

# Have You Had the Mumps Yet?

*Vaccination is the world's most potent weapon to fight against contagious diseases. But what is yours? — Do you know?*

by Dibar K. Apartian

HAVE YOU had the mumps — yet? Ghastly! What a question!

You may expect to be asked if you have had your morning cup of coffee yet—or even perhaps your daily vitamin C supply. But *mumps*? Really—that's unorthodox.

Mumps is said to be *contagious*—and it is. But what does “contagious” mean? Are we supposed to catch anything and everything which is contagious? Is this automatic? Is there such a law in the Bible?

Mumps is also said to usually attack children between five and fifteen years of age—consequently, we *expect* our children to catch it. This is considered normal, conventional. In fact, we sometimes go as far as to *hope*—almost prayerfully—that our children will come down with their “childhood” diseases *as soon as possible!* The reason, of course, is that as children, they do usually get over them very rapidly, whereas quite the contrary is true so far as adults are concerned.

## What Causes Contagious Disease?

This type of reasoning is *natural*—and makes sense. Nevertheless, something is lacking in it; something is misleading. If we only catch contagious diseases because *they are* contagious, then where is *our* share in the sin which produces them? If children are *bound* to catch a “childhood” disease—because of contagion—then just where does *SIN* fit into the picture?

In accordance with the Bible, sickness is a result of sin. Contagious diseases are *NOT* exempt from this law. Nor are the “childhood” diseases. But then, doesn't it sound rather strange when you say, “I hope my children will catch measles or mumps before they grow older”? It's

like hoping that they would sin—or have their share of the sin—*as soon as possible* so that the ensuing punishment will be milder.

Of course, we never think of it that way; we don't think of *sin* when our children—or we ourselves—come down with a contagious disease. Somehow, even though we ask to be anointed, we consider that, in this particular instance, the sin really wasn't *ours*, but *partly* or even *mostly someone else's*—perhaps the very ones' through whom we were contaminated.

A contagious disease is contagious, that's for sure, yet, when properly understood, we are *not at all* *guiltless* in succumbing to it. Such a happening is not merely or necessarily a question of time and chance. Moreover, you can't repent of someone else's sins—but only of your own.

The question then is to know where *you* have sinned, or what is *your* share of the sin which made you succumb to contagion.

## Any Particular Sin?

Last Friday afternoon, returning home from work, I told my wife that I had a strange sensation under my left ear—possibly even a swelling.

“Oh, dear, you're not coming down with the mumps, are you?” she chuckled. “You'll never live it down! It's going to be *embarrassing.*”

It was! But not quite the way I had expected it to be. My embarrassment was not only before men—but *before* *GOD!* You see, I had never thought of it before, but it suddenly occurred to me that if something is “embarrassing” before men, it must *first* of all be “embarrassing” before God. Truly, I did feel embarrassed before God for having caught the mumps—for the way I took the

disease for granted—for my little understanding of the necessary repentance at the time I was anointed for it.

As I tossed around in my bed, deep in thought—and my jowls practically hanging over my shoulders—I asked myself what *did I actually do* to catch the mumps, *how come* I got it! If, as a general rule, mumps is for kids—and grown ups only occasionally catch it—what then, I wondered, is the particular sin children must commit more often than adults, to make them susceptible to the mumps?

You would think I was delirious, but I wasn't, really! When you have much time to think, you try to be philosophical about things—and you follow a certain line of thought which somehow seems quite “logical” to you!

## Sin Is Sin

You can't categorize sin, except for the fact that it can be *physical* or *spiritual*. But it is useless and nonsense to try to pinpoint any particular sin—especially in the case of a contagious disease—and label it as the *cause* of mumps or measles or whooping cough. It just doesn't work that way. Even though sinful actions produce obvious results (for instance, if you have a bad fall, you may break a bone)—nevertheless, sin is sin; whatever its extent, it still represents the *transgression* of God's laws.

In my particular case, I could think of a number of reasons why I should be down with the mumps—and each one, *individually*, would be valid, because each one, *individually*, represented a transgression of God's laws. Granted, our human bodies are pitifully degenerate—but don't I have *my own share* of responsibility in the matter? Don't I contribute to the general degeneration by the very life I lead in this present

corrupt world? And don't our bodies — if they are properly taken care of — have the right amount of antibodies to fight against any contagious disease? Did I — and do I — take care of my body just the way God intended me to? In all this, haven't I fallen short? Haven't I sinned? Wouldn't you consider it sin if you have allowed your body to be in a *rundown condition*, susceptible to catching any kind of disease?

