . . . sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb” ([Psalm 19:10](#)). They are the sweetness of life: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” ([John 6:68](#)). And with indestructible life come words of unshakable peace and joy: “Your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart” ([Jeremiah 15:16](#)).

And the sweetness is not lost in this moment of bitter providence — not if we have learned the secret of “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” ([2 Corinthians 6:10](#)). The secret is this: Knowing that the same sovereignty that could stop the coronavirus and doesn’t, is the very sovereignty that sustains the soul in it. Indeed, more than sustains — sweetens with hope that, for those who trust him, his purposes are kind, even in death.

“Behold the kindness and severity of God” ([Romans 11:22](#)). His providence is sweet and bitter. Naomi did not sin when she said, “The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me” ([Ruth 1:20](#)). That was true. And it was spoken at the very moment when all her fortunes were about to change.

This is not a season for sentimental views of God. It is a bitter season. And God sent it. We know this, because he “works all things according to the counsel of his will” ([Ephesians 1:11](#)). All things. Not a sparrow falls to the ground apart from our heavenly Father ([Matthew 10:29](#)).

Nature is not sovereign. Satan is not sovereign. Sinful man is not sovereign. God rules them all ([Luke 8:25](#); [Job 1:12](#); [2:6](#); [Acts 4:27–28](#)). So, we say with Job, “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted” ([Job 42:2](#)).

Therefore, God not only comprehends the coronavirus; he has purposes for it. God does nothing, and permits nothing, without wise purposes. Nothing *just happens*. Everything flows from the eternal counsels of God ([Ephesians 1:11](#)). All of it is wisdom. All of it is purposeful. For those who trust Jesus Christ, all of it is kindness. For others, it is a merciful wake-up call: “Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” ([Revelation 22:17](#)).

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.” ([Lamentations 3:21–24](#))