

Before the **THRONE**

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Of Tsunamis, God, and Men... or From Whence Cometh Tragedy?

by Mark D. Spencer

The Essence – Are nature’s “acts of God” really God initiated? Is the devil really powerful enough to cause global destruction? Is there something else at work here? The whole of creation is crying out under the burden of Mankind’s sin and rebellion (Romans 8:19-23). These groanings, or birth pangs, are the cry of the birthing of a new Kingdom. While not “PC” to say such things, these groanings, periodically, break forth into awesome destructive power as the earth convulses under the weight of such a spiritual burden. (Leviticus 18:24-25) The Lord God has clearly demonstrated His longsuffering toward Mankind, but the earth has far less patience!

“Later, Jesus sat on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and asked, “When will all this take place? And will there be any sign ahead of time to signal your return and the end of the world?” Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will lead many astray. And wars will break out near and far, but don’t panic. Yes, these things must come, but the end won’t follow immediately. The nations and kingdoms will proclaim war against each other, and there will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. But all this will be only the beginning of the horrors to come.”
Matthew 24:3-8 NLT

“And there will be strange events in the skies— signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And down here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides.” Luke 21:25 NLT In recent days, the world has experienced a great natural disaster. Possibly one of the worst catastrophes in recorded history, especially if we will examine the widespread nature of the December 26th, 2004 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that has wreaked havoc across the Asian and African nations of the Indian Ocean. Man is once again reminded of his insignificance before the forces of nature.



However, in the light of humanity's self inflicted tragedies, the number of casualties from this horrific natural event, while not insignificant, surely pale in the face of man-made calamities such as the onslaught of the Hitlers and Stalins, the Maos or the Husseins! And we have yet to make mention of the current genocide on the African continent or the hidden holocaust of untold millions of babies murdered by their mothers, (not to forget their silent fathers), and their attending physicians via the knife of abortion. Yet we stil

I stand in awe of these "acts of God" as they with more intense frequency arise and

disrupt our relatively quiet lives and demand we notice! But what is it that we are to take notice of anyway? It is not always easy to be both brief and yet thorough, especially with such a topic that has most surely generated more than a few honest, as well as mocking queries... "Why would a loving God allow, or worse, cause such needless human tragedy?"

What with mounting catastrophes, human tragedies and turmoil, more and more of the world will begin to recognize that we are facing the final moments of the Ending Days! Indeed the final moments of time are imminently upon us! How the people of God – the Church – face these days may determine the eternal destinies of many people. We must be convinced that it is God's intention to do all men good – if they will only repent and turn to His goodness found in Jesus Christ.

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Children of Isachaar

"And there were of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times, who knew what Israel ought to do;" (1 Chronicles 12:32). The Lord has gifted His church with men and women who carry specific anointings by the Spirit of God for these glimpses into the meaning of the times (e.g. the prophets Daniel, Isaiah, John or Paul). Today's believer may also rely upon the same inner anointing of the Holy Spirit to enable us to know what to do in such difficult times as well as share our faith with those around us in context of current events. It is as if the Spirit uses the daily headlines to provide us a launching pad for sharing our faith in Christ! (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20).

Having a firm grip on the truths of the Scriptures and holding at least an elementary understanding of what is happening in the world in light of the plan of God, brings credibility, if not relevance, to our testimony as we offer to others a "reason for the hope that is in us." (1 Peter 3:15).

The Secret Things Belong to the Lord.

There are secret things that belong to the LORD our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our descendants forever, so that we may obey these words of the law.” (Deuteronomy 29:29) There is nothing wrong with our not having all the answers to life’s tough questions.

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While that may sound like a “cop-out” or may not be very comforting or helpful, it is the truth. No one has all the answers. However, we do have a source of wisdom that transcends our natural insight and brings us into contact with a supernatural Mind. “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Corinthians 1:30) You see, while we can’t possibly have all of life’s answers, we can know the One who holds life’s answers. “No one can know what anyone else is really thinking except that person alone, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. And God has actually given us His Spirit (not the world's spirit) so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. When we tell you

this, we do not use words of human wisdom. We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means. We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all. How could they? For, "Who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who can give Him counsel?" But we can understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:11-16)



Those things that have been revealed to us by the Spirit of God are intended for us to then possess by faith. It is in this manner that we partner with the Living God in establishing and bringing into manifestation the Kingdom of God to this earth – at least in some

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measure. As we begin to tap into the Reservoir of God’s thoughts and into His will – even when we have only glimpses of His counsel – we may begin to clarify what was once utter darkness or complete foolishness to the natural mind. As we see the Lord’s desire to reveal these things to us, faith

begins to rise within us to further hear from the Lord and to see from His perspective, which in turn releases even more faith and confidence in His purpose for our lives and for our ability to reach out and help others. With this then as a basis for launching out into this rather murky water of theological and moral debate, let’s begin to see if we can come

to some conclusions of “from whence cometh tragedy;” based upon our attempt to think God’s thoughts after Him.

