

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MIKE EVANS

FINDING
GOD
IN THE
PLAGUE



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Finding God in the Plague

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This book is lovingly dedicated to my dear friend,
Leonard Ravenhill (1907-1994)

Leonard Ravenhill was an English Christian evangelist and author who greatly impacted my life.

I had the honor of visiting him in his home just before he died. On the ceiling above his bed he had written the word “eternity” to remind him of focusing on heaven.

During our final meeting, he asked me two questions that have challenged me to this day.

First, he asked, “Are the things you’re living for worth Christ dying for?”

Second, he asked, “Are you living your life in the light of eternity, so you don’t fear eternity?”

I pray this book honors his perspective and leads you to better live for what is eternal.



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INTRODUCTION

F*inding God in the Plague* was written during the plague of the coronavirus during my time of radical prayer and repentance before the Lord. I hope you discover what I saw in this revelation because it changed my life. One word from God can change your life forever.

Many ask me, “What is the key to your success?” I’m a number one *New York Times* bestselling author and have 105 published books that have been read by more than 43 million people. I’ve written over 5,000 articles and have met with over 70 world leaders. I am currently advising three world leaders. I’m also the founder of two beautiful museums, Friends of Zion in Jerusalem and the Corrie Ten Boom Museum in Haarlem, Holland.

As I complete the final words of this book, I’ve just returned from meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and presented

him with the Friends of Zion Award for his support of Israel and was briefed on the current situation in Israel. Over the last 48 hours, I've conducted 18 interviews with major Israeli and American media in support of Israel and the Jewish people.

I'm not saying all this to brag about myself; I'm saying it to brag on God. I know who I am. All the great things God has done in my life have come through dark times that in many ways were like a plague. My first plague happened when I was 11. My childhood was one of unspeakable terrors. My father began abusing me at the age of four because he believed my mother had had an affair for two years with a Jewish man, and that I was not his son.

The abuse was violent. He would strip me naked and beat me with extension cords and coat hangers. Because of the ongoing, violent abuse, I developed tremendous problems—a speech impediment, a stomach ulcer, and was crippled by numerous fears. I had a fear of the dark, of death, of heights, and a fear of people.

I did not believe in God or Jesus. My mother told me at a very young age that she named me after her grandfather, Rabbi Mikel Katznelson, who had been burned alive in a synagogue with 2,000 other Jews. I later found out that the ninth president of Israel, Shimon Peres, who was until his death the chairman of my Friends of Zion museum, also had a grandfather, rabbi cantor Zvi Meltzer, in that same synagogue. He was also burned to death.

My father claimed to be an evangelical Christian. He attended

church every Sunday. He tithed. They called him Brother Bob. But he was a womanizer and a very mean drunk. He would often beat my mother when he came home on Friday nights between one and two in the morning.

He never called me son. He never said I love you. He never affirmed me. What happens to a little boy like that? I think you know. He often ends up in prison for life or becomes a drug addict or an alcoholic, or commits suicide. He certainly doesn't end up happily married for 50 years to his best friend with children and grandchildren who adore him.

But that's precisely what happened to me. I remember one Tuesday in school when the teacher asked us children, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The teacher had told us on Monday to think about it. I was terrified, because my only goal was to become 20 years old. That may sound strange to you, but I was sure my father would kill me before then. He almost succeeded several times.

One time on my way home I found a jackknife in the snow. I was so proud of myself. I showed it to him. He called me a liar and said, "God hates liars. You stole it. If you found it in the snow it would have been rusty." He took me into the basement, stripped me naked, took an extension cord, and started beating me. He held onto one of my arms and beat me with the extension cord in his other hand, and screaming, "God hates liars! I will beat you to death if I have to, until you tell me truth."

He almost did beat me to death. He beat me until I was hysterical and wet myself. He beat me until I could hardly think. I was a bloody mess. I desperately tried to come up with a lie so that he would stop, but I was in such a state of shock that I could not.

I was 11 years old and had to show up for school on Tuesday and say what I wanted to be when I grew up. Everyone had their dreams, like being a pilot or doctor or an astronaut. I intentionally showed up late to school because I hoped the teacher wouldn't call on me. I sat in the last seat in the room, positioned near the red bell. I remember that bell, hoping it would ring so I could get out of there before the teacher called on me. Unfortunately, my plan did not work.

My teacher asked me, "Michael, what do you want to be when you grow up?"

Because I stuttered, I said, "I want to to-to be-be-be 20."

The teacher said, "What? I didn't understand you." I said it again. "You want to grow up to be 20?"

