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## Wuhan to Pharaoh & 3 Musical Messages

David R. Kotok

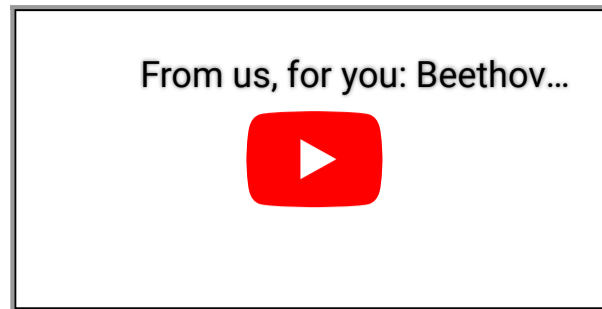
Mon Apr 6, 2020

We especially thank Gary Shilling and Fred Rossi for help with this list.

1. Coronavirus. First officially appeared in Wuhan, China in December 2019. (We now know it was there in November). It spread through China, then elsewhere in Asia, and now throughout the world.
2. MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome). Originated in Saudi Arabia in 2012 and spread worldwide, most notably to South Korea, but was mainly confined to the Middle East. Close to 450 deaths were reported between 2012 and 2015. South Korea learned from the experience and was prepared for the 2019 novel coronavirus now named SARS-CoV-2.
3. Zika. See Kotok pamphlet: <https://www.cumber.com/zika/>. Spread of the mosquito-borne Zika virus is still underway. Still no vaccine.
4. West African Ebola virus. Originated in Guinea in 2013 and spread elsewhere in the West African region for three years. Some 11,300 deaths reported in Africa. One died in the US, and a handful of nonfatal cases were reported elsewhere. Some of the medical research used for the coronavirus originated in the work against Ebola.
5. SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome). First appeared in Guangdong Province in China in November 2002. Spread worldwide within a few months, but by July 2003 WHO declared SARS contained. By then, close to 775 deaths had been reported.
6. Hong Kong flu. Originated in Hong Kong in 1968 and spread worldwide in 1968–1969. Estimated 1 million deaths.
7. Asian flu. Originated in China in 1957 and spread worldwide in 1957–1958. Estimated 2 million deaths.
8. Spanish flu. Said to have originated in wartime France in 1917 and spread worldwide for 3 years. 50 million–100 million deaths. I will skip smallpox, measles, yellow fever, cholera and others.
9. Black plague. Thought to have originated in Central or East Asia, where it traveled along the Silk Road, reaching Crimea by 1343. From there, it was likely carried by fleas living on rats that traveled on all the merchant ships, spreading throughout the Mediterranean and Europe. Peaked in Europe in 1347–1352. Estimated to have killed 30%–60% of Europe's population and may have reduced world population in the 14th century from about 475 million to 350–375 million. It took 200 years for world population to recover to its previous level.
10. Athens about 2500 years ago. During the Peloponnesian War, the plague hit Athens (documented by Thucydides), and the casualties and costs rendered the Athenian coalition against Sparta so weak as to force a capitulation. The writings of the time indicate that the Athenian plague did not reach Sparta. One must wonder if Spartan social distancing was the first lockdown imposed in recorded history.
11. We recite the ten plagues at a Passover seder. Where did this practice originate? How is it tied to the Last Supper? To Easter? Are the present-day locusts in Africa a reminder of this history?

Now to something else – 3 musical messages.

Here is the link to a YouTube of the members of the Rotterdam Philharmonic playing “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* – from home! When I first saw it there were only a few thousand views. Now their effort has been emulated worldwide. Please enjoy again or for the first time if you haven’t seen it. <https://www.youtube.com/embed/3eXT60rbBVk>



Here is a link sent to me by a friend and retired doctor who lives in Washington State and has been watching the events there unfold. As a clue, this music is by Mozart (can you identify it?) – with additional help, as you will see and hear. <https://vimeo.com/243312820>



[Bird Song Opera](#) from [ShakeUp music & sound design](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Lastly, “The Weight,” by the Band – performed here by a band whose members are scattered across the globe – is the theme song at Camp Kotok each year. A few of us sing along with the Randy Spencer Band. We offer it to help those readers still with us, to lighten their load. <https://www.youtube.com/embed/ph1GU1qQ1zQ>



**David R. Kotok**

Chairman of the Board & Chief Investment Officer

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