Defining Tragedy

The word tragedy has many synonyms – catastrophe, disaster, calamity, misfortune, or heartbreak. Specifically the word tragedy means, mournful, sorrowful, and calamitous. The Webster Dictionary of 1828 defines it even more specifically as, “a fatal and mournful event; any event in which human lives are lost by human violence, more particularly by unauthorized violence.” With this understanding we see that a tragedy is something that occurs specifically between people. So then, given this definition we can immediately rule out the tsunami of 2004 as a tragedy (that is, man inflicting such suffering upon his fellow man), or can we?

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“From Whence Cometh Tragedy?”

Well then, “from whence cometh tragedy?” It appears we have at least four choices. Do these awful things come from... God... the devil... men’s sinful nature and subsequent actions... or do they issue merely from the natural occurring processes of nature itself? The problem is that it is often difficult for us to discern between the author of these various options and our discussion. Things can get a bit blurry without the clarifying help of God’s Spirit and His word.



The Question

So we may honestly ask the question everyone is asking.... If God is real, or if He is a good God, why does He allow these things to happen? From Deuteronomy 29:29 we read, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this

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law.” Now, the use of this verse is first and foremost not a “cop-out” allowing us “wiggle room” to twist, distort or ignore the facts at our own choosing, but we do need to be able to “hold this card” if we are to grasp the significance of our finiteness. And yet we also need to understand that the Lord is most willing to reveal certain things to us so we can partner with Him in prayer and the work of the Gospel. We can know with a certainty many things concerning the

purposes and plans of God for our lives! (see Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 1:9; Philippians 2:13.)

So the question remains on some level why do these things happen? Doesn't the goodness of God lead men to repentance? In Romans chapter two, verse one, the apostle Paul instructs us – "You may be saying, "What terrible people you have been talking about!" But you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you do these very same things. And we know that God, in His justice, will punish anyone who does such things. Do you think that God will judge and condemn others for doing them and not judge you when you do them, too? Don't you realize how kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see how kind He has been in giving you time to turn from your sin? But no, you won't listen. So you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself because of your stubbornness in refusing to turn from your sin. For there is going to come a day of judgment when God, the just Judge of all the world, will judge all people according to what they have done. He will give eternal life to those who persist in doing what is good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. But He will pour out His anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and practice evil deeds. There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on sinning--for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good--for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism." (Romans 2:1-11 NLT)

Judgment ultimately comes because we have rejected the truth and have persisted to continue in sin and then when the "stuff hits the fan" or "all hell breaks loose" we blame God rather than walking in integrity and owning the consequence of our actions!

God's judgment ultimately comes because we have rejected His truth and have persisted to continue in direct opposition to it. Then when the "stuff hits the fan" or "all hell breaks loose" we blame God rather than walking in integrity and owning the consequence of our actions! A brief look at this process follows. Every man has written, at some level on his conscience what is right and wrong. Violation of this conscience brings a "twang of conscience." Continued violation dulls the inner voice of the conscience until it is no longer a valid means of knowing the truth. The next progression then is the hearing of the Word of God – either by personal reading or by hearing someone else proclaim it or share it. This hearing of the word of God brings once again conviction of heart and we

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again face the choices to either obey and yield to God or disregard and continue in rebellion and sin. At the choice of disobedience, God's mercy will often send a friend or other means of personal contact that warns and endeavors to help us avert the judgment (or shall we say consequence of our actions) that is certain to

come. When even this clear and present warning is disregarded and we continue to violate the principles of God and life, often sickness, trouble and tragedy strike. While not the author of these things, God, because of His merciful nature will use these things to gain our attention in hope of our turning back to Him. Too often there is a hardening of heart and an inner defiance that finally and certainly ends in utter destruction and death.

