

Beza's "A Learned Treatise of the Plague" Book Study

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In the Year of Our Lord

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Introduction:

The outbreak of the Coronavirus in the winter and spring of 2019-2020 has revealed the godlessness of American society. Prior to this event, most Americans were content in their well-fed Christianity. The stylish clothes of our religion were merely a cloak for our guilt. And this guilt was the soil out of which fear sprouted, full grown in 2020.

How did this happen? How did the land of free and the home of the brave become the home of the socially distanced and the land of fearful? How have we gone from greeting one another with happy eyes atop friendly smiles to suspecting one another with furtive eyes from behind sterile masks? When did we grant our magistrates the power to dictate when, where, and how we gather, for worship or otherwise? When did science become our creed?

Beza's little book has the answers. During this time together, I would like to offer some guidance in understanding his theology, ethics, and wisdom in dealing with an outbreak of infection. Beza's book is a thoroughly Christian treatment of these matters. But not the superficial Christianity you may be used to. He dives deep into the nature of reality. He expounds the divine decree and secondary causes. He also explores the innumerable relationships each person is a part of and fully applies the Golden Rule, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." And he provides common sense wisdom for dealing with an infection, from personal experience, and from the standpoint of Christian duty.

The primary lesson Beza teaches us and that our age has forgotten is simply this: God is God and man is not. As we turn to Beza's "Treatise of the Plague," the implications of that simple lesson will become clear.

- I) Whether the Plague be infectious or no: Causation*
 - a. Primary Cause*
 - i. God's Decree*
 - ii. Execution*
 - 1. Creation*
 - 2. Providence*
 - b. Secondary Causes*
 - i. Nature*
 - 1. Material*
 - 2. Formal*

- 3. *Final*
 - 4. *Efficient*
 - ii. *Man*
 - 1. *Free Will*
 - 2. *Instrumental*
- II) *Whether and how far Christians may avoid the plague by truing aside: Ethics*
 - a. *The Law of Nature*
 - i. *Humanity*
 - 1. *God*
 - 2. *Country*
 - 3. *Neighbors*
 - ii. *Hierarchy*
 - 1. *Individual*
 - 2. *Dependents*
 - b. *The Law of Christ*
- III) *The practical application of ethical principles to our situation in light of what is: Wisdom*
 - a. *Primary Cause*
 - i. *Confession*
 - ii. *Repentance*
 - b. *Secondary*
 - i. *Good Conscience*
 - ii. *The Principles of Duty (pg 48)*
 - 1. *Commandment*
 - 2. *Hierarchy*
 - 3. *Humanity*
 - a. *Neighbors*
 - b. *Country*
 - c. *Magistrates*
 - d. *Ministers*
 - i. *Point out the chief cause of Plagues*
 - ii. *Stir up the people by their doctrine and example*