

# Pestilence

The Hebrew and Greek words “pestilence,” in their first uses, are found and considered below:

**Exodus 5:3** And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with **pestilence**, or with the sword.

- *Moses and Aaron appealing for God’s people to be released by Pharaoh*

**Exodus 9:3** Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: *there shall be* a very grievous **murrain**.

- *God’s hand was upon the Egyptians during the time of the plagues that were sent to deliver His people from bondage*

**Exodus 9:15** For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with **pestilence**; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

- *God warning Pharaoh again through Moses*

**Leviticus 26:25** And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of *my* covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the **pestilence** among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

- *A warning in the midst of the blessings and the curses*

**Numbers 14:12** I will smite them with the **pestilence**, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

- *God testing Moses to see where his heart is—whether Moses is selfish, and if he cares for God’s people or not*

**Deuteronomy 28:21** The LORD shall make the **pestilence** cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.

- *Another warning in blessings and curses*

**2 Samuel 24:13** So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days’ **pestilence** in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

- *A prophet offering King David a choice between punishments*

**2 Samuel 24:15** So the LORD sent a **pestilence** upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

- *God showing the severity of a king turning from His sovereign counsel*

**1 Kings 8:37** If there be in the land famine, if there be **pestilence**, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness *there be*;

- *King Solomon's prayer for the future of his people*

**1 Chronicles 21:12** Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh *thee*; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the **pestilence**, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

- *A repeat story of the prophet offering King David a choice between punishments*

**1 Chronicles 21:14** So the LORD sent **pestilence** upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

- *A repeat story of God showing the severity of a king turning from His sovereign counsel*

**2 Chronicles 6:28** If there be dearth in the land, if there be **pestilence**, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness *there be*:

- *A repeat of King Solomon's prayer for the future of his people*

**2 Chronicles 7:13-14** If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send **pestilence** among my people; <sup>14</sup> 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.

- *God appearing to King Solomon at night with a promise*

**2 Chronicles 20:9** If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword, judgment, or **pestilence**, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name *is* in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

- *King Jehoshaphat praying for his people*

**Psalms 78:50** He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the **pestilence**;

- *A recounting of how God dealt with His rebellious people*

**Psalms 91:3** Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome **pestilence**.

- *A promise of how God will deal with His faithful people*

**Psalms 91:6** *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*

- *A continued promise of how God will deal with His faithful people*

**Jeremiah 14:12** When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

- *God dealing with His rebellious people*

**Jeremiah 21:6-7** And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence. <sup>7</sup> And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

- *God responding to the inquiry of King Zedekiah*

**Jeremiah 21:9** He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

- *God continuing the response to the inquiry of King Zedekiah*

**Jeremiah 24:10** And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

- *God warning His rebellious people*

**Jeremiah 27:8** And it shall come to pass, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

- *God warning those who will not follow His direction*

**Jeremiah 27:13** Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?

- *A question for those who will not follow God's voice through His prophet*

**Jeremiah 28:8** The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.

- *Jeremiah contending with false prophets*

**Jeremiah 29:17-18** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. <sup>18</sup> And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and

will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:

- *Another warning from God*

**Jeremiah 32:23-24** And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them: <sup>24</sup> Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the **pestilence**: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest *it*.

- *The prophet recounting the history of God's people, Israel*

**Jeremiah 32:36-42** And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the **pestilence**; <sup>37</sup> Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: <sup>38</sup> And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: <sup>39</sup> And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: <sup>40</sup> And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. <sup>41</sup> Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. <sup>42</sup> For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

- *God's promises will be kept for His people (Note: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29)*

**Jeremiah 34:13-17** Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, <sup>14</sup> At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. <sup>15</sup> And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: <sup>16</sup> But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. <sup>17</sup> Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the **pestilence**, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

- *God's people jostling between right and wrong, good and evil. Judgments come as a result*

**Jeremiah 38:2** Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the **pestilence**: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.

- *A warning given to God's people*

**Jeremiah 42:17** So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the **pestilence**: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.