For the believer in disobedience and rebellion, the loss of his life may be the Lord's mercy to the end that his soul may still be saved. However for the unbeliever, death brings with it the final and irrevocable judgment. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:" (Hebrews 9:27). Where is that point of losing the opportunity to repent? Can any man know with certainty... especially for others? As with all such spiritual truths it is best to never usurp the ministry of the Holy Spirit Who alone knows the inner heart and motivations of men. It is prudent to "keep our own noses clean" and to love and pray for those around us rather than to judge them. And lastly, it

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is always best for us to obey the Word of God and to follow His Spirit's leadings as quickly as possible! Selah! (Think about that!)

Let us then clearly understand this... God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked! He longs for them to know His goodness and mercy found in His Son, Jesus Christ. "Say unto them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11)

Dare to Know the Truth

As we now turn our attention to this terrible tsunami that swept over so many innocent people scattered throughout the Indian Ocean we must be willing to face the truths of Scripture even when they make us uncomfortable. Just as we must call the War on Terrorism what it is... a war that Islam has declared on the Christian West.¹ With this in mind, we must now face the possibilities that such global catastrophes are more than natural occurrences!

So... Did God Cause the Tsunami?

We know that to fall into the hands of the Living God is an awesome and terrifying thing! "For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongs unto Me, I will recompense, says the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:30-3). And we further know that His judgments when they come are absolute and righteous and that mankind's final moments upon this earth will experience the Lord God's awesome and terrible judgments! (Joel 2:30 -3:16; Revelation.)



However, with all of this said, we must first and foremost make a distinction between His character of patient endurance and those moments when He does act in judgment. His

**His plans for us are for good,
His intentions for our best!**

goodness demands He withhold His righteous judgments as long as there is the possibility of repentance. “The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise to return, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to perish, so He is giving more time for everyone to repent.” (2 Peter 3:9). His character is not one that destroys life or robs people of the joys of living. He is the Good Shepherd! Jesus said, “The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy, I have come to give them life and life abundantly.” (John 10:10) Never base your assessment of the Lord God’s character after the gods of other religions or Greek god’s of myth – all such gods are contrary and as fickle as men. On mere whims such gods destroy life and cause misfortune for mankind. But seeing from a perspective of the Scripture we see an entirely different picture of the true nature and character of the One true God. His compassions fail not! He will not tempt or test men with evil. “ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.” (James 1:13). It is evident that God is a good God. His plans for us are for good, His intentions for our best! (Jeremiah 29:11) Jesus has radically altered the view of God – and we now have the ability to see Him as a loving and caring Father who does not harm His children. “You parents – if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him.” (Matthew 7:9-11). We then may conclude, and that rather conclusively that the Lord was not the cause of the tsunami nor its destruction and loss of life!

So... Was the Devil the Cause of the Tsunami?

The book of Job offers us much insight into the workings of spiritual warfare and this question of “from whence cometh tragedy.” In the first chapter we see the devil striking at Job’s life with fire from the heavens and wind from the wilderness, killing his flocks and his family! Those who run home to tell Job what has happened – like most people today – tell him it was an “act of God”. Because we are allowed the perspective from outside the actual story and have the narrative of the Spirit’s eyewitness account, we know that it was the devil that sent the fire (most likely an electrical storm) and the wind (most likely some type of tornadic wind) to rob Job of his wealth and to murder his family! We also know from the second chapter that it was the devil again that brought Job his sickness, not God.



In Matthew’s gospel we read of Jesus as He was sailing on the Sea of Galilee with His disciples needing to rebuke the wind and waves lest their ship sink. Would Jesus ever

rebuke a storm His Father had sent? Never! Would Jesus ever rebuke an “act of God?” Most certainly not! This storm, or we should better say, the devil, the malicious power behind this storm, had one intention – to destroy the Son of God and prevent Him from fulfilling His Father’s will.

Yes, the Devil has certain power, but don’t assign to him that which He doesn’t possess! The Devil’s power is limited by our Sovereign God’s determination! 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, the devil is the god of this present world’s system. So while he may be demigod of

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sorts, he is only in the sense that he is a squatter, and has stolen from Adam the rightful contract to the world and it’s systems. It is as if the devil has come to

the leaseholder – Adam – an taken over his apartment by stealth and coercion. Still in a legal sense, he holds the lease – a sub-lease – on this present earth. BUT – man’s lease on this earth is about to expire and with that expiration will also come the eviction of the “god of this world.” The Rightful Owner is about to make His appearance and “make all things new!” (Revelation 21:5). Know this then, the devil is not the ruler of the earth; he is here by Adam’s imprudent and reckless invitation and willful treason! But the Lord Jesus Christ is about to clean house! “The earth is the LORD’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” Psalm 24:1 So we may conclude that while the Devil does have a limited ability to manipulate the weather and natural events, he is not the sovereign ruler of the earth nor does he have power to cause global destruction! Which then brings us to the next question...



