

with the foregoing. He argues that the present Covid-19 Global crisis reveals the existence of remarkable components in almost every area which in the light of the Bible, may lead to a dramatic climax of world history. This means that except a proactive actions is taken, the present Covid-19 crisis point to only one conclusion, that disaster awaits the nations of the world, in the measure that disaster befell ancient Egypt of pharaonic era.

Eneche (2021) believes that “in this dark picture that, the world has found itself, only the Bible charts a sure course, and offer man an intelligent explanation of world-wide confusion as it presently exists”. He therefore suggests that concerted effort should be made towards the promotion and public acceptance and upholding of the Bible as the inerrant word of God.

We agree with these points, to the extent that man has seemingly assume the impossible task of defining and proclaiming infinite truth apart from God's divine revelation. This is an effort which history has consistently demonstrated is doomed to failure. As we have earlier noted in this paper, the present Global crisis relative to the Covid-19 pandemic, has resulted from a concurrence of actions. It is therefore imperative that we examine some of those factors.

Scientific factor

It is noteworthy that one of the major elements in our modern world is the rapid rise of science whether in the field of electronics or the atomic structure of matter. Incredible advances are being achieved in one year which more than equal the advance in whole centuries of the past. The atomic bomb has greatly increased the ability of evil men to destroy or control. According to

Whitehall (2020) “the Covid-19 epidemic is most likely the unexpected result of scientific experiments”.

The race to command space is driven by the fear of some breakthrough which would give one nation a dominant position of power over possibly the entire world. To the horrors of war already conceived are added the possibilities of bacteriological or chemical warfare which could wipe out whole civilization and drastically change the face of the earth. The scientific advance has contributed tremendously to the accumulated evidence that the world is facing a showdown. And that history in the future will not be as it was in the past, such that some gigantic crisis looms on the horizon.

Prophetic fulfillment factor

The many factors which contribute to world crisis in our day have tremendous significance as compared to the scriptures. The amazing fact is that these factors fit into a prophetic pattern which describes the end of the age. The Bible anticipates that a world crisis would precede the coming of Christ to establish His millennial Kingdom (Mathew 24:15-24).

In describing end-time events, the Bible makes plain that, the world crisis will eventually result in a world government headed by an evil world dictator (Rev. 13:1-10). The United Nations of our present world built on the assumption that world government is the only way to world peace may well be a part of the preparation for world-wide acceptance of a world dictator as the only way out.

The significance of the present global crisis is that it contains practically all the elements which are a national preparation for the end of the age. The present generation

may witness the establishment of the kingdom of heaven upon the earth, thus bringing to fulfillment one of the great themes of prophecy-the divine programme for the nations of the world.

Biblical approach to Covid-19 pandemic

That the world at large including the Nigerian nation is engaged in a war against Corona Virus (Covid-19) is beyond any sane denial. One of the precautionary measures taken by the Nigerian government to stem the tide of the pandemic was the total lockdown of the citizens and the economy. The lockdown according to Okonkwo (2020) “runs contrary to the spirit of the individual person”. He believes that the lockdown is akin to sacrificing livelihoods in order to preserve lives, whereas we need the livelihoods to preserve lives. He concludes that lockdown is an unintelligent copying by the Nigerian government from foreign countries. Not a few people equally subscribes to the foregoing position of Okonkwo (2020). The general contention of the people is that there is no logical reason to sustain the lockdown apart from the need to create awareness of the existence of the pandemic. This position is based on the premise that, Nigeria as a developing nation cannot afford the cost of the lockdown.

From the Biblical perspective, we do not hesitate to assert that, the fear of death by man should be the least reason in determining what policy to adopt to tackle any situation or enemy. This is because everyone must die in one way or the other. The inevitability of death, even to the most carefully life makes it irresponsible to fear it. Isaiah 43:1 says: “...fear not for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine”.

This means that the fear of death is a

hindrance to solutions, and not a solution in itself. Spiritually speaking, what you fear most comes upon you. We contend therefore that the biblical approach to the Covid-19 pandemic entails an end to any fear of the virus. As Christians, God expect that we move and encourage people around us also to move towards the absolute standard of accepting the Bible as the inerrant word of God. The phrase “fear not appear three hundred and sixty five times in the Bible. This means that God is telling us on every single day of the three hundred and sixty five days in a year not to fear but to rather trust in Him for our safety. God knows that the enemy uses fear to decrease our hope and limit our victories.

A Juxtaposition of Pharaonic era epidemic and Covid-19 pandemic

What this paper seeks to address is an appraisal of the Covid-19 pandemic from the perspectives of Biblical pharaonic era epidemic. Therefore, it is considered expedient to do a juxtaposition of the pharaohic era epidemic as recorded in the bible, with the Covid-19 pandemic that the whole nations of the world are battling with in one way or the other.

From the account of the Bible, a total of ten plagues each approximating to an epidemic were unleashed against the Egyptians because of the obstinacy of pharaoh. The children of Israel who are God, special chosen people were in slavery in Egypt for a period of four hundred and thirty years. Their groaning reach up to God in Heaven, who then decided to set them free, so that they can return to Canaan to live in freedom. Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. At the commandment of God, Moses intimated Pharaoh with the decision of God that

pharaoh should set the Israelites free, so that they can go and worship Him. Pharaoh the king of Egypt declined because of the cheap labour that he, and his people were enjoying from the Israelites as slaves in Egypt.