"Yes."

Everyone in the class looked at me and started laughing. Then the red bell rang. I ran out of that classroom crying, so embarrassed and humiliated, because that was truly my only goal, to be alive at 20. That was on a Tuesday.

That following Friday night, it looked as if that goal would never be achieved. Early Saturday morning, I woke up somewhere around

1:30 to the sound of my mother crying. I walked to the top of the stairs and spotted my father, forcing her to sit in a chair while he slapped her, calling her a Jewish whore, accusing her of having had an affair with a Jewish man, and shouting, “You know he’s not my son. He’s a bastard!”

I cried and felt so ashamed because I’d seen this scene many times, yet I was a coward. I was afraid to protect my mother. I was a skinny little guy and my father was a big, muscular man.

As I sat in agony crying, I had no faith. Because of what had happened to my great-grandfather, I didn’t believe in God, and because my father claimed to believe in Jesus and said he was a good Christian, I didn’t believe in Jesus. I thought it was all faked.

But as my mother was crying, something in me snapped. I screamed out in the dark, “Stop it!”

After I had screamed out, my father flew up those stairs like a raging bull. He reached out, grabbed me by the throat, and lifted me above his head. I reached out to grab his hands because I was in excruciating pain. I looked into those bloodshot eyes and realized I wasn’t going to live to be 20. I was going to die that night.

The next thing I remember was waking up from an unconscious state, gagging. I was in a fetal position on the floor. I don’t know how long I had been there. I had vomited all over myself, but I was alive. I was angry I had survived, because I saw no purpose for my life. This man hated me, and I believed my mother was suffering because of

me. In the dark, in my personal plague, I shouted at God, screaming loudly, “God, why was I born?”

When I said that, I suddenly noticed a light coming toward me. It scared me. I thought it was my father coming back to finish me off. I lifted my hands to protect my face. The light grew brighter and brighter. It seemed like hours, but was probably only a few seconds of quiet.

I suddenly knew it couldn't be my father, because he would have been raging and cursing and screaming. I dared to peak through my fingers at the light. When I did, I saw something I had never seen before or since. I saw two hands reaching toward me. There were nail scars on His wrists. Could it be Jesus? I thought I must be out of my mind because I didn't even believe in Jesus.

I looked up a little higher and could then see His eyes. It was the first time I had ever seen a man with smiling eyes. They were the eyes of Jesus. Every color in the rainbow was in those eyes, blues and greens and every color. They were like magnets when I looked at them. I couldn't stop looking. They just drew me in.

He spoke as He looked at me, calling me, “Son.” I had never heard the word son from my father. No one had ever called me son.

Then He said, “I love you.”

I had never heard those words. I would say, “I love you,” to my mother, but she had been abused so much she couldn't say them. She only said, “Me too.”

Next, He said, “I have a great plan for your life.” Then He suddenly left.

I cried the rest of that night, but in joy, because now I had hope. It was hope I had never experienced.

I realized in the morning that I didn’t stutter anymore and that my stomach didn’t hurt when I ate. I also noticed that I wasn’t afraid anymore. I wasn’t afraid of the dark, of people, of heights, or even death. I had been radically transformed by the grace of God, and I didn’t even understand what any of it meant. I had come to glorious faith in a living Savior.

But what I also saw that morning were the lines from my father’s fingers around my neck when I looked in the mirror. He had choked me so severely that blood came to the surface. Everywhere his fingers had been, you could see their prints around my neck.

At 11 years old, I had gone through my own personal plague, but it was the greatest day of my life. And yes, it was also the worst.

Since that day I’ve encountered many personal plagues. I know of at least a dozen occasions. Some of them have been in war zones such as Somalia with Al-Qaeda attempting to assassinate me. Another was in Cambodia with the Khmer Rouge trying to kill me. Still another time was in the Persian Gulf during the Iraq War when it looked like I was going to die. Yes, I have experienced many personal problems, but God has always shown up in my plagues. He revealed Himself beyond anything I could have comprehended.

MIKE EVANS

I'm sharing this with you because I know how painful plagues are and how paralyzing fear can be. I want you to know the plague you've gone through includes a path to the presence and the power of God in a way that you've never experienced. I pray that the words in this book will help you look to the Lord during your plagues and that God will receive all the glory.

“THE PEOPLE
THAT DO KNOW
THEIR GOD
SHALL BE STRONG,
AND DO
EXPLOITS.”

-DANIEL 11:32, KJV





DID GOD SEND THE PLAGUE?