So... Could Mankind’s Sin Have Caused the Tsunami?

Typically we think that sin affects only the person who has transgressed the law of God – if we believe in sin at all.

With such denial of the strength and power of sin, we think the notion absurd that sin might possibly have the ability to produce natural destruction. Sin’s affect marred the flora of this world as well as the earth’s fauna and malformed God’s intended co-regents (man) into thralls bound no longer

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to the goodness and love of the Creator but held captive by their own selfish natures and the dominating will of their new god – the Devil. Yes, Adam’s transgression, without a doubt, affected the whole of creation! “For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). Mankind’s sin has allowed all sorts of evils to come upon us; evils never intended by a loving Creator, but now forced upon us by our own volition and the devil’s malevolent hatred of God, as he now strikes out at the Lord’s highest creation! “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if perhaps God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they

may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

Jeremiah shares with us what he has heard when he relates to us, “Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My words, nor to My law, but rejected it.” (Jeremiah 6:19). Now this isn’t God’s desire to bring evil upon men, rather it is His permissive will that allows men to suffer the effects of the sin they have brought on themselves! Friend, there is a most certain reaping what we have sown. All of life and nature operates by these very principles! What you sow is exactly what you will reap! “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” (Galatians 6:7-8). Again the apostle Paul in the book of Romans clearly shows us this principle’s working. It is not the Lord who, in many cases, directly judges mankind, it is Him, simply allowing the fruit of our sin to bring its own judgments!

It is the result of fallen men’s promiscuity in violation of God’s law, coupled with the nature of disease in this fallen world.

When the epidemic of AIDS first became recognized as an emerging crisis, much controversy also ensued. Was it God’s judgment on sinners or was it the result of random consequences on innocent people? YES on both counts, but not necessarily as we might think. It is the result of fallen men’s promiscuity in violation of God’s law, coupled with the nature of disease in this fallen world. So, yes, it is the judgment of God, but not necessarily meted out by God specifically, but by Man’s reckless disregard for the Law of God! Jump off a ten-story building and just see if gravity doesn’t smash you into the ground – and that defiance of the law of gravity will forever change your physical appearance, not to mention your life span! Is this then God’s fault that the person jumping from the building dies? Please! It is however, the result of ignoring His laws! So whether His moral laws or His physical laws are violated, there is always a consequence to be faced! And yes, an individual’s sin not only effects them personally, but it effects all those around them as well – and unfortunately along the way many innocent people are impacted because of the sin of others. That is the very essence of sin. It destroys all it touches and endeavors to reach out to all those near to it as well.

So... Was the Tsunami Merely an Act of Nature?

Was this tsunami a natural phenomenon or was there something more to it? Could it be that the earth is reeling under the effects of sin and evil works? Before we delve any further into this we must emphasize once again that no man holds all the answers to these hard questions of life. Yet, as Christians we do hold to the belief that all circumstances in life are under the final arbitration of God’s wisdom and providential care. (Romans 8:28). To classify every thunderstorm, as having a sinister intent would be foolish, wouldn’t it? Nevertheless, to rule out the possibility of any supernatural force driving a destructive storm or act of nature may be even more foolish – especially in light of eternal things!



With all of that now said and restated, let's press on... In Leviticus chapter 18 we find a most enlightening passage of Scripture. "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the people I am expelling from the Promised Land have defiled themselves. As a result, the entire land has become defiled. That is why I am punishing the people who live there, and the land will soon vomit them out." (Lev 18:24-25)

Could it be? Could it be that the very land will become so polluted and violated by the acts of sinful men that it literally becomes sick, even to the vomiting out of the people? But this isn't the only reference to such fantastic happenings! The prophet Hosea confirms this idea of the earth itself becoming sick from the sin of its inhabitants. "Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel! The LORD has filed a lawsuit against you, saying: "There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land. You curse and lie and kill and steal and commit adultery. There is violence everywhere, with one murder after another. That is why your land is not producing. It is filled with sadness, and all living things are becoming sick and dying. Even the animals, birds, and fish have begun to disappear." (Hosea 4:1-3)

Or what of this from the book of Numbers? "But if the LORD performs a miracle and the ground opens up and swallows them and all their belongings, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have despised the LORD." He had hardly finished speaking the words when the ground suddenly split open beneath them. The earth opened up and swallowed the men, along with their households and the followers who were standing with them, and everything they owned. So they went down alive into the grave, along with their belongings. The earth closed over them, and they all vanished. All of the people of Israel fled as they heard their screams, fearing that the earth would swallow them, too." (Numbers 16:30-34)

The Lord God has clearly demonstrated His longsuffering toward Mankind, but the earth has far less patience!