- *A warning to those who will not listen to God's counsel*

**Jeremiah 42:22** Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the **pestilence**, in the place whither ye desire to go *and* to sojourn.

- *Another warning to those who will not listen to God's counsel*

**Jeremiah 44:13** For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the **pestilence**:

- *Another warning to those who will not listen to God's counsel*

**Ezekiel 5:12** A third part of thee shall die with the **pestilence**, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

- *God's judgments foretold for His people because they had rejected His counsel*

**Ezekiel 5:17** So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and **pestilence** and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken *it*.

- *God's judgments continued*

**Ezekiel 6:11-12** Thus saith the Lord GOD; Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the **pestilence**. <sup>12</sup> He that is far off shall die of the **pestilence**; and he that is near shall fall by the sword; and he that remaineth and is besieged shall die by the famine: thus will I accomplish my fury upon them.

- *God's people, called to be holy by His grace, to be judged*

**Ezekiel 7:15** 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.

- *God's warnings to His people continued (read through chapters 8-9)*

**Ezekiel 12:16** But I will leave a few men of them from the sword, from the famine, and from the **pestilence**; that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

- *God's desire to use His people though they have been punished and dispersed*

**Ezekiel 14:19-21** Or *if* I send a **pestilence** into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast: <sup>20</sup> Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, *were* in it, *as* I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall *but* deliver their own souls by their righteousness. <sup>21</sup> For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the **pestilence**, to cut off from it man and beast?

- *A nation can be judged, yet it is for each individual to stand for themselves in the judgment*

**Ezekiel 28:23** For I will send into her **pestilence**, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

- *God's warning to Zidon*

**Ezekiel 33:27** Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; *As* I live, surely they that *are* in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that *is* in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that *be* in the forts and in the caves shall die of the **pestilence**.

- *God's continued warnings to Israel*

**Ezekiel 38:22-23** And I will plead against him with **pestilence** and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that *are* with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. <sup>23</sup> Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

- *God's warnings and prophecy to Gog and Magog (symbolized in Revelation 20)*

**Hosea 13:9-14** O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me *is* thine help. <sup>10</sup> I will be thy king: where *is any other* that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? <sup>11</sup> I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took *him* away in my wrath. <sup>12</sup> The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up; his sin *is* hid. <sup>13</sup> The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he *is* an unwise son; for he should not stay long in *the place of* the breaking forth of children. <sup>14</sup> I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy **plagues**; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

- *God's words to His people*

**Amos 4:10-12** I have sent among you the **pestilence** after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. <sup>11</sup> I have overthrown *some* of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. <sup>12</sup> Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

- *Continued warnings through yet another prophet to God's people*

**Habakkuk 3:3-6** God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. <sup>4</sup> And *his* brightness was as the light; he had horns *coming* out of his hand: and there *was* the hiding of his power. <sup>5</sup> Before him went the **pestilence**, and burning coals went forth at his feet. <sup>6</sup> He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways *are* everlasting.

- *God described in glory*

## New Testament

**Matthew 24:7-8** For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and **pestilences**, and earthquakes, in divers places. <sup>8</sup> All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

- *An end-time foretelling of God's judgments—because of our unfaithfulness*

**Luke 21:11** And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and **pestilences**; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

- *The same end-time foretelling of God's judgments—because of our unfaithfulness*

**Acts 24:5** For we have found this man a **pestilent** fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

- *This is the final of the three uses of the Greek word in the New Testament... Paul, a faithful servant of God, was wrongly accused of being pestilent. It was the majority of people who were unfaithful to God, while the minority—the faithful—was blamed as the trouble maker!*

*While appearing to the children of men as a great physician who can heal all their maladies, he will bring disease and disaster, until populous cities are reduced to ruin and desolation. Even now he is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away," "the haughty people ... do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." Isaiah 24:4, 5. GC 589.3*

*And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity. Thus the accusation urged of old against the servant of God will be repeated and upon grounds equally well established: "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." 1 Kings 18:17, 18. As the wrath of the people shall be excited by false charges, they will pursue a course toward God's ambassadors very similar to that which apostate Israel pursued toward Elijah. GC 590.1*