

A Call for Repentance
Reflection on the September 11 Tragedy
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What can the loss of thousands of lives in a few brief minutes teach us? Can we move beyond the gripping pictures and thousands of broadcast and published words to learn what we desperately need? The event was singular, but the lessons echo to us through the ages, and will reverberate on forever.

Many ask, where was God in all of this? As I see the evidence, only one answer is valid. He was where He has always been, with His creatures, suffering. Perceived alone by faith, His connection with each of us is as distinct as if there were no one else on earth. Can we fathom the terror He shared in the final moments of thousands? And how He rejoiced as untold hundreds calmly put their final trust in Him? He was also on His throne, in control, willing to take the blame, until the horrors of sin and evil are traced to their roots. At that time He will be fully exonerated, as the evidence of the ages are laid out in vivid detail, and every knee bows to Him. He was also intently looking at humanity, and particularly our nation, to see if we can trace from cause to effect, if we can stop blaming Him and others, if we can recognize lawlessness for what it is, and repent.

When Christ was given the news of a massacre, He did not address the injustice of the situation, though such certainly existed. He referred to another disaster when a tower fell and killed people. He used both incidences to focus on our corporate sinfulness and need to repent.

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:1-5)

Let us look at the events of September 11 from several perspectives, and ask how can each of these teach us the repentance Christ says we need. In the context of righteousness, the acts were pure evil. Accepting the

definition of righteousness being faith and love, we see here neither. Whatever motives incited the complex planning and execution, nothing redemptive appears behind it. Can we be led by this to repent of all destructive, lesser deeds of evil we have all committed? Have we not also been blinded by raw pain and injustice, and sought to nurture the spirit of bitterness and revenge? Can we see where this spirit leads? God, forgive us.

In the light of corporate solidarity, we view aghast the painful reality that the innocent suffer for the sins of others. There is no avoiding it. Images from around the world have shown us also that the world suffers in sympathy with the tragedy. An amazing unity exists in grief. The nation seems roused to a patriotic call to unity and strength. The perpetrators clearly saw the whole nation implicated in the wrongs that motivated their deed. We must grasp the truth in all of this. We are one. My sin does not just affect me. Can we grasp how far reaching are the ripples of my self-centered acts? God, forgive me.

Can we rise to the challenge of trying to see the situation through the eyes of the perpetrators? The children on Peter Jennings Kids Special asked, why do they hate us so much? Are we willing in childlike simplicity to face that stupendous question? What is the injustice that they seek to remedy, through means as evil as the injustice? What violated rights do they feel compelled to kill and die to defend? Could we be unknowing participants in offending them? Can we not walk in their shoes a short ways? How unlike them we feel. God, forgive us.

From the perspective of the USA as a nation, are we ready to view candidly its dual character qualities cryptically described in Rev. 13:11? The strength of our nation has ever been its lamb-like qualities. We have been strong through our humility, our generosity, our willingness to put others first. The horror has highlighted these realities. It did not create them. The firefighters and the passengers of Flight 93 laid down their lives to protect others. To die for others, in defense of their lives and liberty, these are qualities of the Lamb. It is what He did. The event has reverberated through the nation, arousing this slumbering spirit. People have asked, how can I help? Through blood and money, the giving spirit has been expressed. The

shallowness of greed has been unmasked. Can we perceive how much of our lives have been devoted to self-seeking? God, forgive us.

It is the height of historical ignorance and national arrogance to think that the USA's future is any more certain than that of the ancient Roman Empire. The weakness of our nation, and its doom, spring from the inner workings of our human nature flowing out to national policies, that would put pleasure above principle, and would coerce others to follow our course. This dragon-like attitude has led us to adopt national perspectives that should be seen for the short-sightedness that they embody.

On the home-front, the attitude of liberty without responsibility has bred the moral rot that is eating out the heart of our nation. Our national dominance in world communication and entertainment has in essence forced this mind-set to the globe. Moral people around the world are offended. Short-sighted religious leaders in the USA see our moral pollution as the sole manifestation of our problem, and actively encourage our leaders in a globalist solution, rather than a gospel solution.

The last century has unfolded the globalist strategies of the New World Order, which our leaders have embraced. These have led us to ignore George Washington's parting words, and to spend the fruit of our prosperity in foreign entanglements and intrigues. We have trained operatives (such as Noriega and bin Laden) to carry out our "dirty work." We have fought wars in far-flung battlefields to "defend the American way of life" (which superficially may mean nothing more than how much I am willing to pay for a gallon of gasoline, but more deeply speak of who is in control). The leaders of the New World Order speak openly of waiting for the disaster that will lead all nations to accept the future they design. Can we explain why we ignored the warning six years ago by the Philippine police that plans were afoot to destroy large buildings with commercial airplanes? Power plays can use such dragon-like methods.

American Muslim leaders now speak simply and eloquently of the inequities in foreign policy. These policies have violated the rights of others in their homelands and bred hatred of the country behind them. This approach has more than once come back to haunt us. It has happened again, this time on our own soil in a magnitude that cannot be easily ignored. Can

we avoid reaping what we have sown? Have we been so arrogant to think it would not happen? Are we willing as a nation to lay the ax at the root of the hate? Lord, is it I? God, forgive us for our dragon hearts and actions.

In all of what has transpired, do we see a spirit of repentance? Or do we perceive an attitude that says, “We are right; they are wrong. We are good; they are evil. We have no problem; they are the problem. We will triumph.” God, forgive us for our lack of repentance.

This horrific event, along with all others of lesser and greater magnitude, pales in comparison with the event 2000 years ago which implicates every one of us. Seen through the eye of faith, the cross erected outside Jerusalem was evil at its ultimate expression, and righteousness fully manifest. We committed the horrendous evil, and He revealed pure righteousness. In the corporate picture, all of us killed Him, the innocent One. But in a marvelous way, He took us with Him to our reward. He revealed the only effective, eternal way to overcome evil. Justice alone served will perpetuate the evil. We are told and shown, it is “by mercy and truth iniquity is purged.” (Prov. 16:6). Justice must be bathed in mercy. “Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before Thy face.” (Ps. 89:14).

The call is to us as individuals, and to nations. Repudiate the methods of the dragon. Repent of them from the heart. Humble yourselves in deep contrition. Become like the Lamb. The response to this call will determine the destiny of individuals and nations. Sadly, the Scriptures reveal no nation that will be willing to lay down their pride, and crown the Lamb. But individuals from every nation will be won by His love. Corporately they are pictured as His bride, for whom He must come, to deliver her from the dragon-like forces, and to marry her for eternity. God, forgive us for delaying that day. May the marriage hasten apace.