



SA NEWS

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What Would Solomon Say About COVID-19?

By [Benjamin Shaw](#)

The world has seemingly come unhinged in the last few months. First, there were just rumours of some viral disease in China. Then, almost overnight, it was everywhere. Officials have urged us to practice “social distancing”, a delight for introverts but something that causes real difficulties for most people. There is an almost palpable sense of fear and anxiety, as people stream to supermarkets and “big box” stores to stock up on anything they can think of. Keith Mathison wrote a fine piece on dealing with fear and anxiety that is worth reading. But I want to step back and survey our situation with a little help from our old friend Solomon. His little essay Ecclesiastes has some wisdom that can help us deal not only with fear and anxiety but can also help us put our whole situation in a godly perspective.

First, Solomon reminds us that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9). Though COVID-19 may be a previously unknown disease (at least in humans), there are many viral diseases that cause significant problems, including death for many of those who suffer from them. In addition, there have been plagues that have afflicted mankind through the ages that had a much higher death rate than the current indications are regarding COVID-19. [We] have difficulty remembering that these diseases have come and gone before, since such plagues have been relatively rare over the past couple of generations. But regrettably, as Solomon reminds us, “There is no remembrance of earlier things” (Eccl. 1:11), so we tend to act as if this had never happened before. Since there is nothing new under the sun, we can find comfort knowing that this too shall pass. In the current crisis, in light of Solomon’s wisdom, we are to walk by faith, taking the next step, doing the next thing that comes to hand, whatever our calling requires of us.

Second, Solomon reminds us that death comes to us all (Eccl. 2:16; 7:2). Sadly, some people, perhaps an exceedingly large number of people, will die as a result of this plague. But it can be helpful to remember that all of us will die as long as the Lord tarries. Heart disease, cancer, a car wreck, war—these are but a few of the death-dealing threats that we see around us every day. A pandemic might make the possibility of death more immediate, but the pandemic has not

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introduced death into our world. It has been here since the fall. Not that we should be callous regarding death, of course, for one death lessens us all. As John Donne put it, “Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” But by remembering that we are not immortal, we can prepare ourselves for our deaths that were sure to come even before COVID-19 struck.

Third, in light of our mortality, we must remember our Creator, especially when we are young (Eccl. 12:1). The living should take to heart the lesson that every death teaches. We, too, will die and we, too, will answer to our Creator. God will bring every deed into judgment, even the secret deeds, and the thoughts and intents of the heart. These are not light or frivolous considerations but deal with the very core of our being. This pandemic can be used of God to renew our faith and call many people to salvation through faith in Christ.

Fourth, what are we to do in the meantime? “Fear God and keep his commandments” (Eccl. 12:13). What does it mean to fear God? It means to recognize who He is and to take Him at His word. He has not been caught off guard but is providentially working all things together for our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28). Among other things, this means that God will fulfill both His blessings and His curses. As Jesus reminded us, we are to “fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). But such fear without obedience is an empty and soul-destroying fear. In the current crisis, in light of Solomon’s wisdom, we are to walk by faith, taking the next step, doing the next thing that comes to hand, whatever our calling requires of us. We are to remember the brevity of the life that is given to us. And we are to remember that the mystery of providence is the outworking of the good and glorious purposes of our loving heavenly Father.

Meditation 17, in *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*

Dr. Benjamin Shaw is professor of Old Testament at Reformation Bible College in Sanford, Fla. and is author of *Ecclesiastes: Life in a Fallen World*.

Come and Stay at Karnkendi, Nelson

Camp Costs

The current costs for groups at the camp is \$25 per person per night (min 20 if possible) with a special cost for family groups over 60 in number of \$25 per night for Adults and \$12.50 for children 5-15 (under 5 free).

The Cottage

The cost per night is based on 2 Adults for \$125 (bedding included) with additional charge of \$15 per person thereafter.

The cottage can sleep up to 8 but only has the one bathroom with separate toilet. Weekly rates available on request.

Nelson can offer a range of outdoor activities from canoeing, fishing and bush/ beach walks all a short distance from Karnkendi.

