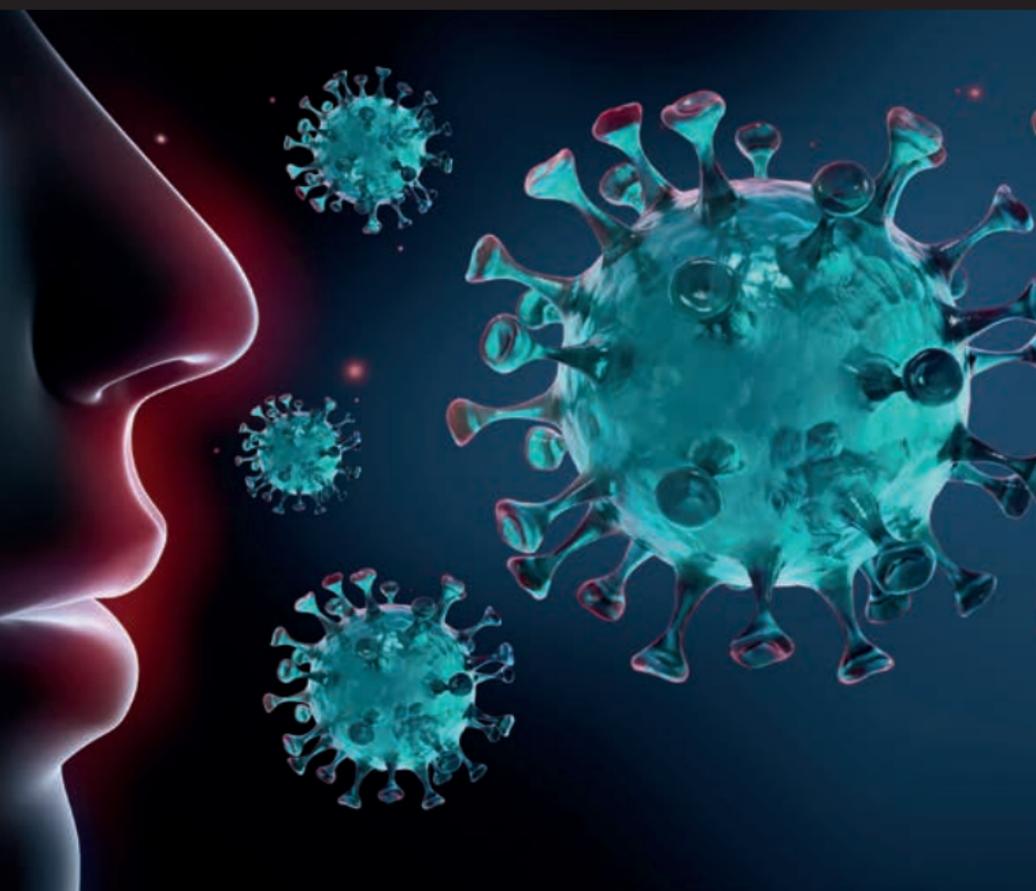




Covid-19

Should we be concerned?

Impulses from a biblical perspective



Covid-19

Perspectives of Hope

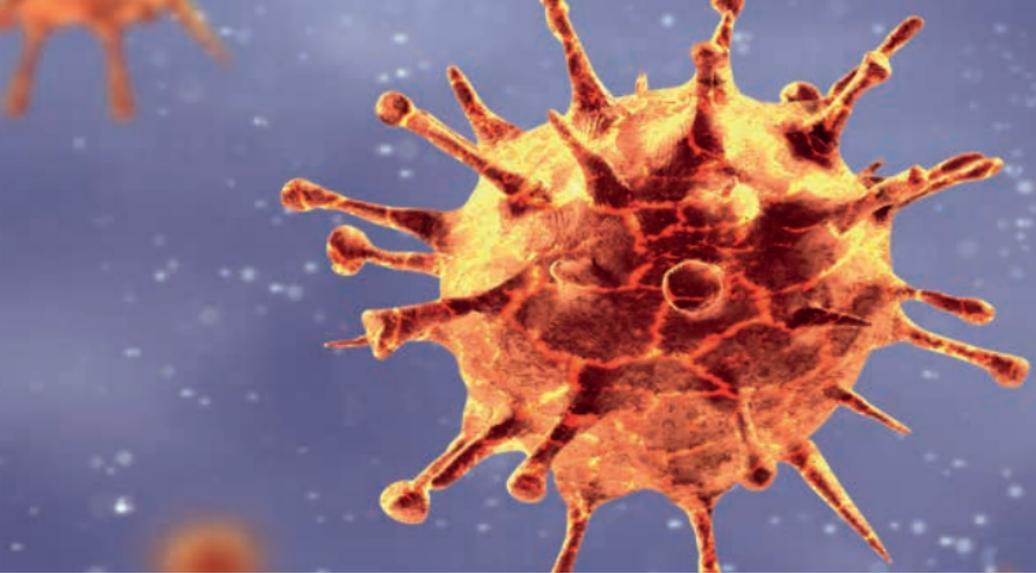
The Coronavirus is spreading at a fast tempo and causes a new form of lung disease that is called Covid-19.

