

Deber or Pestilence in the Bible
Amos 4:10; 2 Chronicles 7:13, 2022-01-16

“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” (Amos 4:10, AV).

“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” (2 Chronicles 7:13, AV).

Introduction: Today I want to talk to you about the coronavirus in relation to the Hebrew noun that is translated "pestilence" and also "plague" in our English Bibles. In Amos 4:10 and 2 Chronicles 7:13, the word "pestilence" translates the Hebrew noun דִּבְרָה *deber*, *deh'-ber*. For those who read Hebrew and make a distinction between a bet (b) and a vet (v), the Hebrew noun is pronounced "dever." The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible #1698 and most Lexicons do not make a distinction between the Hebrew bet and vet because the main letter for "v" is "vav." Therefore, we will pronounce the Hebrew noun דִּבְרָה "deber" rather than "dever."

Some of the meanings of "deber" are "epidemic, disease, destruction, death, bubonic plague, and pandemic." According to the Dictionary of Biblical Languages, "A pandemic occurrence of sickness that causes widespread death, often with the associative meaning of judgment from God."

According to the Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, "deber" occurs 49 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, called the "Tanach" also "Tanakh." The Authorized Version or Old King James Version translates "deber" "pestilence" 47 times, "plague" one time in Hosea 13:14 and "murrain," which is a cattle disease, one time in Exodus 9:3.

These are the 49 verses where דִּבְרָה *deber*, *deh'-ber* occurs: Exodus 5:3; 9:3, 15; Leviticus 26:25; Numbers 14:12; Deuteronomy 28:21; 2 Samuel 24:13,15; 1 Chronicles 21:12, 14; 2 Chronicles 6:28; 7:13; 20:9; 1 Kings 8:37; Psalm 78:50; 91:3, 6; Jeremiah 14:12; 21:6, 7, 9; 24:10; 27:8, 13; 28:8; 29:17, 18; 32:24, 36; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17, 22; 44:13; Ezekiel 5:12, 17; 6:11, 12; 7:15 (two occurrences in this verse); 12:16; 14:19, 21; 28:23; 33:27; 38:22; Amos 4:10; Habakkuk 3:5; Hosea 13:14.

Study each occurrence of "deber" and observe (1) the connection of "deber" with God; (2) the connection of "deber" with God's warnings, with God's disciplining, and with God's judgments; (3) the connection of "deber" (pestilence) with famine, and sword (war).

Some of the verses in the Old King James Version of the Bible where pestilence, famine, and sword occur together: Jeremiah 14:12; 24:10; 29:17, 18; 32:24; 34:17; 42:17, 22; 44:13; Ezekiel 5:17; 6:11; 7:15; 14:21.

There are two chapters I encourage you to master and three verses I encourage you to memorize: The two chapters to master are Deuteronomy 28 and Amos 4.

(1) Observe in Deuteronomy 28 the curses and the blessings.

- (2) Observe in Amos 4 that God takes full responsibility for all of the problems listed in Amos 4:6-11.
- (3) Observe the occurrences of the refrain "Yet have you not returned unto me, saith the LORD" (Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11).
- (4) Observe that God wanted His people to recognize their sins, repent of their sins, and return to Him.
- (5) Observe that we have experienced or witnessed every problem listed in Amos 4:6-11. For example, famine and fires because of lack of rain; drastic changes in the weather; damage to the food crops or food supplies; pestilence or pandemic, earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic eruption.
- (6) Observe that the Northern Kingdom of Israel did not recognize, repent, and return to God. Therefore, the nation experienced Amos 4:12-13, which was the discipline or judgment of God. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians (cf. Amos 4:2-3; Isaiah 10:5-36).

The three verses to memorize: Exodus 15:26 and 2 Chronicles 7:13, 14.

“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee” (Jahovah-Rophe, Exodus 15:26, AV). **Note the context – God used means to heal the waters. God frequently used means in the Bible to heal – God used a tree to heal the bitter waters at Marah (Exodus 15:25), the Jordan River for Naaman, the leper (2 Kings 5:1-14), a lump of figs for King Hezekiah (2 Kings 28:7), and so on. God can heal this land from the coronavirus directly or indirectly through means.**

“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 [deber, an epidemic or pandemic] among my people; 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” (2 Chronicles 7:13–14, AV).

God is sovereign, which mean God does what He wills, when He wills, where He wills, how He wills, and with whom He wills and no one can stop Him from doing what He wants to do (Daniel 4:35; Psalm 135:6; Isaiah 46:9-10; Psalm 75:6-7; Proverbs 21:1).

I have believed for over 20 years that there is going to be another Great Awakening in America. I believe that the Awakening is going to start with God's people. God ordains the ends and the means to the ends that He has ordained. The means that God has ordained are found in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

I believe that the problems we are currently witnessing are God’s final warnings to the nations, especially America (Amos 4:6-13).

Judgment on Nineveh was delayed because of the five things the Ninevites did in response to the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3:5-10).

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