Please call Heather on 0448 871 225 or email karnkendi@psca.org.au

Mount Gambier

It's hard to believe that it's over eight months since we celebrated Christmas and welcomed in a new year.

A lot has changed over the last six months due to COVID-19. We moved to doing church online, via our web page and YouTube, for about ten weeks during the period where we could not meet in our building. Those of our congregation with no access to a computer had DVD's of the services delivered to them every week. A big thank you to everyone who made it possible to meet online and to Ralios Chiodze for producing the DVD's and Alan Fox for delivering them.

We are now back in the building, for our morning and evening services, and observing COVID-19 Restrictions ie physical distancing, hand sanitiser, contactless morning tea and staying away if sick.

The one activity that continued throughout the restrictions was our weekly Prayer Meeting. This was held over ZOOM and is still being held in this way. It has been encouraging to see a few more people joining us for prayer.

All our activities ceased during the period of about ten weeks and some activities for longer. However, some of our Growth Groups are meeting again and Coffee & Craft are back meeting and doing their craft work. They have even had a Mobile Coffee Van up at the Church so they can have their coffee.

Wattle Range

Millicent

Best wishes and Greetings to all our church friends. It is great to hear news from other churches.

February: We have returned to our monthly coffee mornings here in Millicent, and also our prayer meetings. 16 of our people went to Beachport for fellowship together, and some attended the World day of Prayer. The country celebrated was Zimbabwe and the speaker was a lady who had lived in Zimbabwe. The attendance was only 35-40. I can remember when 89-90 ladies attended.

Sadly, we have lost another of our friends. Mrs Betty Thompson passed away on 15th March while a resident of Hart court. She along with her late Husband Alan had attended St Andrews after transferring from Penola.

What a dreadful 6 months we have had with the Corona virus. Our prayers are for those who have lost family members and friends. So unbelievable that our churches have been closed. I have been attending St Andrews for 94 years and this is the first time it has happened. We all miss the services so much.

July 12th: Thankfully we have resumed services, and in spite of the cold mornings we have had a good attendance. There are still a few on the sick list and we wish them well.

Thelma Thomas

Jesus said, Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe in me also

Karnkendi Campsite

Our last camp was from Mount Gambier with Tenison Woods Catholic College Senior music camp on the 11th -13th March after a break from using the camp for several years. This went extremely well and we received many positive comments as Karnkendi served the 'Budding' musicians well which saw them practicing in all corners of the camp including the cottage.

We had a major push to get the outdoor stage/camp kitchen ready and readers may have seen images of the flooring material loaded on a trailer in Melbourne some time ago bound for Nelson.

With help from a few good friends we managed to get the old floor removed and new floor down just in time to see the Drums section of the Senior Music camp make good use of the open surrounds which was very much to order for the size and volume of the group!

In late March the unfortunate situation of COVID-19 was felt by practically all Australians in some way and the sudden loss of any groups for several months at Karnkendi fell like an axe as Government restrictions were brought in.

From the middle of March until the end of May we have had 6 groups cancel, of which 4 would have been from Beacons Hills College Melbourne with their outdoor Explorer programme, due to COVID-19 precautions. Just prior to their first camp we had long overdue upgrades of the external lighting which included a large floodlight of the camping ground, sadly this wasn't used.

Traditionally we do not have any camps from June to late September.

We have had a number of well known clients (Vic based) to our Aircraft maintenance business who require accommodation in Nelson so have been able to occupy the Cottage for 15 nights. We have even stored a vehicle that was damaged by a kangaroo for 10 days which saw revenue come in from the insurance company Shannons.

We are making the best of the situation so to keep Karnkendi in a "ready state" once things start to improve and have repaired water pumps, fixed gutters, done external painting and completely repainted the internal rooms of the cottage whilst things are quiet which have been good improvements at minimal cost.

I am hoping the lawns may have been affected by the pandemic but NO they will need mowing once we get a little warmer weather!

Our next booking is for a small Victorian based craft group that have been coming for many years on the 25th of September for 3 nights, then a large Mount Gambier Church group and another Child welfare group both SA based for October.

