

Bible Study on Famine, Pestilence and Plague

Given this Coronavirus Pandemic and the resulting economic hardships that, for the most part, have not yet been experienced, it seemed important to me to look into what the Bible teaches about such things, particularly since I believe most Christians do not think that such things can happen to them. As I am using the notes below to conduct a live Bible Study online with the members of our fellowship, I recommend that you not only read the notes below, but also listen in to the actual Bible Studies. I hope this study proves to be a blessing to you.

Famine

The word appears 87 times in the old testament and seven times in the new. The Hebrew word translated famine is ra'ab (Strong's #07458). It is a masculine noun used 101 times and translated famine 87 times, hunger 8, dearth 5 and famished once. It comes from the Hebrew verb ra'eb (Strong's #07456) which is found 11 times and variously translated hunger 5, hungry 4, suffer famish 1 and famished once. It means to be hungry or voracious. The Greek word translated famine is limos. Limos probably comes from the Greek Word leipo (Strong's #3007) through the idea of destitution or lack. Limos is a masculine noun used twelve times in the New Testament and translated famine 7 times, hunger, 3 times and dearth twice. It means scarcity of harvest or famine.

Christians tend to think that such things can't occur to them or where they are, but the Scripture tells a very different story.

1. **Abraham**. Abraham left the land of Canaan to sojourn in Egypt (where God provided for him) because the famine was grievous in the land of Canaan Gen. 12:10. This occurred shortly after Abraham entered into the promised land.
2. **Isaac**. There was a famine in the land of Canaan during Isaac's life, but God appeared to him and told him not to go down to Egypt, but rather to dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of and I will be with thee and bless thee. So Isaac dwelt in Gerar, where Abimilech was king of the Philistines and God blessed him to the point of receiving one hundred fold in a single year. Gen. 26:1-14. In other words, God provided for him in the midst of dearth for others.
3. **Jacob**. During the time of Jacob (Israel), famine once again struck over all the face of the earth. The Lord provided the way out for he and his family through Joseph in Egypt. Gen. 41:15-57 & 42-46 (saving of Jacob, his sons and grandchildren). See also Psalm 105:15-16. Might it be that the Lord multiplied Pharaoh's store? After all, it is hard to imagine that 20% of the harvest in the 7 years of plenty would be sufficient to cover 7 years of dearth, particularly when all the world (not just Egypt) came to Joseph for food.

4. **Days of Judges (Ruth)**. There was a famine in the land during the days of the Judges, which is why Elimelech, Naomi and their sons went down to sojourn in the country of Moab. Ruth 1:1-5.
5. **David**. There was a three year famine in the days of King David because of Saul's wronging of the Gibeonites. II Samuel 21:1. Note: the Gibeonites were the people who tricked Joshua and the children of Israel into saving them, contrary to the will of the Lord. Joshua 9. David sought the Lord for the cause and then went to the Gibeonites, who Saul sought to destroy contrary to God's will and satisfied their demand by giving them 7 men of Saul's line for them to hang, ending the famine.
6. **Elijah**. When Elijah prayed that it not rain, but by his word a great famine came to pass. I King 18:2 and Luke 4:25. During that time, God took care of Elijah:
 - a. **Ravens/Brook**. God told him to go to the brook Cherith where he drank from the brook and was fed by the ravens. I Kings 17:2-8.
 - b. **Widow in Zidon**. When the brook dried up because there was no rain, God commanded that he go to Zarephath, a city in Zidon (modern day Lebanon) as He had commanded a widow woman to feed him. By Elijah's faith in the command of God, he spoke and the oil and meal was multiplied to sustain the widow woman, her son and Elijah until it rained again. I Kings 17:9-16. Note: in Luke 4:25-26 Jesus highlights to the Jews in his hometown of Nazareth how there were many widows in Israel at this time, but unto none of them did God send Elijah for no prophet is accepted in his own country.

God also took care of **100 prophets of the Lord** in Israel by the hand of Obadiah, a man who feared the Lord greatly and who was governor of Ahab's house. Obadiah hid 100 prophets of the Lord from King Ahab's wife Jezebel when she was on a mission to kill all of the prophets of the Lord. He hid them in a cave and fed bread and water to them day by day. I Kings 18:3-4.

The rain did not come that ended the famine until after the contest between the prophets of baal and Elijah that occurred in I Kings 18.