The number of confirmed infections and deaths due to this sickness is growing. At the same time, researchers are trying to find an antidote. Preventive measures are especially important at this time. If someone is infected this person must be placed in quarantine in order to isolate this person from healthy persons. All contacts of this infected person must be determined in order to place them under quarantine as well. All chains of infection should be interrupted, as far as possible.

Should we be concerned?

The respiratory illness Covid-19 broke out the end of December 2019 in the Chinese city of Wuhan and has developed since then into an international epidemic. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the previous Coronavirus-Epidemic to





be a pandemic. Because of the rapid spreading of the Coronavirus we have need for concern. It is important to take the necessary precautions.

Even three thousand years ago – as we learn in the Bible – people were isolated because of a contagious skin disease. They had to be separated from those around them (Leviticus 13:46, the Bible). From our viewpoint today it seems horrible to treat sick people in this way. But today we use similar methods. We call it quarantine.

How can we protect ourselves?

It is recommended that we avoid meetings where there are large numbers of people, under certain circumstances wear face masks and to wash our hands regularly. We should use disinfectants and door handles should be cleaned regularly. One should keep a distance of one to two meters from people who may be infected.

A further means of prevention is to strengthen the immune system with a healthy diet. But are all the suggested means of protection sufficient to give us the security that we need? We can notice very quickly that the recommendations can only minimally reduce our concerns.



I would like to point out an important aspect that cannot be overlooked in this situation. In the Bible we learn that God is able to protect each and every person. We read:

You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. (Psalm 91:5-7 NIV)

The Israelites experienced exactly that in Egypt. While the firstborn of the Egyptians died in one night, the Israelites were protected. None of them died (see Exodus 12:12-13). During the flood, God protected those who trusted Him.

Can we count on the same protection?

We notice that the above examples do not fit directly to our situation. But they show us the mighty power of God, who is able to protect us from all dangers. We experience that people who believe in God also die from illnesses, wars, catastrophes oder persecution. We must consider these possibilities as well.

An encouraging example of how God helps in distress is the experience of the three Jewish adminis-

trators in the province of Babel: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, about whom we read in the Bible. They (and their people) were expected to bow down to the image of King Nebuchadnezzar. Whoever did not bow down would be thrown into the furnace. The three administrators knew they would not bow down to anyone but God. Therefore, they answered the king as follows:

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.
(Daniel 3:17-18 NIV)

The three administrators did not know how the situation would turn out. But they wanted to remain true to God, even if it meant that they would die. They were thrown into the fire and experienced that God protected them. We can be assured that God will protect those who trust in Him and he will carry them through the greatest problems in life. Even in sickness, sorrow or death, they know that they are secure in God. They trust God's leading and that all things serve for their good.



An epidemic with tragic results

With regard to the Coronavirus-epidemic we should think about the “sickness” that is more tragic than Covid-19. We are justified to be concerned about the spreading of the Coronavirus. Some are infected with the virus and pass it unknowingly on to others.

But there is a “virus” that is much more insidious. The worst “virus” appears just as inconspicuously. Many do not notice it. It is “sin”. The word “sin” is a biblical term and describes the condition of people who are separated from God and have the wrong way of life. Those persons do not live according to God’s commands and do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.

God wants us to live in harmony with him and with others. Sin disrupts our relationships with others and our relationship to God.

Our world is broken in many ways. There is so much hatred, terror, war and so much personal distress. Every one of us is affected in one way or another.

We stand in front of the broken pieces and often we do not know which way to turn. The “virus” has control of us. People are divided. Families break up, countries are at war. The virus of sin has not even developed to its maximum. The most tragic consequence of sin is that it separates us from God. This separation is for eternity.

Just imagine that you have to remain in quarantine due to the Coronavirus – not for two or three weeks, but for the rest of your life! That would be a terrible thought! The virus of sin has such tragic consequences that people are not in “quarantine” for a few weeks or months, but for eternity. That means that the person is separated from God’s presence and heaven forever. After death a place awaits that is separated from God.



An “epidemic” that can be overcome

If the consequences of the virus of sin are so drastic, how much more important it is to know the way to healing! God has found a way of prevention. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world in order to free us from the virus of sin.

Jesus died on the cross for the sins of every individual person. He paid with his life for the results of sin: He took on our guilt so that we could be forgiven. But that does not mean that everyone is automatically free from guilt.

A sick person must take the medicine that is meant to help. In the same way, we must accept the medicine that God provides for us. This “medicine” for our sin is Jesus Christ. Accept it. In the Bible it says:

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

How can we be freed from our sin through Jesus? First of all, we have to recognise that we need to be forgiven for our guilt. Then we must accept Jesus as Lord in our life.

How does this happen? Speak to Jesus Christ in a simple prayer. Thank him for dying on the cross in your place for your sin. Ask him to forgive your sins and invite him to come into your life. Tell him that you want to belong to him and that he should take over the control of your life. Put your life in his hands.

Jesus forgives your sin and calls you his child. You are free from the virus of sin and you can look forward to being with him in heaven. On this day and as a result of this decision a new life with Jesus Christ has begun. Read the Bible regularly in order to get to know God's will better, talk to God and look for others who know Jesus personally to be with them.

Should we be concerned? I want to encourage you to count on God and to trust Jesus Christ with your life. Maybe the concern about Covid-19 can result in you being freed from the worst "virus" – sin - that there is.

Manfred Röseler

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