We have 4 groups booked for the remainder of 2020 with a small Victorian based group confirming the 23rd - 26th of December a couple of weeks ago.

At this time interstate users will clearly be our first issue with the current restrictions.

Both Heather and I would like to sincerely extend our thoughts and prayers to you all and trust your congregations, small groups and families to be safe in God's care and thankyou also for your prayers that we feel extended to us at Karnkendi.

God bless,

Harvey and Heather McBain

Karnkendi

Nelson

Naracoorte

Greetings to our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

We have all been through a difficult time in the past 5 months. Some churches are meeting face to face again, but Naracoorte has not yet come to that stage.

During these months, we have continued to issue a fortnightly newsletter with a Devotion, Prayer Points, interesting stories and news for the congregation. On the alternate fortnights Julie McLean has prepared a Handout with a Devotion and Bible Readings on a particular theme: for example "Be Still", "Rest and Renew", "Let Go and Let God" etc. ably supported by Norma Davis with the art work.

The ladies KYB Bible Studies continued on Zoom; 7 ladies had practice sessions before the first meeting and then we were all able to connect at the appropriate time. We looked forward to this time each week, which was very welcome and encouraging, especially in April and May when most of us were not going out of our homes. It was great to connect with each other and discuss the questions and any issues which arose. We completed Term 1 study in the first 2 weeks of April then studied Acts 1-12 in Term 2. We began a face to face study of Nehemiah in Term 3.

Committee of Management meetings have been held as and when required and it is good to see that the community use of the hall has begun again in Term 3.

We thank Mount Gambier church for uploading their services on to the internet. Many of our members, who have the internet, and are able to connect, have been worshipping along with the Mount Gambier congregation. Thanks to the 'techno gurus' who had to learn quickly how to set up and use this new technology. I am sure it is very much appreciated by all who join in for Sunday morning Worship and Praise.

Blessings to you all,
Pat Leitch

"pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

From the Moderator-General

The One Thing Needful

There are seasons in life when the light shines a little more brightly, and all looks rather clearer, even if all is not peace and tranquility. As Jesus came to the home of the sisters, Mary and Martha, in Bethany, Martha became distracted with the practical things of service. This led to her complaint to Jesus that she was left with the mundane tasks of life while Mary sat at Christ's feet and listened. Jesus' reply is a gentle rebuke, that Martha was troubled and anxious about many things, but Mary had realised – in the KJV's memorable expression – that 'one thing is needful', and it would not be taken from her (Luke 10:38-42). In the ESV translation it is 'one thing is necessary', which, of course, is accurate, but not so compelling to this ageing mind.

In 1765 the great evangelist, George Whitefield, stayed overnight in the home of a Thomas Fanning in New England. Fanning was apparently a man who possessed an abundance of the good things of life but not the 'one thing needful'. The next morning, Whitefield could not contain himself, and so he wrote with a diamond on a pane of glass 'one thing is needful'. Apparently the pane with its inscription survived for over sixty years, being commented on in 1828.

Whenever the four horsemen have been riding – pestilence, sword, famine, and death – they should lead finite creatures like us to ponder the shortness of our earthly stay. Threats of dislocation and death do not change the human condition; they merely run a highlighter through it. As Dr Johnson famously commented: 'Depend upon it, sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully.' At least it ought to.

Media-land would do anything to distract us, and have us think in terms of a return to normality – to *Sunrise*; *Home and Away*; *Bride and Prejudice*; *The Drum*; *Four Corners*, and many other variations of banality, at best. Slogans abound, and serve as a substitute for thinking. Marxism has receded, but Cultural Marxism has taken its place, with 'victims' replacing the proletariat. The World Council of Churches in 1968 officially adopted a slogan which had been well-worn in liberal circles: 'The world sets the agenda'.

Christ tells us otherwise. When the sinful woman weeps at Jesus' feet, the Lord announces: 'Your sins are forgiven' (Luke 7:48). When Nicodemus comes to ask Jesus some questions, Jesus cuts him off with His statement that 'You must be born again' (John 3:3). Paul wrote to the Corinthians that he was determined to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, he carefully explained to his hearers that the man Jesus was in fact Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). Then he went on to explain how through Christ, repentance, faith and baptism would mean that one's sins were forgiven (Acts 2:38).

