

A LOCKED-DOWN EARTH AND AN OPEN HEAVEN?

Earthly and human made doors are designed to lock and open. They are principally meant for access and security. Doors to locations where precious and things of noble use are stuffed up, are designed more technically sophisticated than doors to where things of ignoble and ordinary use are kept. On earth, man has the power to lockdown or lockup doors under his watch whenever the occasion warrants and as he feels led. The current individual lockdown of countries and nations is a pointer to this fact. And one by one, as nation after nation locks down, the whole earth is assuming and wearing the semblance of a lockdown. Yet the power to the present lockdown is not in the hand of man but a virus. It has no limbs-legs, hands and body, yet it is everywhere and with a life-snuffing power and can open any and every door no matter how sophisticated, and access man the most precious of God created beings and who is its target of attack.. It respects no position, status, wealth, influence and education. Interestingly, its theatre of operation, is the earth. Heaven is a no go area for it and is beyond its reach. No matter the amount of human attempt at locking down, this virus appears defying being tamed. It is like the lock-down either locks it in with you or leaves it waiting outside and by the door for you. So that either ways-in or out, without God, there is no escape.

And because God must take his position in this matter, while Earth is lockdown, heaven remains open. Its throne room, altar and communication lines remain open. All who have been crucified and have been raised with Christ, have express access to the throne room. The evil threatened children of God can reach him one his emergency line and secure his attention and intervention.

The Psalmist overwhelmed by the fear of the danger that characterized his pilgrimage through life and weighed down by the burden thereof, by Psalm 121, points us to the source of help in distressed and desperate situations, "Open Heaven." Hear him pray:

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, he made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil: he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore."

This is a great benediction and which every heaven bound Pilgrim needs. For it is about all being kept that the world today is locked down. Humanity scrambles and stumbles because its life is under great threat. Yet we fear Coronavirus but keep our eyes from looking to the hills-the Lord from where our help is assured and from where our help comes. In the human struggle with the Coronavirus, all human wisdom and knowledge appears to have come to its wits end. Yet we have remained trying what does not seem working-science and medicine, and have failed to turn to and knock at the door of heaven where solution abound for all human problems.

Heaven nonetheless, ever remains open, for there, the guru of your salvation and mine rose and ascended to. And this Psalm a Psalm of ascent, foreshadows the Christian pilgrimage to

heaven and whose road is lined up with so much danger. And one of which Coronavirus pandemic is. Jesus crucified on the cross and damped in the grave, after three days, has risen and gone higher up than the cross upon which he was hanged. While on the cross men dreaded to look at him because thereupon hanged their weighty sins for which they were ashamed. But now that your sin and mine have been crucified, dead, buried and rotten, the rest of the pilgrimage ahead of us to heaven, must have our hitherto shame bowed heads lifted up, and our eyes set or focused on him who is high above us and who is the author and finisher of our faith-even Jesus Christ who is our Lord and Saviour.

Heaven has always remained opened to those opened to connecting with it. When Stephen was being killed, Luke reports that "He full of the Holy Spirit gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at right hand of God," declared, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God," (Acts 7:55&56).

Let the earth be locked down; heaven will ever be open. And the lockdown a human initiative, is because man does not want to die, yet death remains a reality of earthly existence. On this sight of eternity, all humankind living, is mortal and must die. And when sin takes over the world and becomes endemic, just as when it infests the life of the individual; and when in the midst of it, the feet of repentance gets dragged, then the wrath of God is inevitable. And this may come in plague form. And who knows, Coronavirus may be a God sent plague to cleanse the world of sin and to turn the hearts of the penitent sinner together with the righteous remnant to himself. And with him there is no coincidence. The plague of Coronavirus has hit the world at the time when Christ the banner of protection and the harbinger of our salvation, like the bronze snake, is raised on the cross of Calvary, that whosoever lifts up his head and looks to him may be saved from the sting of Coronavirus and live. God did open heaven and sent Him down that he may give humankind life and life in abundance, but Coronavirus (the devil) comes to steal, to kill and to destroy.

Jesus on the resurrection morn, said to Mary Magdalene to say to his brothers, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," (John 20:17). Heaven then, is the place to be and the place to long for. This earth has a lifespan. No matter how much man attempts to lock it down, it must pass away. Yet it will appear humankind would rather have a lockdown earth than an open heaven. Yet no matter how much we love the earth and cling to it, we must part ways with it someday.

But mark you, the most dreaded virus is not the COVID 19, but COVID 9sin. COVID 9sin, unlike COVID 19 knows not, and respects no lockdown. It pursues and overtakes you from inside out. It attacks your being just anywhere, any day and any hour. Like the Coronavirus however, the COVID 9sin kills, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Conversely, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. You then, have life and death offered you to choose from. Stephen had to be killed because he chose life-Christ against death-Satan. And like Christ, those who like Coronavirus were set kill, killed him.

Do you like Stephen, want to stand with Jesus at the right hand of God or remain in a locked down world threatened by both the bad and worse viruses; Coronavirus and sin?

Whichever you choose has an eternal implication.

Choose a lockdown world and be locked up in eternally damned or choose an Open Heaven and live eternally with God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and the saints triumphant.

Bottom line: Jesus expects you to be with him: For hear him say to the penitent sinner, "I tell you the truth, today you shall be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

A Locked-down Earth or an Open Heaven? The choice is yours on this resurrection morn.

"BEHOLD I SAW THE HEAVENS OPENED AND THE SON OF MAN STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD," (Acts 7: 56).

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