

September 2020

Dear Brethren:

Greetings to you all, the household of God at this time. I would like to write about signs of the times. With the COVID-19 pandemic that has made the world stand still, many have been wondering what is going on in the world. Seeing people die like this, many have been asking where is God and what is He doing. Churches have been closed, nobody is allowed to go to a church building. World leaders are dumbfounded; they do not know where to start and what to do. They must come to acknowledge God as King Nebuchadnezzar did.

Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret (Daniel 2:46–47, *King James Version throughout unless otherwise noted*).

Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver (Daniel 3:28–29).

Some false prophets are now saying that they saw this a long time ago. How can somebody prophesy what was already written in the Bible? The Bible says that pestilence will come.

As those who have been alerted by the God of Israel, we need to turn to the Bible where Jesus said: "And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven" (Luke 21:11).

We need not panic, because it was written in the pages of the Bible that the time will come in which many pestilences (sicknesses and diseases) will come. Many have thought and asked themselves, *is it God* who is doing this?

When the Israelites sinned before God, He sent King Nebuchadnezzar to punish them:

Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle (Jeremiah 25:9–10).

Now all of the media/internet is coming out with many stories. People have not come to know where this thing came from—China, USA, Russia, or wherever? Leaders are now coming to bow down to God and ask for His help because there is nowhere to run and no way out.

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them (verses 15–16).

If it is God doing this, what should people do? It is now upon them to acknowledge that they are God's servants, put there to serve people, not to lord it over them. World leaders have gone mad with wealth and have turned their backs to God. He is *now* giving people the cup to drink—all the kings (verses 18–27).

I remember when the September 11 terrorist attack took place in America, people asked the same question they are asking now: Where is God? Many blamed God at the same time that they asked God to help them. King Solomon said:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

If people fail to turn to God and confess their sins—turn from their wickedness—God will use His power.

For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy

with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground (Jeremiah 25:29, 31–33).

We need to know that even if it is not God's hand in this COVID-19, He sees, and He knew beforehand that something like this would happen in the world this year. God through the prophet Ezekiel said:

They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity. All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumbling block of their iniquity. As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them (Ezekiel 7:14–20).

The Bible says that God created us perfectly, but we the people have gone mad with our inventions. Our inventions have turned on us and are killing us now.

Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions (Psalm 99:8).

Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them (Psalm 106:29).

Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions (Psalm 106:39).

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

You cannot take poison and drink and expect God to heal you. As the household of God, we should not panic, we should build our trust in the saving power of Jesus Christ, no matter what comes to us. If God planned that this is the way we are to die, we cannot push it away from us. We need to ask God for forgiveness and turn to Him (Jeremiah 26:2–3). Only God is able to save people from all of these curses which are happening. God's promise to those who hide in Him is in Psalm 91:1–16. He looks to His elect with His eyes (Psalm 33:18–22). "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied" (Psalm 37:19). He is their salvation.

But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him (Psalm 37:39–40).

The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble (Psalm 9:9).

Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people (Psalm 3:8).

This is not the last thing to happen in this world, the worst is yet to come. Jesus said:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matthew 24:21).

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken (Luke 21: 25–26).

Mr. Herbert Armstrong wrote this in January 1962, in *The Plain Truth*, p. 13:

The realization flashed to my mind with terrific impact that in WORLD WAR II—already then under way—America being then drawn closer to participation—that *I could see this "sword" of WAR coming!* [Ezekiel 3:17–21, 33:1–19].

When this took place, people thought it was the end of the world, even as many false prophets today have come out saying that the fifth seal has been opened. Now it is not war but a disease (*virus*) that has taken the world into custody—no cure, no medication, no antidote to stop it. What will people do now? Return to God:

Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity (Hosea 14:1, *New American Standard Bible*).

We are to return to God, to rend our hearts, acknowledge that we have done wrong to our God and to our fellow man.

". . . And rend your heart and not your garments" Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil (Joel 2:13, *NASB*).

God told us, too, that we have to hide a little while until His wrath passes away. Why His wrath? Because people have gone against God's will, they have allowed same-sex marriage, which God forbids, and they have allowed abortion.

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).

For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction (Isaiah 10:25).

Look how this has come to the whole world, even as the Bible says that God will judge the whole world. God will not judge without reason. He says in His Bible through the prophet Isaiah that the houses have been shut (self-quarantine) and that no man can come in or go out (Isaiah 24:1–6).

The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction (verses 10–12).

Scientists are trying their best to find the cure for this COVID-19, but still we do not know if they will get it. God gave man power over all the earth to tend and take care of it. Mankind has gone too far and has started killing himself and destroying the earth.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1:28).

Man is destroying even what he was told to take care of. It is very painful, but what can we do about it? Go back to the God of Israel—He is the refuge for those who run to Him.

"Come, let us return to the LORD For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us" (Hosea 6:1, *NASB*). He will comfort us; He will give us back our health. We know that our God is not sleeping nor slumbering. He knew this would happen. Many people think that God has no knowledge of what is taking place all over the world.

Scientists are now crying, asking where they can find help. Solomon said that technology has made people go beyond the line that God had drawn for man to reach, but not to pass (Ecclesiastes 1:14,18). When a Hand from somewhere takes control, a cure will be found.

I urge all brethren who will be reading this letter to fasten their belts, take the helmet of salvation and the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:10–18). Where we are heading, we will need more faith than ever before (Colossians 2:6–7; 1:23).

When the world is shaking, we are to say *Maranatha* (O Lord, come!), because we know that soon our King of Glory will come and will end all of this we see now. God said that He will defend Jerusalem—His Church (Isaiah 31:5). He said that He is with us. We should not be afraid, no matter what comes our way. God is in control. It might seem painful and sorrowful, but our God is in charge. And the time also will come when God will destroy those who destroy the earth (Revelation 11:18).

God bless you all,  
Your coworker,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isaya Owak', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Isaya Owak