And how about the fact of being *careless* — yes, just plain CARELESSNESS in following faithfully all of God's laws?

Think seriously! Don't you really consider such things as sin?

Any human being, anywhere and anytime, is liable to catch any sickness (including, of course, the contagious ones), if he has been careless of his *diet* — careless of his *sleeping habits* — careless of his *physical exercise* — careless of the *rules of hygiene* — careless of . . . (You know, this type of enumeration reminds me of the amusing record I once heard at Mr. Herbert Armstrong's home — on that record, former President Johnson was naming *ad infinitum* all the medical doctors who were consulted when he suffered a simple cold! However, if Mr. Johnson's list, by the laws of mathematics, is bound to come to an end, the list of *our human carelessness* never can and never will . . .).

### Carelessness Is Sin

It is high time we begin to associate carelessness with sin, because to be careless in keeping God's laws means plainly not keeping them. No justification or compromise is possible; it's like being half alive!

Of course, it is so easy — so very easy — to be careless: all it takes is not to use your head or to neglect doing what you ought to do.

If you took time to think about these things, to meditate seriously on what sin and its ramifications actually are, you wouldn't first of all ask yourself, as I did, "Where did I get the bug? Who gave it to me? Wasn't I bound to catch the disease because of its contagious nature?" Rather than seek the answers to

such questions, or blame someone else, you would search your heart to know where *you have gone wrong*, where you have failed in doing your share, where you have been careless and negligent in taking proper care of God's temple.

And then — there is another phase. In case of sickness — whether contagious or not — after we repent of it, after we are anointed, we sometimes tend to believe that if God, in His infinite mercy, allowed our plans to be changed, it was to protect us perhaps from another calamity or accident, a more serious one, which otherwise would have been our lot.

Let me explain this.

### Did God Really Cause This

Have you ever wondered — when sick or undergoing some hardship — just what is the underlying lesson God wants you to learn? *You should*, because there's always a lesson for each one of us to learn in all the occurrences in life. But in so doing, have you also *assumed*, subconsciously perhaps, a somewhat self-righteous attitude, seeking first what other calamity you were spared of, or the "meaning" of the adverse circumstances — rather than admitting you brought them on yourself?

I am sure you get the point. There is always — for each one of us — a lesson to learn in whatever happens to us. But all the changes brought in our lives as a result of such circumstances are *not* necessarily of God's doing — or a divine "sign" of His intervention. When our plans are upset — and they always are in such circumstances — we tell ourselves, "it must be God's will." This way of thinking is rather convenient since it makes us *de-emphasize our sin!* In other words, in our eagerness to rationalize the "divine" intervention, we forget that the mess we are in is because of sin.

No doubt, God can and does — *when HE so chooses* — intervene in a dramatic way in our lives, causing our plans to be upset, our decisions to be reversed, trips and appointments cancelled, and all sorts of such things. However, more often than not, such upsetting of our plans is most often imposed on us *by our sins* — and not necessarily by God.

### My Plans Upset

The same was true, to be sure, in the case of *my mumps*. (For once, I hate that adjective "my"; in this particular case, it is most appalling to me!) Nevertheless, in my vanity, I in turn seemed more preoccupied to know just *why* God allowed the sudden changes in my plans and schedule than the part my sins played in the matter. For one thing, this sickness would set me back in my work; it would prevent me from making new broadcasts to the French-speaking people for a certain length of time — and would upset, of course, my regular schedule as well as all of my immediate plans. "Why — oh, why did God allow this to happen?" I asked myself, as though *He* were responsible for it, quite oblivious to the reasons for my catching the mumps.

Incidentally, we were expecting a visitor from Europe, the teen-age daughter of close friends from Belgium; both she and we — especially our children — had been looking forward to her visit. In view of the fact that she speaks only French, my children would be forced to converse with her in that language. What an excellent opportunity for them!

But we had to postpone her trip; just a few hours before her departure, we contacted her parents to call it off, at least temporarily.

Now — was this necessarily God's will? It could have been, of course. But was it *really*? I presume you can be philosophical about it and reason your way around, looking out for all kinds of plausible arguments to prove that such was indeed the case. But would that necessarily be true?