“**D**id God send the plague?” This is a question I’ve heard probably a hundred times from different people: Did He send this plague? If so why? People want answers. I’m not going to give you answers based on my opinion. That’s completely irrelevant. Everyone else’s opinion is irrelevant. The only thing that’s relevant is what the Word of God says. Let’s look at what the Bible teaches about plagues.

First, let’s look at Jesus. He established the Lord’s Supper. Yet the Lord’s Supper was also a commemoration of a plague. The Passover was celebrated on the same night the Lord had passed over the Jewish people and struck all firstborn males of Egypt with death. The Lord’s Supper also commemorates another

plague, the death of Christ. It was all predicted in the Last Supper and even in the Psalms. The revelation of the Passover plague was that the angel of death could be stopped only by the blood of the Lamb.

Many say plagues are exclusive to the Old Testament. They would argue that we're New Testament believers, and that plagues no longer take place: "God doesn't send plagues today; we're under grace." I want you to look at three Scriptures in the Old Testament on this issue:

"For at this time, I will send all my plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like me in all the Earth" (Exodus 9:14).

"But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague" (Numbers 11:33).

"If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants

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extraordinary plagues, great and prolonged plagues, and serious and prolonged sickness” (Deuteronomy 28:58-59).

This passage in Deuteronomy includes the last words of Moses before Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. God talked to him about the covenant people, the people of promise. He warned him that even though they were entering into the Promised Land, if they took their eyes off God and put idols between them and God, there would be consequences.

In Deuteronomy 28:61, we read, “Also, every sickness, every plague which is not written in the book of the law will the Lord bring upon you until you are destroyed. The Lord will bring upon you all the diseases and plagues.” Again, the Lord is talking to His covenant people. Can you imagine that? This is Joshua, the leader who would be known for a victory in Jericho with the walls falling down, being warned by Moses, the man of God. He was told that plagues would come upon them if they disobeyed, and the Lord would send those plagues.

In 1 Samuel 5:7, the Ark of the Covenant had been taken into the land of the Philistines. God sent a plague so great that the idol Dagon fell on its face. What an illustration! “When the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, ‘The Ark of God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh towards us and our god.’” It’s a great

example of what happens when the church makes a covenant with the world.

I want you to look at these two Scriptures:

“And David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel” (2 Samuel 24:25).

“Behold, the Lord will strike your people with a serious affliction, your children, your wives, and all your possessions” (2 Chronicles 21:14).

In the first passage, the plague was stopped by David’s obedience to the Lord. Plagues are a sign of God’s wrath, usually regarding idolatry.

Yet many will insist, “That’s the Old Testament, but I’m in the New Testament of God’s grace. We don’t have plagues now.” Unfortunately, some of today’s pastors give you smooth words of comfort while people are suffering because of plagues, and even dying.

When Jesus healed a blind man in John 5:14, He told him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” Do you see that? “. . .lest a worse thing come upon you.”

We also read in Acts 5 about a story of two amazing church members, Ananias and Sapphira. They gave a large financial gift to the church, but they were not honest with their gift. They lied to the Holy Spirit, and both were suddenly struck dead.

Let's also look further in the New Testament at Revelation, also called the Apocalypse. The word "apocalypse" comes from the Greek word meaning an unveiling. We've been in a plague, but there will also be plagues in the future. If you read the book of Revelation, you'll see this on multiple occasions.

Revelation 9:18: "By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths."

Revelation 9:20: "But the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk."

The people would not repent. They hardened their hearts despite the plague. This is precisely what the late Pastor David Wilkerson told me in 1986. He preached that there is idolatry and unrepentance in the church, and a plague was coming because of it.

Revelation 11:6: “These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.”

These men will have the power to strike the world with plagues from God, just as Moses predicted to Joshua.

Revelation 15:1, “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.”

Revelation 15:6-8, “And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.”

Revelation 18:4, “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people that ye may

not be partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Plagues continue to be mentioned in the final two chapters of Revelation that describe the new heaven and the new earth. Revelation 21:9 mentions seven angels with the last seven plagues: “Then one of the seven angels, who had seven bowls filled with seven plagues, came to me and talked with me saying, ‘I will show you the bride, the lamb’s wife.’”

Do you know what this is all about? It’s talking about Jesus, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It refers to our Savior. When did He come? In the midst of a plague! God cleanses through plagues. Don’t take it lightly. Plagues are the judgment of God.

Plagues are sent to lead people to repent. We must humble ourselves. We must look at this issue from the Word of God. My opinion doesn’t matter. Your pastor’s opinion doesn’t matter. Only the Word of God matters.