Proportion plays a part in all this. When the Good Samaritan came across the beaten-up Jew, he saw that his immediate need was for physical help and comfort. It would have been inappropriate - even unchristian - to have simply

placed a gospel tract in his pocket. John Wesley famously told his evangelists: 'You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work.' Such a sentiment did not prevent Wesley from becoming involved in the campaign against slavery. It has been said that it is braver to stamp on the corns of a live giant than to cut off the head of a dead one. We need to make sure we are reflecting God's priorities, and not simply being media-driven. Not far off death, Paul exhorted Timothy: 'Preach the Word' (2 Tim. 4:2). He was not reducing the Bible's message to three words, but he was saying that we need to centre on its message in the right proportion.

Rev. Dr Peter Barnes,

Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

Whyalla

We probably share a common experience since our Services have been disallowed due to COVID-19 with our last service held on 22nd March. During this period away from Church we had the benefit of complete services delivered to each of us prepared by our Session Clerk Mrs Helen Mills Mashford and our Elders Mr John McVey and Mrs Annabell McVey.



We were able to use these as a means of Worship each Sunday within our own homes. The Congregation is unanimous in wanting to thank these people for their efforts.

However, one sad note in this period was the unexpected and sudden passing on the 4th April of one of our longstanding members, Mrs Fay Taylor. Our hearts go out to husband James and their son Kenneth and his family. Due to gathering restrictions only a small group was able to attend the Funeral Service on the 15th April. Kenneth flew over from Western Australia alone leaving his family behind. However, his family was included in the Service via a video link which all worked very well. We will be having a Memorial Service in the future to celebrate Fay's life.

Happily, we received word that we could recommence services on the 5th of July, Praise God! So now we need to put the rest of the year into some sort of planned order.

We had another happy event on Sunday the 2nd of July when a former Sunday School student in the person of Jennifer Kristic became a member of our Church. We all congratulate her on her important step.

Again we have a challenge ahead of us all but we just rest in the Lord and ask for His guidance and strength to continue our work as a Congregation of His people.

Barry Williams

PRAYER POINTS

- Intercede for the Federal Government; Prime Minister Scott Morrison; that he will lead with integrity, stand firm in his belief and hold fast to his faith.
- Pray for the Adelaide Church; Davo Gunning, Damien Carson, Ben Harvey; congregations and elders.
- Pray for Bible Studies being held; that people may come to a deeper knowledge of God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- Pray for all security forces around the world working to prevent violence and destruction, that our Lord will lead and guide them in their work, even though they may not know Him.
- Intercede for the Defence and Police forces and all first responders during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Uphold in prayer your parliamentary representatives, federal and state.
- Pray for the PIM and pray that someone will be found for the Flynn Patrol in South Australia.
- Pray for persecuted Christians throughout the world.
- Pray for all those affected by the Coronavirus.
- Pray for the Leader of the Opposition Anthony Albanese; that he will be guided by Christian principles and come to know Jesus as his Lord and Saviour.
- Pray for the Mount Gambier Church; Gary & Margaret Ware; Mark & Rachel Lewis; congregation and elders.
- Pray for the Presbytery of South Australia, Moderator Phil Strong; Clerk Gary Ware.
- Pray for the APWM office, Kevin Murray (Director)
- Pray for the towns and cities of South Australia, for the people in them who do not know Christ, including unsaved family members, friends and work colleagues.
- Pray for hearts to be opened as the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed by word and deed by PIM workers.
- Christian witness in primary and secondary schools (especially your local ones) through believing pupils, parents, staff and visiting teachers.
- Pray for 'M' serving in west Asia
- Uphold our brothers & sisters in Victoria while they are unable to meet physically. Pray that they will keep focussed on the Gospel.

Editor's Note

Thank you to all who have contributed items for this issue of SA News they are all very much appreciated. Contributions for the December 2020 issue are to be in my hands **no later than 5.00pm Monday 16th November 2020.**

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