In Romania during the despotic rule of communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu there was a castle where unspeakable atrocities occurred. There came a time when this very phenomenon transpired. An earthquake so happened that the epicenter was directly under this castle's very foundations! Though anecdotal, how can one honestly believe this is coincidental? The Lord God has clearly demonstrated His longsuffering toward Mankind, but the earth has far less patience!

The Whole of Creation Groans with Birth Pains!

Jesus said in referring to the Ending Days, "...these are the beginnings of sorrows."

For the Redeemed Community, such cataclysmic "birth events", though terrifying, should also awaken our blessed hope of Jesus' soon return!

Literally He was saying "these are the beginning of birth pains!" The earth, along with all of creation, is waiting with great anticipation for the coming Kingdom of the Christ. Don't forget that birth is preceded by increasingly stronger and distinct birth pangs! For the Redeemed Community, such

cataclysmic "birth events", though terrifying, should also awaken our hearts to the blessed hope of Jesus' soon return! "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:28).

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:19-23 KJV).

The words "groan" and "travail" speak with certain clarity to this common experience of crying out in both pain and grief along with the joyous anticipation of the soon manifested Son of God and His brethren – the sons of God! It is as if the whole of creation is holding a common child-birthing session whose end result will be a New Heavens and New Earth. (Titus 2:13; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13 and Rev 21:1).

The Conclusion of the Matter

Specifically we do not hold an answer for why innocent children and other such people have been and will be subjected to such horrific events as the Tsunami of 2004. Generally though, we may speak with a firm assurance that the Lord is firing a warning shot across the bow of the nations and peoples of the earth!



The earth has itself said, "Enough."

The Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 struck at that part of the world where tsunamis are a rarity, but where the population is the most entrenched in Islam (Indonesia is the most populace Islamic country in the world.) This tsunami also struck at the most populated Hindu and Buddhist cultures in the world, not to mention animistic tribes scattered throughout the region! In short – now

this won't sound good to your humanistically trained hearing – this tsunami struck at a region of the world that hates the Lord God and is possibly the most resistant to His Gospel!ⁱⁱ The earth has itself said, “Enough.” Now in ensuing days storms are ravaging the U.S. and northern Europe. Fires again plague Australia and three volcanoes have simultaneously erupted in Guatemala and Mexico? Coincidence? Perhaps a fluke? Maybe a twist of fate? I don't think so! And in your heart of hearts neither do you. As one news caster recently said, “is the earth trying to tell us something?” Yes! While

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these geologic and cosmic events have been happening all along throughout man's tenure upon this planet, it is becoming clearly evident, at least on some level, that our home is beginning to groan under the weight of human sin. And these

birth pangs will only increase in frequency and intensity as the Earth convulses under the weight of such spiritual burden. There is no denying it, the days in which we find ourselves are unique and something is on the horizon! “Lift up your heads, your redemption is drawing near!”

Placing Things in Context.

In light of these things, it is imperative that the believing church be about our Father's business! We must offer the world and its people a hope that transcends the troubles of this present world and its turmoil. It is our place to show forth the glory of our God in the earth until He returns and sets all things right! “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Often it is our lives that will speak louder than our words

The Christian Response in These Final Moments of the Ending Days!

So, we now must place all of this in some type of context of our Christian worldview. It is never easy to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15), for there is always present the possibility that people will neither hear the truth or the spirit of compassion with which we attempt to speak. Regardless of how people respond or react, we must attempt to speak in spite of the resistance that faces us. (Ezekiel 3:18-19) Often it is our lives that will speak louder than our words and so it becomes imperative that we not only speak but also act out our Saviour's love before all people. Never boasting or condescending toward those in trouble, yet we must offer aid and help, a smile and encouragements until they know the love of God through our words and our acts of Christian love! We must be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is within us. (1 Peter 3:15). “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”

So... Why Do the Good Die Needlessly?

