**The plagues and economic ruin** dkm Sept 2020

The Indian economy was among the fastest growing in the world- that was until the coronavirus pandemic. The latest news is that the Indian economy will shrink by 25%; their car sales are down 80%. Millions of migrant workers fled the cities when the government imposed a lockdown. The current Hindu nationalist government previously imposed policies of oppression upon Christians and minority religions.

The economy of our state of Victoria is in turmoil because of a similar lockdown. In this once-thriving economy, spending is down 30%. This lockdown will cause the whole nation’s economy to contract by 6%. The treasurer referred to this as an economic disaster. In 2008 Victoria passed a law allowing abortion up to 24weeks gestation, despite the clear teaching of the Bible. In 2010 it introduced teaching on homosexuality into state schools. Along with the rest of the nation, it legalised homosexual marriage in 2017, despite the clear teaching of the Bible.

God afflicted Pharaoh and the people of Egypt with various disasters or plagues. He turned water into blood, sent plagues of frogs, lice and flies, as well as a disease which killed the livestock, and boils on man and beast. God then sent an unprecedented hailstorm that killed animals and people who failed to take shelter- they were given 24hours notice. After this came a locust plague. All the field crops and fruit crops of Egypt were destroyed. Foreseeing economic ruin, Pharaoh’s officials advised him to give Moses what he wanted and let the people of God go to worship as they wanted. ‘Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?’ they told him (Exodus 10:7). They knew famine was imminent.

Egypt was a rich and prosperous nation, and a major world power before Moses came along. It prospered under the leadership of Joseph, a man of God. It was after Joseph died that the oppression started. Using slaves in massive building projects could not go on for long, especially when these slaves were God’s special people. When Pharaoh arrogantly rejected the word of Almighty God, most people knew that the end was near. The Lord sent plague after plague that afflicted the people and devastated the economy of Egypt.

We are being told that it will take years for our economy to recover from this pandemic- and there is still no end in sight! Our only hope, we are told, is a vaccine against coronavirus. No one knows when this will come and who will get access to the vaccine. We have another hope of course, and that is the Lord. It wasn’t a vaccine that stopped the plagues in Egypt. The people of God were set apart after the fourth plague, and others who believed what Moses said escaped the hail. Anyone who put blood on their doorpost on the night the angel of death passed through was saved. Belief in the word of God delivered thousands from the deadly plague. Tragically, Pharaoh and many others hardened their hearts in unbelief and suffered the wrath of God. How many hard hearts are yet to suffer at the hands of the Lord? ‘Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God… lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin’ (Heb 3:12,13).