7. **Elisha**. During the days of Elisha there were at least two famines or dearths in the land.
 - First famine**. There was a great famine in Samaria, when Benhadad king of Syria besieged it, to the point that an ass's head sold for 80 pieces of silver and a woman, who had boiled her son yesterday and shared it with another on the condition that she would boil her son the following day, came to the king to compel the other. II Kings 6:24-33.

This wartime famine ended miraculously in accordance with Elisha's prophecy the next day when a "measure of fine flour" was sold for a shekel and "two measures of barley" for a shekel. See II Kings 7.

Notes.

- A. Elisha was not in the city of Samaria so he may not have been affected by the Syrian besiegement.
- B. This famine arose after Elisha's counsel to the King had saved Israel multiple times from the King of Syria and yet the King of Israel (Joram, Ahab's son) blamed Elisha for the famine and wanted to kill him. That may be the reason for the 2nd famine below, which was nationwide.

Second famine. Elisha warns the woman, whose son he had restored to life, that the Lord had called for a seven year famine upon the land and advised her to sojourn wheresoever she could. (She went to the land of the Philistines). II Kings 8:1-6. It very well may have been during this same time that the two stories related below occurred. It also may be that they represent a third famine or localized dearth in the land.

- A. Healing of the Pottage. II Kings 4:38-41
- B. Multiplying of God's provision. II Kings 4:42-44.

In any case, they evidence how the Lord can miraculously provide for His people when they are living in a time of famine. Do note that the children of Israel generally were not saved during either of the periods of famine noted above.

- 8. **Jeremiah.** After the first carrying away under Jechoniah, during the reign of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. This lasted from the 9th year, in the 10th month in the 10th day of the month until the 11th year, in the 4th month on the 9th day of the month. I believe this was about 1.5 years. Then the famine prevailed and the King and his army sought to flee but were caught and the city broken up. It was after this 2nd carrying away that the temple, the king's houses and every great man's house was burned. This famine was the fulfillment of multiple prophecies of Jeremiah to King Zedekiah, during with time there were many other "prophets" in Israel prophesying blessings to the King. See Jeremiah 21, 27-28 and 32.

9. **Nehemiah**. In Nehemiah there was a dearth in the land, while they were in the building of the wall, that seems to have come to pass (at least in part) because of the selfishness of the Israelites that had returned from captivity. It turned out that they had taken their Israelite brethren's land and, in some instances, their freedom (i.e. they became their slaves) through usury (i.e. interest on loans). The dearth seems to have ended when they returned the lands unto their brothers and freed them. Nehemiah 5:1-13.
10. **New Testament**. Agabus prophecies of dearth. Gentile brethren sent relief to Jewish brethren. Acts 11:28-30. The other New Testament scriptures relating to famine or dearth refer to
- (1) prophecies of the end of the age of the Jews (Matthew 24:7, Mark 13:8 and Luke 21:11),
 - (2) Elijah (Luke 4:25-26),
 - (3) the suffering of the prodigal son (Luke 15:14),
 - (4) Jacob and his family going into Egypt because of the dearth (Acts 7:11) as preached by Stephen,
 - (5) how not even famine can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:35) and
 - (6) God's judgment of Babylon in Rev. 18:8.

Deliverance from famine

Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (II Chronicles 6:12-42 is his prayer verses 28-31 relate to famine and pestilence) and God's answer by fire at the conclusion of Solomon's prayer (II Chronicles 7:1-3) and subsequently in person when God appeared to Solomon and told him that he had heard his prayer, saying:

12 ¶ And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.
 13 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;
 14 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. II Chronicles 7:12-14.

Jehoshaphat was relying upon this promise when he prayed for deliverance from Judah's enemies as recorded in II Chronicles 20 and God miraculously delivered him. Contrast King Jehoshaphat's responses to the prophets the Lord sent to him with the Kings of Jeremiah's day. Specifically, Jehoshaphat said: "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." II Chronicles 20:20.

Psalm 33:18-19 says:

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD [is] upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Psalm 37 (of David) – after speaking of fretting not oneself because of evildoers neither being envious of the workers of iniquity, but rather exhorting people to Trust in the Lord, delight yourself in the Lord, commit thy way unto the Lord, etc... then says:

18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD [shall be] as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

The Hebrew word translated “upright” here is tamiym (Strong's #08549). It is found 91 times in the Scripture and translated variously without blemish (44 times), perfect (18 times), upright (8 times) and many variations of the same. It means to be complete, whole, entire, sound. I thought that “perfect” was one of the definitions was quite telling. The sense of “upright” is of one who stands up (i.e. one who accepts the responsibility of faith and takes their place in His Body). This is confirmed in Psalm 91 (see below).