The refusal of Pharaoh was what provoked God into visiting the land of Egypt with ten different plagues as follows:

- (1) The water of river Nile changed into blood such that all the fishes in the river died, which make the river to smell so badly. The people of Egypt could not drink the water (Exodus 7:20-21).
- (2) Frogs covered the whole land of Egypt (Exodus 8:6)
- (3) All the dust of the land of Egypt became gnats, and the gnats swam upon both men and animals (Exodus 8:17).
- (4) Flies covered all the land of Egypt (Exodus 8:24).
- (5) All the livestock of the Egyptians died mysteriously. (Exodus 9:6).
- (6) Festering boils broke out on men and animals (Exodus 9:10)
- (7) God rained hail on the land of Egypt which produced the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. (Exodus 9:22-24).
- (8) Locusts invaded the land of Egypt in great numbers and devour everything growing in the fields (Exodus 10:12-15).
- (9) Thick darkness covered the whole land of Egypt for three days, so that no one could see the next person or leave his place for three days (Exodus 10:22-23).
- (10) The first born both of men and of animals of every Egyptian died (Exodus 11:29).

From the foregoing analysis of the ten plagues, it can be deduced that the plagues bears semblance to the Covid-19 pandemic in the following areas.

- (i) The plagues of the hail, the death of livestock, and the locusts crippled the economy of the nation of Egypt in the same way that the Covid-19 pandemic crippled the economy of the almost every nations of the world.
- (ii) The plagues of the frogs and gnats covering the whole land made interrelationship impossible among the Egyptians. Covid-19 replicate the same thing in that interrelationship, among nations became quite impossible.
- (iii) The plague of the thick darkness that covered the while land of Egypt kept everyone in the same place for as long as it lasted. Similarly, Covid-19 resulted in the total lockdown of people and the economy across all the nations of the world.
- (iv) The death of the first born both of men and animals provoked great grief and lamentation throughout the land of Egypt. In the same vein, many prominent citizens of nations of the world lost their lives to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Nigeria for example the chief of staff to the president and a former governor of Oyo State to mention but just two, lost their lives to the pandemic. The people are doubtless grieved by these deaths and those of many others.

Suffice it to say that in the stories of the plagues as they are recorded in the book

of exodus, and the experience of Covid-19 across the nations of the world now, the dominant theme could not be seen as the personal struggle between men. The real antagonists are God the creator of heaven and earth and men who continue to demonstrate stubborn obstinacy to the supremacy of God over everything He has created. In the biblical account of the plagues, pharaoh's servants and Magicians are discomfited by the servants of God-Moses and Aaron-as they themselves are mocked by the superior power of the lord of creation. In the same way the medical scientists of our time are already discomfited by the alarming rate that the virus has continued to spread from one nation of the world to another and defying medical emergencies. This can only lead to one inescapable conclusion: that all nations of the world need divine solution in the practical term of divine healing from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Implications on societal precautions

As we have noted earlier in this paper, the Covid-19 pandemic may just be one of the ways that God has chosen to demonstrate His sovereignty and power. It is therefore imperative that we examine some of the implications of the pandemic, so as to galvanize the society towards certain precautionary measures that must necessarily be taken.

(a) Obviously God the Creator of heaven and earth has not given to men to comprehend the truth about Him and His will for mankind. In other words, the morality of the Covid-19 pandemic from biblical perspectives, can only be gained by examination of a number of facts.

(b) Covid-19 pandemic could be the wrath of God upon an intensely evil world and obstinate men.

(c) The lord by the intensity of the Covid-19 pandemic may be impressing upon the minds of all citizens of the world that He knows in detail what each one is doing.

Therefore every member of every human society must be constantly vigilant over evil deeds, immorality and deadly or concealed sins.

The standards of God must be diligently upheld in our society rather than being detested and rejected.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper has attempted to agree in this paper that the covid-19 pandemic bears semblance to the epidemic of pharaonic era in ancient Egypt, both in scope and enormosity. It is our contrition that while the covid-19 pandemic continues to ravage the world, God the creator of heaven and earth is seemingly making a universal offer that, man should come under His ride as a panacea to overcoming the pandemic. It was concluded in the paper that the coming of all men under the rule of God would ultimately fulfill the pronouncement of God in Psalm 72:11 thus "all kings shall fall down before Him and all nations shall serve Him". It is therefore recommended that:

- All men should acknowledge the supremacy of God in controlling the happenings in His created world and this includes the covid-19 pandemic.
- "cleanliness they say is next to godliness" all men and religious adherence should imbibe the culture of cleanliness since our God is a

clean God in order to avoid contact with the covid-19 virus.

- Government at all levels should know that God put them in the position and then the operators should have the fear of God at heart while discharging their duties in combating the epidemic.
- All citizens too must obey God-ordained leaders on measures put in place by them to curb the spread and reduce the impact of the epidemic on people.
- It is said "...Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1sam 15:22), despite all the vaccinations, if people refuses to yield to all rules and regulations attached to preventions and the rules of God, we will still be far from seeing the end of the epidemic.

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