Look at the last words of the Book of Revelation. Last words are very important. Revelation 22:18 reads, “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.”

The Bible even ends with the warning to not change God’s Word. Those who do so will experience plagues. If you are taking the Word

of God and adding to it, or removing anything from it, you will experience plagues.

Some pastors are not preaching against sin. Do you know that the moral standard of the world is determined by the moral standard in the church? When pastors refuse to preach against sin, there's no conviction in the pews. They are taking away from the Word of God. When pastors refuse to preach against hell, they are taking away from the Word of God. When they're adding cheap grace and exemption from judgment, they are putting themselves and their congregation in a position to bring the plagues of God on their own heads. Yes, plagues are from God. This latest plague was surely allowed by God, and there will likely be plagues in the future.

Why are we experiencing plagues? What is the number one reason this plague has come upon humanity? It is because mankind shook its fist in the face of God and embraced secular humanism, not only in the world, but also in the church. Secular humanism is when man meets your needs, where your focus is on man, not on the Lord. But the Bible says, "The fear of the Lord leads to life" (Proverbs 18:23).

The Hebrew word for fear includes awe of the exalted, an overwhelming sense of His glory. The fear of God also implies the hatred of evil and wrong.

You don't hear a great deal of preaching against sin today. Why? Because of religious secular humanism. The Gospel is being radically

influenced in the church by a secular humanistic world. Many say, “Look at how big our church is. Look at how prosperous our church is.” Tell it to the first church of Sodom and Gomorrah!

Secular humanism puts man on the throne. It does not mind man worshipping God or claiming to know God, so long as man is on the throne.

Secular humanism promotes tolerance for immoral behavior.

Secular humanism rejects absolute moral standards.

You won't be convicted in a seeker-friendly church. You won't come into that church crying in repentance and falling on your face, because they're taking away from the Word of God, or they're adding to it. You can be sure of one thing: When the Antichrist takes control of this planet he'll take control of religion, because the spirit of the Antichrist is in many churches today.

How will he do that? He'll do it because the road has already been paved by seeker-friendly preachers, who will not preach on hell, will not preach on sin, and will leave sinners feeling comfortable. Many are familiar with the words of Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:14, but few are familiar with verses 13-15:

“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or I command the locusts to devour the land, or I send pestilence among My people, if My people which are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face,

and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to their prayers in this place.”

First, God sends plagues to humble us. Solomon affirms what we’ve studied throughout the Bible. God uses droughts and locusts and sickness and plagues to humble us, to help us realize that we’re not in control. He shuts up the skies. Instead of feasting, we’re living in fear. The preacher Andrew Murray wrote, “Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you.” Religious pride must die in us, or nothing of heaven can live in us.

Second, the response to the plague needs to be prayer and repentance. When we humble ourselves, it’s a call to holiness. Evangelist D.L. Moody once said, “It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it.” We are told to let our light shine, and if it does we won’t need to tell anybody it does, the light will be our witness, our own witness. He adds, “Lighthouses don’t ring bells and fire cannons to call attention to their shining. They just shine.”

1 Peter 1:16 says, “Be holy, for I am holy.” Peter referred to what God said in the Torah, the Law of Moses. Holiness comes at a cost. That cost is repentance and prayer and humility. The late evangelist Leonard Ravenhill noted, “The world has lost the power to blush over its vice. The church has lost her power to weep over it.” When

was the last time you really repented before the Lord? When was the last time you cried out to God for forgiveness, and saw yourself the way He sees you? In Luke 18:10-14, Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His time. He said to them:

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one was a Pharisee, the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I’m not like other men—I’m not unjust or an adulterer or a tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyebrows to heaven, but he beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ‘I tell you,’ Jesus said, ‘this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’”

Yes, we have a problem right now in Christianity. Some Christian preachers and evangelists really believe they are celebrities. Some believe it so strongly that have their own private jets. They have a bodyguard. They may even call themselves influencers, but there are no celebrities at the foot of the cross. The only celebrity in the presence of a holy God is Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Our problem is that we tend to identify more with the Pharisee than the tax collector. Religion does that to us. We are to be more like the repentant tax collector, admitting our sins, humbling ourselves, crying out to God. If you can't cry out to God in the plague, your heart is as hard as stone.

Plagues pass when we respond to God's judgment. God does not send endless plagues with the desire to destroy us. He sends plagues with the desire to restore us. Look at all the positive aspects that follow a prayerful, repentant heart during a plague: "I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land. My eyes will be open, my ears will be attentive to their prayer in this place" (2 Chronicles 7:14). When we pray and repent, God hears and responds.