Matthew 6:25-33 – Jesus says to take not thought for what ye shall eat or drink, but rather seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and those things shall be added unto you.

Pestilence

The Hebrew Word translated pestilence in the old testament is deber (Strong's #01698). It is found 49 times in the old testament and translated pestilence 47 times, plagues once and murrain once. It is a masculine noun that means pestilence, plague, murrain, cattle diseases or cattle-plague. It comes from the Hebrew Word dabar (Strong's #01696) which means to speak, declare, converse, command, promise, warn, threaten or sing (in the sense of destroying), quite possibly in the sense of God speaking to the people or manifesting His judgment through pestilence. In the New Testament, the Greek word loimos (Strong's #3061) is a masculine noun used three times and translated pestilence twice and pestilent in the sense of a person once.

The first use of the term pestilence is by Moses to Pharaoh when Moses asked Pharaoh to let them people go three days journey to offer sacrifices unto the Lord that He not fall upon Israel with a pestilence. Pharaoh refused and instead ordered the task masters to have the people make bricks without straw. Exodus 5:1-9.

The second use is when Moses warns Pharaoh that God will bring a pestilence (in the form of a destroying hail) down upon the Egyptians for Pharaoh's refusal to let the Hebrews go. Exodus 9:15. This warning was issued as the 7th of the 10 plagues/judgments against Pharaoh and Egypt. The fourteenth use is in Psalm 78:50 referring back to these events.

The third and fifth uses are in Leviticus 26:25 and Deuteronomy 28:21, both of which are warnings from God to Israel of the fact that He will send the pestilence against Israel if they rebel against Him.

Deut. 28 we know well in this fellowship. It was Moses' words just before he died and the children of Israel under Joshua went into the promised land. Basically, he says that if Israel will not hearken unto God's voice, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which Moses commanded them that day then they will be cursed and amongst those curses is being destroyed by pestilence. (Deut. 28:21).

Lev. 26 is a chapter much less familiar to us, but perhaps more apropos of our current situation. God's command to Israel really begins in Lev. 25 and continues into 26. I believe this would have been to the first generation, but it could have been to the second. In any case, God essentially says what He will do if they despise His statutes, abhor His judgments so that they do not keep His commandments then He appoint unto them "terror, consumption, etc..." (Phase I) and if they will not yet hearken unto Him then He will punish them 7 times more for their sins, including pestilence (Phase II) and if they still will not hearken unto Him then they shall be chastened yet more to the point where they will turn to cannibalism, their cities destroyed and be removed from the land (Phase III).

The fourth use is similar and is found in Numbers 14:12. There it is God speaking to Moses of His desire to smite the Israelites of Moses' generation with a pestilence and to make a greater nation of Moses than of all Israel. Moses' intercession on behalf of Israel turns back God's wrath. Compare that with Jeremiah 15:1 where the Lord tells Jeremiah that even if "Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people."

The sixth, seventh, ninth and tenth uses all involve David and the interactions between he and Gad, the seer, concerning the judgment of God on Israel for David numbering the people. David chose three days of pestilence over seven years of famine or three months of fleeing before his enemies. See II Samuels 24:13 & 15, I Chronicles 21:12 & 14. Note: in 2nd Samuel, the pestilence is also described as a plague.

The eighth, eleventh and twelfth uses relate to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple as recorded in I Kings 8:37 and II Chronicles 6:28 and God's answer in II Chronicles 7:13.

The thirteenth use is in Jehoshaphat's prayer when his enemies were bearing down on him. In his prayer, he quoted from Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple and God delivered them. See II Chronicles 20:9.

The fifteenth and sixteenth uses are found in Psalm 91:3 & 6. Both refer to how the Lord will protect those that dwell in the secret place of the most High (referring to the Body of Jesus Christ) from the pestilence. This agrees with Psalm 37 where he promises that the upright will be kept from famine.

The next 29 times are found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In almost every instance it is referring to God's judgment of Israel by, amongst other things, the pestilence for their rebellion to Him.

See 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, and 44:13.

