

## Signs of the Times

Recent events have once again born witness to the fact that we live in perilous and uncertain times. Were the episodes of recent days merely acts of terrorism birthed in deranged minds that from time to time vent themselves uninvited upon the stage of modern life or markers of a spiritual condition in the earth? If, as according to Romans 1:20; Psalms 19:1-6; 1 Corinthians 10:11; etc, the natural is a window on the spiritual, then what might the Lord be trying to tell us about the circumstances of late? Is God trying to speak through all this and are we hearing?

We know the Lord did not cause this calamity but as with all things He is able to give us instruction through it. What might He be trying to say in the fact that this devastation occurred on 9/11? Does the reality that those who caused this monstrosity could do so only by voluntarily giving of their lives suggest anything? Is there any spiritual symbolism in the crashing of the two towers? How might the destruction to the World Trade Center speak of spiritual conditions related to the center of world trade? Do these events have anything to do with the prophecy given by the Lord on the eve of the last presidential election, and the process of father/son order? (see December 2000 Bloodline).

Are these occurrences affecting the people of God in the same way they affect the general world or are they giving spiritual direction and understanding to those who have knowledge of the Holy One? *Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?* Jesus was asking, what is not so obvious to many today, why is it you can only understand in natural ways but have no spiritual discernment or application?

Almost all see these natural events in some prophetic light. The perpetrators of these ghastly deeds think they are the instruments of the will of God to rid their land of the infidels and the world of the "great satan". Cultists and mystics cite some great sage or seer from the past who had supposed words of knowledge for those at the turn of this new millennium. Evangelical and fundamentalist Christians, in large part, see these events as further fulfillment of biblical prophecy leading to the return of Jesus. It has always been amazing to me that so many speak with such certainty after the fact about how this or that prophecy has been fulfilled and are so certain what this fulfillment means for the future. If these prophecies were so clear, I often wonder why they did not have this understanding before the fact to warn and prepare?

Many Christians interpret these *signs of the times* to be one more evidence of the soon "rapture" of the Church. Although thoughts of what all this means, vary and there are differences as to exact interpretations, many feel the often predicted "great tribulation" is soon to be upon us. "We must save as many of the lost as possible before the trumpet ushers the Church away to glory and plunges the world into continual disaster and affliction". These sentiments have been spoken so many times and with such great certainty that for the average Christian to question this interpretation would be in many places tantamount to heresy.

The Church, for the most part, is looking for fulfillment of prophecy in natural ways. An event like this happens and interpreters of bible prophecy begin to see how the whole world might be gathered together in the Middle East for a climactic battle. It must be time to, *look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption – the rapture – draweth nigh*. Is the Church really discerning the times or using natural events in a natural way to justify its great fear evidenced by its desire to escape the world?

Without a doubt the prophetic plan of God in the world today will be evidenced in many natural ways with marching armies, economic trials and natural catastrophes. A world ruler may rise giving hope to the masses who long for peace and security. Are these the highest fulfillment of prophetic understanding or a natural gateway to the higher spiritual purpose of God? Is all that prophecy is to the Church just one great big “I told you so” to the world. “Get yourself right, tribulation is coming and you wont want to be here; come fly with us come fly up to the sky”. Is biblical prophecy merely for worldly chastisement and self justification or to those who can discern the *signs of the times* may their actually be a higher spiritual understanding leading to a Kingdom appearing?

Leaders of various religious faiths have been called upon to give inspiration and counsel to the nation. Multitudes lay their sorrows upon God in prayer services seeking the peace and intervention of the Almighty. These are good things to do. By their actions most of the nation, in a tacit if not outright manner has spoken with the Psalmist the hope that, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble*. The hearts of most seek an understanding that goes beyond that which can be given in stated facts and figures for a consolation that can only come from the heavens.

But what is it that we are exactly asking God to do and what is it that we expect Him to do? We pray for the families and friends of the dead and injured; this is good. We ask for the wisdom and strength of God upon our leaders; this is good. We desire the unity of our nation and the protection of God; this is good.

Some pray the blessing of God upon those who did these heinous acts to lead them from their error, is this the will of God or should we respond as David, (*Psa 54:5 KJV*) *He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth. And; (Psa 6:10 KJV) Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly*. Others pray the continued blessing of God through economic prosperity and deliverance from war, we all hope this is His will but is it?

In all our entreaties to the Almighty much is birthed out of genuine good will and desire for the welfare of our fellow man. It may also be that much is requested from God out of a fear of loosing the amenities we so richly enjoy via the freedoms and prosperity of western society. Are we petitioning the Lord for the performance of His will or for the preservation of our comfort? If it were the Almighty’s will through tribulation and hardship to bring forth a perfection in His people that they do not readily understand, would the words of their prayer still be “thy will be done oh Lord”.

To those with eyes to see and ears to hear, the earth is a vast classroom of spiritual instruction. We each find ourselves on one of a countless number of stages on which we either deny or affirm the Kingdom of God. What are we to learn from these acts of violence which are so destructive and so without reason as to elicit contempt from even the most callous and cynical among us? What if God through these and other acts of the past and future, were trying to propel His Church past the religious fables and fears that tie it to an escape mentality and a natural mode of thinking? What if the underlying control of these and future events were not in the hands of the earth’s armies and politicians and humanitarians but in the hands of a remnant destined to bring forth the Kingdom?

We are engaged in a holy war. This is not a new occurrence but hopefully its truth will be newly realized by the people of God. (2 Th 2:4 KJV) *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.* To those who understand this prophecy naturally it speaks of a ruler in a brick and mortar temple deceiving the nations that he is God. To those who can discern the *signs of the times*, it speaks of a carnal mind resident in what should be the true temple of God.

