

Has COVID-19 Caused Us to Slander the Name of Our God?

Our world is a mess right now. I know that in the grand scheme of things our world has been a mess since the days of Adam and Eve. But, in a real sense, the last few months have really been a wake-up call to the body of Messiah about how quickly things around us can change.

The quickness of things changing due to COVID-19 reminded me of when the Berlin Wall fell. Everything in Germany, Europe, and in some ways globally, became different. Before those moments, people believed it could take years, even lifetimes, to see freedoms and unity brought to the divided country of Germany. Yet those who were alive saw it happen in what seemed like minutes.

For those of us who believe what the Bible says, we have been looking for “prophetic meaning” or “end-time” significance in the events taking place following the spread of COVID-19. For a moment, who would have thought that in only a few weeks because of a sickness, we would see restaurants, bars, professional sports, Disney World, and churches and synagogues close their doors to the public based upon government directives?

It makes complete sense that believers in Yeshua (Jesus) would look toward Revelation, Daniel, Ezekiel and other prophetic writings to explain what is taking place around us.

I, however, would like to direct our attention not to one of the books written by seers of the future, but rather to a book written by the apostle Paul to believers of his day—not about what would happen in the future, but about how they were behaving when he wrote this book.

Paul wrote these words in the book of Romans to Jewish

believers of his day, but they are just as valid for you and I today.

“For as it is written, ‘the name of God is slandered among the nations because of you’” (Rom. 2:24, TLV).

In Romans 2, Paul is chastising Jewish believers because they were causing G-D’s name to be slandered or profaned by their actions. Another way to say this is that they were living hypocritically.

These Jews claimed they knew the G-D of the Torah and they claimed they lived according to the Torah’s commandments. But they were not doing so. Their actions in disobedience to G-D’s Holy Word not only caused them to be in sin, but it also resulted in the Gentile believers around them sinning because they were following the examples of the Jewish believers.

Paul’s accusation against the Jewish believers is not that they were sinning. No, it was much more than that. Paul said they slandered or profaned G-D’s name.

In Judaism, when we speak of G-D’s name, we are not speaking about the letters that form a word we identify Him by. No, in Judaism when we speak of the name of G-D, we are talking about G-D’s character and nature. When we use His name in vain, it isn’t simply cussing. Our actions and words cause others to see G-D as less than He truly is.

When we show fear, we cause others to see G-D as weak. When we steal, we are telling others G-D cannot provide for us. When we do something idolatrous, we tell people that G-D isn’t the One and only true and living G-D. Every sinful action we take that is seen by either new believers or unbelievers, no matter how small, causes G-D’s name to be profaned.

Paul even asks in Romans 2:19: “and you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness ...”

These verses caused me to consider how I and other believers were responding to the COVID-19 virus and the resulting changes in our lives. Are we walking around in fear? Are we looking toward the government for help instead of G-D? Are we selfishly hoarding goods? Are we causing G-D's name to be slandered?

The book of Romans isn't the first place we read about this issue. We find G-D's warning against this sin all the way back in Leviticus 21, speaking about the priests who were commanded not to profane the name of their G-D.

"They are to be holy to their God, and not profane the Name of their God, for they present the offerings of Adonai made by fire, the bread of their God. Therefore they are to be holy" (Lev. 21:6).

You may wonder why this is relevant to you. After all, Romans was written to Jewish believers and Leviticus was written to the priests of Israel. Well, in 1 Peter 2:9, Peter writes the following about you and I:

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

It is clear that as believers in Yeshua as Messiah, we are all a part of the holy nation and we are a royal priesthood. So, as with the temple priests of old and as with the Jewish believers Paul wrote to in Roman 2, you and I have the responsibility to consider our words and actions, especially during times of crisis.

Are our actions causing those watching us to see our G-D as a weak, wishy washy, poor, inept, uncaring or untruthful god? If so, we are causing those watching us to slander the name of our G-D and we should repent. {eo}

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