See Ezekiel 5:12 & 17, 6:11-12, 7:15, 12:16, 14:19 & 21, 28:23, 33:27 and 38:22.

The final two times in the old testament also relate to God's judgment. See Amos 4:10 and Habbakuk 3:5.

The only two times the word is used in the New Testatment it refers to God's judgment. See Matthew 24:7 and Luke 21:11.

Plague

The word plague (in its various forms) is found 128 times in the Scripture, 112 of which are in the old testament and 16 in the new. In the old testament, there are essentially three Hebrew words that are translated plague

Nega (Strong's #05061) is a masculine noun used 78 times and translated plague 65 times. It comes from the Hebrew word naga (Strong's #05060), a verb that means to touch, reach, strike, extend unto, be defeated.

Negeph (Strong's #05063) is another masculine noun. It is only used 7 times and is translated plague 6 times. It means to blow, strike, plague. It comes from the Hebrew verb nagaph (Strong's #05062), a verb that variously means to smite, put to the worse, be smitten down, etc...

Maggephah (Strong's #04046) is a feminine noun that comes from 5062 like negeph above. It is found 26 times and translated plague 21 times, slaughter 3 times, plagued once and stroke once.

In the New Testament there are two.

- (1) **Mastix (Strong's #3148)**. A feminine noun used 6 times, 4 times translated plague and twice scourging. It means to whip, scourge, punish or discipline.

Jesus healing the multitude of their plagues. Mark 3:10

Jesus healing those that were plagued in answer to John, through his disciples, as recorded in Luke 7:19-23.

This word was used in reference to the woman with the issue of blood who was healed when she touched the hem of Jesus' garment (Mark 5:25-34).

In each of the these instances, it was the devil who was plaguing the people not God.

- (2) **Plege (Strong's #4127)**. A feminine noun used 21 times and translated plague 12 times, stripe 5 times and wound 4 times. It refers to a blow, stripe, wound, public calamity, heavy affliction, plague.

In each of the instances where this Greek word is translated plague, it always refers to God's judgment of his enemies.

Rev. 11:6 (power given to the final two prophets to call down plagues)

Rev. 15 (verses 1, 6, 8) referring to the 7 plagues.

Rev. 16 (verses 9 & 21) refers to the various plagues being poured out and man's refusal to repent.

Rev. 18 (verses 4 & 8) referring to the fall of Babylon

Rev. 21:9 (no more plague, but John speaks to one of the angels that carried a vial with the plagues)

Rev. 22:18 (prophecy of plagues coming upon any man who shall add unto that which God said in this book)

In the Old Testament various plagues are described, warned against and/or protection/deliverance from provided as follows:

1. **Pharaoh's Household at time of Abraham.** (Genesis 12:14-20)

When Abram sojourns in Egypt to avoid the famine in the land of Canaan, Pharaoh brings Sarai (not knowing that she was Abram's wife) into his house. God's response:

17 And the LORD plagued (Hebrew word "nege" Strong's #05060) Pharaoh and his house with great plagues (Hebrew word "nega" Strong's #05061) because of Sarai Abram's wife.

2. **Moses and Pharaoh** (Exodus 9:14 & 11:1)

In the midst of the ten plagues, the Lord has Moses speak to Pharaoh of how He will bring all his plagues upon Pharaoh (Exo. 9:14) and then the next relates to God speaking to Moses of how he will bring one more plague upon Egypt and afterwards Pharaoh will let them go. Exo. 11:1.

In Exodus 12:13 the same word is used by God in relation to his promise that if the Israelites will put the blood on the doorposts and lintels of their homes then His plague will not come upon their households, rather he will Passover them.

3. **Levitical Priesthood / Service in the Sanctuary.** Exodus 30:12 and Numbers 8:19

In Exodus 30:12 (verses 11-16 for context), God tells Moses that when he numbers the children of Israel, every man must give a "ransom for his soul" that

there be no “plague” (Strong’s #05063) among them. Each man, rich or poor is to give “half a shekel” and no more. The atonement money shall be appointed for the service of the tabernacle that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord to make an atonement for their souls

In Numbers 8:19, the Levites are given to Aaron and his sons in lieu of Israel’s first born “to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.”

4. **Plague of Leprosy.** Leviticus 13 and 14

In Leviticus 13 and 14, the plague of leprosy is identified and described, its prescription for healing and the recognition of healing is set forth in detail. In fact more than half (44 verses in total) of all instances of the word plague are contained in these two chapters. Let me highlight a couple of points.