You might say perhaps that God stopped her from flying that day because her plane might have crashed. Actually it didn't. The plane landed very safely — and there were no airplane crashes reported anywhere in the world that day! You might think of numerous other reasons. But please try to see the point: whatever the circumstances, even though "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose," nevertheless, when our thinking

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not blasphemed" (I Tim. 6:1). In modern day terminology this applies to those men who work for an employer. They are to give that employer the honor due him. And part of the way to do this is to perform your work well.

Your employer will know that you belong to God's Church. You tell him you must have the Sabbath day off, Holy Days, etc. Then, if you do sloppy, half-hearted work, you will give occasion for him to blaspheme. Plus, you yourself are actually blaspheming. You are professing to do God's will and are not. God says that His name *and* His doctrine will be blasphemed if you do not honor your employer properly. Part of His doctrine is "whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

#### Leads to Unpardonable Sin

Blasphemy is dangerous. And it ought to be considered so because one form of blasphemy is the unpardonable sin. Let us understand this.

The case of *blasphemy against the Holy Spirit* is shown in Matthew 12:22-32. "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a demon, blind, and dumb; and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand; And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the SPIRIT OF GOD, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you." Then Jesus said in verse 31, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men . . ."

Notice in this statement that Jesus said there were different manners or

kinds of blasphemy just as there were different kinds of sin. All the other types of blasphemy can be forgiven. The Apostle Paul was one who was forgiven of blasphemy that he had done in ignorance. See I Timothy 1:13.

"But," Jesus went on in verse 31 and 32, "*the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men.* And . . . whosoever *speaketh against the Holy Spirit*, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

What did the Pharisees do or say against the Holy Spirit that Christ should say this to them? Let us notice.

In verse 23, after the people saw the miracle, "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?" The people let the work performed by the Holy Spirit in this miracle prick their hearts. They were ready to acknowledge that God was working through His Son Jesus Christ. And that Jesus was not just an ordinary man but that He truly was the Messiah who was prophesied to come. They let the manifested power of the Holy Spirit convict them, and begin to bring them to repentance.

But the Pharisees, who saw the same miracle, who saw the blind and dumb man speak and see, did not allow the work of the Holy Spirit to convict them. They hardened their hearts. They probably had a feeling that they should give God glory. They knew that what Jesus did was an act of God — that it was good and right. But instead of allowing this wonderful work to soften their hearts and bring them to repentance, they hardened themselves and spoke against the miracle done by the Holy Spirit.

They said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils [or demons]." This was blasphemy! They called a work done by the Holy Spirit — a work done to bring them to repentance — the work of Satan the Devil. Instead of repenting, they struck back at God's Holy Spirit — which is the power that brings us to repentance. They spoke against and blasphemed the only power that could make them repent. They therefore seared their consciences and

hardened their hearts to the point they could never repent. Therefore they could never be forgiven.

If we get into a habit of blaspheming God, His Word, His doctrine by our words and misdeeds, we are only a step away from blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. We are walking the cliff, so to speak. It is a dangerous walk, for one slip could mean our eternal end.

Let us put away all forms of blasphemy. Let us eradicate even such terms from our speech as "Gee," "Gosh," etc., which are polite forms of swearing. Let us not *profess* RIGHTEOUSNESS and then *commit* SIN! Let us not claim to be spiritual Jews when we are not. We also must be careful about speaking against the word of God as spoken by His ministers. And we need to be careful of the example we set in front of others — in the home and at work.

All these things are included in the sin of *blasphemy*. And above all, let us never attribute work done by and through the power of God's Holy Spirit as being the work of Satan the Devil. For if we harden our hearts to this extent we shall have committed the sin of which Jesus Christ said, ". . . it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

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is biased or *unbalanced* — when we have *blinded* our eyes to the very cause that made us change our plans — when we *forget* that we have sinned — then we are on dangerous ground.

As you see, it all depends on how you look at things — and just how close you are to God. But whatever the outcome, it does not justify your sins.

Mr. Ronald Dart, Deputy Director of the Foreign Work, and I were scheduled to visit — the middle part of July — the three main islands where God's people regularly convene: *Barbados*, *Trinidad* and *Martinique*. Of course, we had to call it off temporarily.

Now — was this God's will? Once again, it could have been, but I have no

proof. Moreover, as I write these lines, our trip was called off not because of my sickness, but because of an important matter which Mr. Dart had to handle urgently in South Africa. In this sudden change of plans, I could see God's directing Hand; it was quite obvious.