In Osama bin Laden and in many others, the enemy is sitting *in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.* These people are true believers. They believe they are on a mission from God. It is not God but the enemy that is in their temple and isn't this what Isaiah said of Lucifer; *I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation.* He resides not only in these obvious examples of human evil but also in many which profess to know God but who are controlled by the carnality of their minds. The greatest battlefield is not located on the deserts and mountains of the middle east but in the fertile territory of the mind of man.

We call upon the Lord for His salvation in these times of trouble. To the world at large this struggle is nothing less than the preservation of civilization as we have come to know it. To the forces promoting this evil it is nothing more than a crusade, a jihad, a holy war to rid the world of infidels and heretics and to establish the god of their temple into rulership over increasing numbers of people. The greatest battle is not that which is being fought in the natural world but that which is being fought in the minds – the temple – of men. This is the true land for which the enemy is fighting so viciously; the natural battles only being a type of the spiritual. For it is the Lord's sovereignty over this land that brings the manifestation of the Kingdom of God and the submission of all of the kingdoms of the world.

But the Church of God is having trouble understanding the *signs of the times*. They see the natural but not much of the spiritual. (1 Pet 4:17a KJV) *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:* The natural world is only revealing the warfare that is already present in the spiritual realm. That is why judgement must first begin at God's house if the world is ever to be positively affected. The Church is not judging itself but is at times enthusiastic in its judgement of the world. It is telling the world it needs to become as the Church is but the world, for good reason, isn't buying.

(2 Chr 7:14a KJV) *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear.* We call out to God for His intervention but do we call out to God for our transformation. His promise is that He will hear and heal if His people will change. *Be ye not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Our temple must be transformed from habitations of worldly and carnal thinking to the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. The terrorists in their twisted minds are trying to rid the land of infidels but the Lord is desiring to rid the spiritual land of our souls of all that pollutes and make His total habitation impossible; this is the Kingdom – the rule of the King in us.

Our nation and the world have progressively turned from God. Many have sought to ferret out every vestige of God from the schools that educate our children and from all public institutions from which our national character is fostered. To this add a multitude of perversions and the deaths of tens of millions of unborn children and ask yourself, what is it we are asking God to bless?

We can shake our heads at an evil world but it is we, not they, that hold the key to what the Lord would do; (Luke 12:48b KJV) *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:*

What is required of us? (*Micah 6:8 KJV*) *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (1 Cor 11:31 KJV) For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* A church in right order with God is the only hope for the coming of the Kingdom and the coming Kingdom is the only lasting hope for a lost world.

Does that mean that the events of recent days and what may come is a punishment from God on our nation and world. No, the world in its defiance of God has been punishing itself well enough without the Lord adding to it. It is not God's desire to destroy mankind but to save it.

(*Psa 103:8 KJV*) *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.* The Lord is merciful. He has used this imperfect nation, as well as others, many times to bring forth His purposes and will almost surely do so again in this situation. In times of trouble the leadership of this nation and the majority of its people have traditionally invoked the aid of God. For all its sins, it is this characteristic that is quite possibly most responsible for its victory in difficult times and it is this act of acknowledgement that will bring forth God's purpose for this time through it.

It is not the survival of the nation but the condition of the Church that should be of most concern to those who see beyond the natural events of this time. To change the world the church is going to have to be changed and change in the church begins with change in the soul of each individual saint. Do we hear and more importantly do we see a true repentance on the part of God's people or just a call for His blessing? God knew in advance the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> but why didn't His people? It may have been God's purpose not to reveal them or it may be that God was calling but no one was answering.

The manifestation of the Kingdom of God is the manifestation of the rule of God over the kingdoms of the earth until this rule becomes complete; (*Rev 11:15b KJV*) *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.* The remnant seed who can discern the *signs of the times* and not be bound to religious fables, will be instrumental in bringing forth this Kingdom. We hold the greatest answer to the world's needs. The lost individually need Jesus but the world needs the manifestation of Jesus in His Kingdom. A Kingdom people will not only have knowledge of situations like those of the past week but also the answer and the power to bring right resolution. Why should God give His people knowledge if they are not prepared or changed to bring forth His solution?

The world is arming to deal with the terror thrust upon it. Should the Church arm itself with sword and gun to deal with the adversaries? No, God has set authorities over us for that purpose. (*Rm 13:3-4*) *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.* But are we not to love our enemies? Yes, but it is not love to allow evil people to commit depravity upon the innocent. We are at war but as mentioned earlier, as great as the natural destruction and warfare appear, it is only a natural manifestation of a greater spiritual war.

God is arming His people. (*2 Cor 10:3-5*;) *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;* These weapons are the power of God in the mind of His people. The carnal mind and its Imaginations give

place to the mind of Christ in His people. Our thoughts becoming His thoughts brings forth the greatest weapon of warfare ever unleashed upon this earth.

*(Jer 51:20 KJV) Thou art my battle ax and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;* This weapon is the Lord but the vessel for delivering this weapon of war is Zion – the remnant church brought to perfection. If we can see the *signs of the times* then we must see the greater spiritual truths behind the events of the day. Why are the people of God so fearful? Is it not because they are yet carnal? Should not our desire be to change? Should not our prayer be “fulfill your purpose in me Lord”? Should not our longing be to be armed with the weapons of spiritual warfare to bring forth the His Kingdom? Give us eyes to see and ears to hear Lord and grant that we may understand the mystery and be conformed to the image of your son in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

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