- A. Unclean. When you or your house has leprosy you are or it is unclean.
- B. Show yourself to the Priest. If you or your house has what you believe to be a plague of leprosy, you are to go to the priest for examination. The priest is the one who identifies the plague of leprosy and its cleansing (i.e. healing).

Importance confirmed in Deuteronomy 24:8 which states:

Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, [so] ye shall observe to do.

5. **Plaguing of Children of Israel in the Desert under Moses.**

- A. Quails. When God furnished the people quails, he then smote the people who lusted with a very great plague while they were eating. Numbers 11:31-34 (Maggephah, Strong’s #04046).
- B. Miriam (leprosy). Numbers 12:1-15.

C. Ten Unfaithful Spies. In Numbers 14, Moses intervenes on behalf of the children of Israel when God was ready to destroy them with the pestilence. God pardons the children of Israel, but swears that they will not enter into the promised land. Instead their children shall enter in, but only after they shall wander for 40 years, for every day that the spies searched the land a year. He then kills the 10 spies who came back with the evil report with a plague. Numbers 14:36-38. Note the children of Israel, after mourning greatly, went up in presumption and they were smitten before their enemies. Numbers 14:39-45.

D. Israelites who murmured against Moses and Aaron after rebellion of Korah.

1. Prelude. (Rebellion of Korah. Numbers 16:1-34)

Korah (a Levite), Dathan and Abiram (Reubenites) and 250 princes of the assembly famous in the congregation, men of renown said unto Moses and Aaron

“[Ye take] too much upon you, seeing all the congregation [are] holy, every one of them, and the LORD [is] among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?”
Numbers 16:3

Dathan and Abiram would not come up saying

13 [Is it] a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

14 Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

On the morrow, at the command to see who was acceptable before God, Korah and those with him brought the entire congregation up against Moses and Aaron. God's response was to kill the entire congregation. Moses intervened and God told him to tell the people to separate themselves from Korah, Dathan and Abiram. He then went to Dathan and Abiram and God opened the earth and swallowed up all 250 princes that had joined with them.

2. God Plagues Israel for Response. The day after the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and those who were joined with him, the children of Israel gather themselves against Moses and Aaron accusing them of having “killed the people of the LORD”. God tells Moses and Aaron that he will consume Israel “as in a moment”. Moses and Aaron intervene, Aaron taking a censer from off the altar to make an atonement for Israel. Aaron stands between those who are dead and the living and the plague is stayed, but only after 14,700 were dead. Numbers 16:41-50 (Maggephah, Strong's #04046).

E. Plague for Fornication (Numbers 25:1-18, reminder in Psalm 106:29-30).

Israel (2nd generation) committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab and bowed before their gods. God commands Moses to slay all those that were joined unto Baalpeor and hang them before the Lord against the sun. While he said this a man brazenly brought a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, took a javelin and thrust both the man and the woman through and the plague was stayed, but only after 24,000 died.

God then has Moses avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites. They do, but bring the women and children together with the spoil. Moses is wroth, reminding them of the above plague, and orders them to kill all the male children and all the women that are not virgins and remain without the camp for 7 days. Num. 31:1-24.

6. Moses' Warning. (Deut. 28, particularly verses 58-68)

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;

59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, [even] great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

60 Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which [is] not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.

63 And it shall come to pass, [that] as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to

destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, [even] wood and stone.

65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy [you].

In Deuteronomy 29, Moses makes a covenant with the people to not go after the gods of those that the Lord destroys before them else a curse will come upon them and the people from afar shall say:

22 So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it;

23 [And that] the whole land thereof [is] brimstone, and salt, [and] burning, [that] it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what [meaneth] the heat of this great anger?

25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt:

26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and [whom] he had not given unto them:

27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:

28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as [it is] this day.

7. **Philistines.** (I Samuel 4-6)

On the day that Samuel's prophecy to Eli came to pass, the ark of the covenant was captured by the Philistines. I Samuel 4. The Philistines brought the ark back to their country and God plagued them. I Samuel 5. After 7 months they sent the ark back in accordance with the counsel of their priests and diviners:

3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

4 Then said they, What [shall be] the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, [according to] the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague [was] on you all, and on your lords.

