So What Did you learn in the Pandemic?

I have noticed recently that news about COVID-19 and the pandemic has focused generally on two themes: (1) the ongoing spike (and maybe now even some decline) of the Delta variant; and (2) the beginning of a bit of reflection, if not first draft of history, on how we lived during the pandemic. For instance, I saw footage about people raising their windows at 7:00 p.m in New York City. People banged pots or sang or simply “made noise” to come together at a particular time during the day since they were otherwise isolated. But the newscast asked, “do you remember what this was about?” It shouldn’t be hard as it was only 18 months ago.

All of this is to ask, what did you learn or what will remember from the pandemic? To put it context of a discussion for our class, I Googled “what book of the Bible have people turned to during the pandemic,” thinking this might give an indication of how religious and spiritual people were thinking during the past year and a half. While there were many answers, I found an article that suggested that the Book of the Ecclesiastes was a common and good place to read to reflect on all that has occurred during the pandemic. <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/reflection/ecclesiastes-has-some-things-say-about-covid-19>. I encourage you to read it as a basis to see how Ecclesiastes has a lot to say about how we think of living through the pandemic. In particular, the author identifies Eccl. 9:11-12 as being particularly apt. Those verses state:

*Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.****12****For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.*

These verses remind me of the seemingly arbitrary nature of who has been affected by COVID. Some people have been infected even though they took enormous precautions. Some people have died while others have experienced only minor aches, if even that.

Regardless of whether or to what extent you have been affected by COVID, the words of Ecclesiastes ought to ring a bit closer to home.

Question 1: Has COVID caused you to think differently about spiritual things? If so, what? And how?

It has also been suggested that COVID should make us think more deeply about God – not just that He exists, but how who He is and how He stands in contrast to us. He does have the ability to control. I heard a lesson recently on Psalms 46 that reinforced this thought. Psalms 46 states:

God is our refuge and strength,  
    a very present[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalms+46&version=ESV#fen-ESV-14616b)] help in trouble.  
**2**Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,  
    though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,  
**3**though its waters roar and foam,  
    though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*

**4**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
    the holy habitation of the Most High.  
**5**God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;  
    God will help her when morning dawns.  
**6**The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;  
    he utters his voice, the earth melts.  
**7**The Lord of hosts is with us;  
    the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

**8**Come, behold the works of the Lord,  
    how he has brought desolations on the earth.  
**9**He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
    he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
    he burns the chariots with fire.  
**10**“Be still, and know that I am God.  
    I will be exalted among the nations,  
    I will be exalted in the earth!”  
**11**The Lord of hosts is with us;  
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalms 46 ought to remind us that God is in control, even over COVID.

Question(s) 2: Has COVID made you think differently about God? Can you think of any event other than COVID that would have significantly affected how you view God? What are the lessons you learned?