

# What does the Bible say about pandemic diseases/sicknesses?

**Question: "What does the Bible say about pandemic diseases/sicknesses?"**

**Answer:** The recent Ebola outbreak has prompted many to ask why God allows—or even causes—pandemic diseases and whether such pandemic diseases are a sign of the end times. The Bible, particularly the Old Testament, describes numerous occasions when God brought plagues and diseases on both His people and His enemies “to make you see my power” ([Exodus 9:14, 16](#)). He used plagues on Egypt to force Pharaoh to free the Israelites from bondage, while sparing His people from being affected by them ([Exodus 12:13; 15:26](#)), thus indicating His sovereign control over diseases and other afflictions.

God also warned His people of the consequences of disobedience, including plagues ([Leviticus 26:21, 25](#)). [Numbers 16:49](#) and [25:9](#) describe God destroying 14,700 people and 24,000 people, respectively, for various acts of disobedience. After giving the Mosaic Law, God commanded the people to obey it or suffer many evils, including something that sounds like Ebola: “The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation...which will plague you until you perish” ([Deuteronomy 28:22](#)). These are just a few examples of many plagues and diseases God caused.

It's sometimes hard to imagine our loving and merciful God displaying such wrath and anger toward His people. But God's punishments always have the goal of repentance and restoration. In [2 Chronicles 7:13-14](#), God said to Solomon: “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will 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.” Here we see God using disaster to draw us to Himself, to cause us to repent of sin and come to Him as children to their heavenly Father.

In the New Testament, Jesus healed “every disease and every sickness,” as well as plagues in the areas He visited ([Matthew 9:35; 10:1; Mark 3:10](#)). Just as God chose to use plagues and disease to show His power to the Israelites, Jesus healed as an exhibition of the same power to verify that He was truly the Son of God. He gave the same healing power to the disciples to verify their ministry ([Luke 9:1](#)). God still allows sickness for His own purposes, but sometimes disease, even worldwide pandemics, are simply the result of living in a fallen world. There is no way to determine which, although we do know that God has sovereign control over all things ([Romans 11:36](#)), and He will work all things together for the good of those who know and love Him ([Romans 8:28](#)).

The current Ebola epidemic is not the last we will see of plagues and pandemic diseases. Jesus referred to future plagues that will be part of the end-times scenario ([Luke 21:11](#)). The two witnesses of [Revelation 11](#) will have power “to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want” ([Revelation 11:6](#)). [Revelation 15](#) speaks of seven plagues wielded by seven angels as the final, most severe judgments, described in [Revelation 16](#).

Whether the current outbreak of Ebola and other pandemic diseases are part of God's judgment or the result of living in a fallen, sinful world, and whether or not it is a signal that the end time is beginning, our response should be the same. For those who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior, disease is a reminder that life on this earth is tenuous and can be lost at any moment. Without the saving blood of Christ shed for us, we will pay for our sins for all eternity in a hell that will make the worst pandemic seem mild. For the Christian, however, we have the assurance of salvation and the hope of eternity because of what Christ suffered on the cross for us ([Isaiah 53:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:28](#)).