5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him [for] a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, [then] he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that [it is] not his hand [that] smote us: it [was] a chance [that] happened to us. I Samuel 6:3-9.

8. **David's Numbering of Israel.** David and Araunah, the Jebusite, talk of the plague (elsewhere referred to as pestilence) when David purchases Araunah's threshingfloor to build an altar unto God as Gad advised, but only after 70,000 Israelites dies. II Samuel 24:18-25 and I Chronicles 21:18-30. (Note: David had not enquired at the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses had made in the wilderness, because he was afraid because of the angel of the Lord.)

9. **Plaguing of David's Enemies.** See Psalm 89:19-37 for context. Verse 23 states:

And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.

There are a multitude of examples of this coming to pass, much like with those that were against Moses.

10. **Deliverance Available.** See Solomon's Prayer at Dedication of the Temple. I Kings 8:37-38.
11. **Protection Promised to those in the Body of Christ.** Protection promised in that no "plague" shall "come nigh thy dwelling" to those who make the Lord (i.e. the Body of Christ) their "habitation". Psalm 91:9-10.
12. **Christ's Enemies During Millennial Rule.** Zechariah 14:12, 15 & 18 speak of plagues that will come upon the people that fight against the Lord.

Supplemental Study of Jeremiah and Ezekiel

One thing you can't help but notice in looking at the various instances where the words famine, pestilence and sword are used in various instances is their prevalence in the Books of the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. This arises, at least in part, because it was during their time that the prophecies of Moses in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26 come to pass for the children of Judah. They had previously come to pass with the divided Kingdom of Israel in the time of King Hoshea (a contemporary of King Hezekiah of Judah and his wicked father King Ahaz), who the Assyrians carried away captive as recorded in II Kings 17.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah's 40+ year ministry began in the 13th year of Josiah, covering the last 18 years of his reign. It then continued over the 22+ years that the three sons (Shallum, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah) and one grandson of Josiah (Jechoniah aka Coniah) reigned through the time that Gedaliah was appointed governor in Judah and then assassinated. Jeremiah was expressly forbidden to take a wife as a sign to Judah of its coming destruction. Jeremiah 16. Jeremiah blames the pastors for the judgment of God that is going to fall. Jeremiah 23. He also, while in prison, is ordered to redeem some land in Anathoth as a sign to that generation that God is going to bring His people back again and they are going to plant vineyards, etc.. just not now. Jer. 32.

Shallum (eldest son of Josiah, first to reign after father's death)

Jeremiah also prophecies that Shallum, Josiah's eldest son who had been placed on the throne after his father, but who Pharaoh had carried away captive to Egypt would not be returning. Moreover, Coniah, King Jehoiakim's son would never have a seed that sat on the throne. Jeremiah 22. Not certain when this prophesy came forth.

Jehoiakim (2nd son of Josiah to reign)

In the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, Jeremiah warns the King to serve Nebuchadnezzar and live and be not carried away. All the other "prophets" were telling the king that God was with him to defeat the Babylonians. Jeremiah 26.

In the 4th year of King Jehoiakim (Josiah's 2nd son to reign after him), the Lord has Jeremiah write in a book all the words that the Lord had given to him since the time of Josiah in the hope that Judah would "return from his evil way that [God] may forgive their iniquity and their sin." Those words rejected. In fact, the King burned them as they were read to him, after the priests, the people and the princes had heard them. Note: this event took place only 5 years after Josiah's death. See Jeremiah 36. Jeremiah's word from the Lord is rejected and he prophecies of the 70 year captivity. Jeremiah. 25.

Thereafter, God forbids Jeremiah from praying for the peoples good (Jeremiah 14:11-12) saying that even if Moses and Samuel stood before Him that they could not change God's mind toward Judah. Jeremiah 15:1.

Jeconiah (aka Coniah), Jehoiakim's son (Josiah's grandson)

Prophecies of the two baskets of figs. The good figs were those who had just been carried away captive with Jeconiah (aka Coniah), the son of Jehoiakim. God was going to bring them back. The evil figs were those that were with Zedekiah. They were going to be destroyed. Jeremiah 24.

He shall never have a seed that sat on the throne of David. Jeremiah 22.