But the point is this: whatever the case, we should avoid *rationalizing*. When our plans are shattered by illness or accident, instead of looking out for reasons why it happened to be that way, we must first examine ourselves to see what we have done wrong — repent of it, and trust God to make things work out the best possible way.

If God, in His infinite wisdom, uses a certain circumstance in our lives to make us do, or abstain from doing, a certain thing — will this make us *less guilty* of our wrong actions? Can we consider ourselves *less sinners* because something good came out of it all *by the grace of God*? Are we, for that matter, automatically forgiven of our sins? Shouldn't we rather repent just as much — or perhaps *even more* deeply — for having been careless and not having kept God's laws the way we should have, rather than justify or rationalize the circumstances?

Let's straighten our views and see things the way they actually are. If we do our share, God will always do His. Let's recognize our share of guilt in catching a contagious disease, and if God — through His mercy — works things out for the best, let us be ever more grateful to Him.

#### Yes — It Was Embarrassing!

I had to be well past my teen-age years — and be a man over 40 — to finally be able to say, sadly, that I have at last had the mumps!

Yet, it is only today that I fully grasp the meaning of a "childhood" or contagious disease which is usually looked upon as "unavoidable." I was accustomed to taking them for granted, *de-emphasizing* their "sin" aspect. The words "childhood" or "contagious" had somehow misled my thinking, making me — subconsciously perhaps — disassociate them with sin.

It was embarrassing!

But my worst embarrassment, as I understood this point, was *before God!* I

was embarrassed for having *overlooked* my part — the sinful part I myself have played in today's human degeneration; I was embarrassed for having acted rather *self-righteously* in the presence of a childhood or contagious disease — I was embarrassed for having been *careless* in doing my part — embarrassed for my *negligence* in doing my share in keeping my body in top shape — embarrassed for not having fully *discerned my guilt*, but for having instead *rationalized* its consequences. No, I didn't catch the mumps just because of someone else's sins; I had *my own part*, a big part in it, even though it was overlooked and *de-emphasized* by the reasonings of my carnal mind.

It was most embarrassing, indeed!

Whether children or adults, we all are subject to catching a "childhood" or contagious disease, not necessarily because of contagion, but *because of sin*

under one form or another. Contagion is a result of sin. We all sin. A "childhood" disease may be more serious with an adult because an adult is more directly responsible for his actions — he should know better how to take care of himself; consequently, the penalty in his case can be expected to be heavier.

My wife was right. Having mumps can be a most *embarrassing experience* — but not just before men. No, that isn't where it hurts most — but before God especially, because sin is always *against Him*.

In a way, I have learned quite a bit from this experience with the mumps. In its ugliness, and with all the inconveniences it caused — it taught me important things. Next time, when the opportunity presents itself, I will think twice — and ponder the meaning of my words — before asking someone, "Have you had the mumps yet?..."

## THE BIBLE ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

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from a mixture of protein fibers such as wool, mohair, silk, etc., are all right.

Another part of this question concerns the mixture of synthetic, man-made fabrics such as dacron, nylon, polyester, rayon, etc., with either cellulose or protein fibers. Unknown to many, a garment made from a combination of synthetic and either cellulose or protein material does not break the above principle. This is because today's synthetic materials are made to have essentially the same characteristics of the natural fibers they are combined with. They would not mix properly if they were not made this way. Thus, the resulting fabric from such combinations is acceptable since it is a mixture of essentially like rather than dissimilar fibers.

However, it should also be noted that such combinations produce a cheaper *garment* quality-wise than one made with the best grade of pure fabric. On the other hand, a garment made from low-grade natural fibers is usually improved by the addition of compatible man-made fibers. Such mixtures enable

the manufacturer to use a *cheap* grade of wool or cotton by fortifying it with a cheap man-made fiber. Far too often, the motivation for such combinations stems from the greed for profit. Any good tailor knows that the best quality clothing is made from 100 percent wool, cotton, etc. Nevertheless, one need not throw away or destroy clothing which may be of a poor quality or wrong mixture. Such materials are NOT sin in themselves. Rather, God does not want a manufacturer to produce shoddy materials and take advantage of his customers.

A wise principle to follow in purchasing either a pure or mixed garment is to purchase the *best quality* you can afford for yourself and your family. We honor God in what we wear. Cheap imitations (both in character and wearing apparel) that appear to be genuine do not honor God! So remember, be a *quality* Christian and buy the *best quality clothing* you can afford! But don't go deeply into debt buying better quality than you can afford. That's not being genuine either!