Do you want the plague to pass? There's a path to ending the plague. In Nehemiah 9:2-3, the people of God had returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of bondage. They had disobeyed the Lord by marrying people who did not follow their God, but when called upon to repent, they did. Then those who repented separated themselves and confessed their sins. They stood up when they heard the reading of the Word of the Lord. The Bible says that they repented and confessed and worshipped the Lord.

The key is that they obeyed. They didn't continue in sin. They separated themselves from their sinful ways. If we want the plague to pass, we must truly change from our sins and do what is right. They confessed. They both did what was right and confessed what

was wrong. Sometimes we try to change the past without confessing. But in this case, the people publicly announced their wrongdoings.

When was the last time you heard sinners crying out in repentance? When was the last time you saw a pastor crying out from the pulpit in repentance? The Word says that if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us of those sins (1 John 1:9).

A sign of authentic confession is true brokenness. In the classic book *The Calvary Road* written by British evangelist Roy Hession we find, "This is ever the nature of true confession of sin, true brokenness. It is the confession that my sin is not just a mistake, a slip, or something which is really foreign to my heart ('Not really like me to have such thoughts or do such things!'), but it is something which reveals the real 'I'; that shows me to be proud, rotten, the unclean thing God says that I am. . ."

David confessed his sins. He humbled himself and he was a king. He wasn't trying to justify himself by gathering people to tell him how wonderful he was. He humbled himself in the presence of God (Psalm 51:4).

The second thing that happened in the midst of a plague is that they listened. I love this thought! The people had gathered for a time of revival, listening to the Word of God being read for one-fourth of each day. We're talking about three or four hours at a time! They wanted to be in the Word. We have more access to the Bible today than at any time in history, yet many of us rarely read God's Word

for ourselves. For many of us, God's Word is not transforming our lives. We have one foot in the world and the other in the temple. It won't work.

Another thing that happened out of the Israelites experiencing the plague is that they worshipped. They concluded their time of repentance with adoration. Do you realize that a plague can end in praise? Maybe you need to stop watching TV or the news and start worshipping God, and repent and humble yourself. There's something about singing of our love to God that builds our faith in Him.

James 5:13 says, "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms." If you don't know where to begin, turn to the middle of your Bible and find God's source of joy in the Psalms. A plague brings us to our knees, but it's not intended to leave us in despair. Through repentance, we can rejoice with our hands in the air.

I'm seeing a fire, and I'm seeing a plague. I'm seeing three Jews in a furnace, men who refused to bend or bow or burn. And I'm seeing a king who says, "There's a fourth man in the midst of the furnace, and he looks like the son of God." Hallelujah! God is coming in the midst of this plague. God sends plagues. He did in the past. He's doing it now. He'll do it in the future. But they're only to turn our hearts to Him and to pursue holiness.

Today we've forgotten what the word holiness means. We think it means happiness. On March 10, 1998, David Wilkerson preached a message entitled "The Dangers of the Gospel of Accommodation."

His words stirred my heart as I sought the Lord in repentance during the COVID-19 crisis. He stated, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ is one of self-denial. Jesus said, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.’”

Self-denial is not something you give; it’s something you give up. The giving up of yourself, giving up everything you are. It’s a living sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ to present your body as a holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. God has every right to say to His church, “If you expect to give Me your resurrected body all through eternity, I have every right to ask you to devote your body to Me in this life. I want every part of you. Surrender to Me.”

We’re not here for our own pleasure and prosperity. We’re here for the pleasure of the King. When we want His attention, when we focus on Him in the midst of a plague, His glory will come on us. A plague is painful, but it’s also purposeful. Let us not forget the reason God sends plagues upon the land. Let us respond with a heart of confession and repentance and holiness before the Lord, in humility.

I realize this is a strong message, but it’s not as strong as theologian Jonathan Edwards’ message, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” that birthed the First Great Awakening in the 1730s and ‘40s. God is calling us to fall on our faces and acknowledge that He sent the plague in order for us to repent. If we do, we’ll hear from heaven in a way we’ve never experienced.

MIKE EVANS

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ✧ How have the plagues of our time changed your life?
- ✧ What responses do you feel God is calling you to make as you face challenging times?
- ✧ In what ways do you need to change how you pray to respond to God during this time of plague?
- ✧ Who has God placed in your life who also needs to hear the message of God at work through plagues? How can you share this message of repentance and hope with them?