Zedekiah (Josiah's 3rd son to sit on the throne)

During Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah prophecies many times to King Zedekiah. At the beginning of his reign, Jeremiah tells him to serve Nebuchadnezzar and live, asking "why will ye die" of the famine, pestilence and sword.. Jeremiah 27:12-14. By contrast, the other "prophets" (led by Hananiah) prophesy that the Lord is going to brake the yoke of the King of Babylon and return the people. Jeremiah then prophecies of Hananiah's death and it comes to pass. Jeremiah 28. This event occurred in the 4th year of Zedekiah's reign. Jeremiah then writes to the children who were previously taken captive to marry, build houses, etc... because the captivity is going to be long (70 years). He also comes against those that are prophesying lies in the captivity by name. Jeremiah 29.

Towards the end of Zedekiah's reign he prophecies multiple times to the King and the princes telling them not to fight with the King of Babylon for the Lord will not be with them, but they reject him at each turn even going so far as to imprison him.

Jeremiah 21 (those that go out to the King of Babylon will live)

Jeremiah 34 (those that broke the covenant of liberty would die by the sword, pestilence and famine)

Jeremiah 37 (don't be deceived by the fact that the Chaldeans left when the Egyptians came up for they will return, Jeremiah falsely accused of treason and imprisoned, Zedekiah feeds him with a little bread)

Jeremiah 32 (makes prophetic purchase of land from prison to signify how Judah will be brought back from captivity)

Jeremiah 38 (princes want to kill Jeremiah, lower him into the dungeon. Ethiopian Eunuch intercedes before the king who retrieves him from the dungeon and feeds him. Zedekiah even comes to him secretly and is given one

last time to go out to Nebuchadnezzar so that he, his family, the temple and the city could be saved, but he fears the people and does not obey)

Jeremiah 39 – Jerusalem falls, God’s judgment spoken by Jeremiah comes to pass, including the saving of the Ethiopian Eunuch and the destruction of the princes. Zedekiah’s sons and the princes killed and then his eyes put out and he is carried away captive. Jeremiah set at liberty by the invading army.

Gedaliah established as governor by Nebuchadnezzar and then assassinated. Jeremiah 40-41.

Jeremiah uses his liberty to stay with Gedaliah and be amongst the people. The people try to warn Gedaliah of plot by Ishmael of the seed royal to kill him, but Gedaliah discounts the warning and is assassinated.

After Assassination (Jeremiah 42-44)

People come to Jeremiah requesting that he seek the Lord for their sakes as to what they should do and they promise to do it. After 10 days the Word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. Jeremiah tells the people to serve Nebuchadnezzar and live. Do not think to flee into Egypt because the sword, famine and pestilence shall overtake them there. They accuse Jeremiah of lying to them and flee to Egypt taking Jeremiah with them. While in Egypt, he proclaims God’s judgment on them for their going after other gods. They say that things went well with them when they served other gods (e.g. in the times before King Josiah), but that they went evil only after they stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven, etc... Jeremiah tells them they are wrong and sets up stones in a hidden place, promising that Nebuchadnezzar shall set up his throne there.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, is of the priesthood. In other words, he is in Aaron’s line. He was part of that first group that was carried away captive. During the end of Jeremiah’s ministry, Ezekiel’s began. Specifically, in those 11 years +/- that passed between the first and second carrying away captives, Ezekiel is active in Babylon. Specifically, while there many ministers in the captivity that were “prophesying” of Judah’s impending deliverance, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were prophesying of God’s impending judgment. Specifically, in Chapters 5-7, 12, 14 and 33, Ezekiel prophecies of God’s judgment of the Jews that remained in Judah.

Chapters 5-7 are all about the destruction of Jerusalem. One-third to die by pestilence and famine, even resorting to cannibalism; one-third by the sword and one-third be scattered to the wind. Chapter 12 records how he becomes a sign to those in Babylon of the removing of those that remain in Judah. He also lets them know that these things are not a far off, but are going to come to pass now. In Chapter 14, God

makes clear that even Noah, Daniel and Job would only save themselves not their sons nor daughters from God's wrath against Jerusalem. His 4 judgments are the sword, the famine, the noisome beast and the pestilence. In Chapter 33 (12th year of captivity, 10th month, 5th day) one who escaped from Jerusalem came to inform all of the fall of Jerusalem. Ezekiel responds with further judgments of God, prophesying that those that are in the "wastes" shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will God give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence." Ezekiel 33:21-33.

The other two prophecies of famine, pestilence, etc... in Ezekiel relate to Zidon (Chapter 28) and the end times (Chapter 38).