Jesus was being asked many of the same sorts of questions about the fairness and justice of certain people dying. Here is His response.... “There were present at that season some that told Him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered them saying, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, No: but, except you repent (*of your sins*), you shall all perish. Or what about those *other* eighteen *people*, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, do you think that they were sinners above all the other men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, No: but, except you repent (*of your sins*), you shall all likewise perish.’” (Luke 13:1-5).

“Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, No: but, except you repent (*of your sins*), you shall all perish.”

Don't be naïve. People will always endeavor to excuse their own rebellion or sin or unbelief by perceived or genuine injustices that are happening to others. We must be wise and bring the issue back to their response to God's love shown to them in Jesus Christ. Bring Christ's salvation “home” to them. At this moment in your conversation it's not about those people in a distant land and the struggles and horrors they are experiencing, rather it's about how the person you are talking with at this moment will respond to the call of God's Spirit in the now! “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Corinthians 6:2)

“Until He Returns...”

“Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.” (Luke 12:43 NASB)

Approaching the final moments of the Ending Days means we will as well be facing the mounting catastrophes, human tragedies and turmoil of the coming New Kingdom! It also means that we must be found in this hour as faithful to our Master, Jesus Christ. We must be convinced that it is God's intention to do all men good – if they will only repent and turn to His goodness found in Jesus Christ, and that He has commanded us to tell others of His wonderful love.

Will you be found faithful in the things of God in these last of the Last Days?

As Jesus prepares to return to this earth to finally establish His reign and rule, His saints, those of us coming back with Him, will most certainly carry one specific trait above all others... “He is Lord over all lords and King over all kings, and His people are the called and chosen and **faithful** ones.” (Revelation 17:14). Will you be found faithful at the coming of the Lord? The apostle Paul offers this word of exhortation to Archippus... “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it.”

Various other translations of this verse urge Archippus to “carry out the work the Lord has given to you,”... “complete the work you have received in the Lord,”... or “to discharge carefully [the duties of] the ministry and fulfill the stewardship which you have received in the Lord.” And what of you? Can you place your name in this verse? Will you be found faithful in the things of God in these last of the Last Days?

So how do we fulfill this ministry that has been entrusted to us by the Lord? By... faithfully obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit. By... faithfully adhering to the Word of God. By... faithfully loving all people as our Lord does. By... faithfully proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to all we meet. By... faithfully blessing and serving those less fortunate. By... faithfully praying for the sick. By... faithfully caring for the sick, and the hurting. By... faithfully living a example of the Christian life... personally... in our homes... in the redemptive community called the local church... in the market place... and at work. By... faithfully praying for the His Kingdom’s coming!

And finally...

We must never forget that we live in a fallen world, affected far beyond our capacity to understand the radical nature of sin’s ravages or from even the heights mankind has fallen! Nor may we ever understand completely (as a creature may



comprehend the Creator), the work of redemption afforded to us by the Cross of Calvary! We must however, be radically convinced that the Lord has a plan of good for those who will turn to Him and trust in His Redeemer, Jesus Christ! We also know that the days ahead of us will be filled with many horrors that will challenge the most stout hearted. These final moment of Mankind’s history upon this earth will be filled with such terrible things that hearts will fail many as they catch a glimpse of the last great death throws of this kingdom of men! We will see untold millions facing eternity in a moments time! Wars will continue and no doubt magnify. Men’s unspeakable atrocities upon their brothers will increase and the Earth will grow sicker and sicker by the foul acts and defiled minds of such perverted and evil men! And yes, part of the horrors will be the innocent people and the children who are victims of sin’s fruit full grown! “Let both grow together (*the seed of evil and the seed of the righteous*) until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.” (Matthew 13:30)

“The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'" (Matthew 25:21 NLT)

In these last days of time we must be prepared for, with some regularity, the earth’s groanings and travailings, until the eastern sky itself parts as the King of kings and LORD of lords descends from heaven with a shout! Until then, let’s busy ourselves and be found in the Master’s service!

BtT – The End

Standing in the Gap

(Practical help for the ministry of intercession.)

by Mark D. Spencer

“By terrible things (or “by awesome deeds”) in righteousness You will answer us, O God of our salvation; *You* who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:” (Psalm 65:5)

We are living in the hour when awesome, terrible deeds in righteousness will be seen by the entire world! Our God’s fame will be spread throughout the earth! Every eye will see His mighty deeds and confess His Lordship! One of His awesome deeds in righteousness will be that moment where in a twinkling of an eye, He catches the believing

We are living in the hour when awesome, terrible deeds in righteousness will be seen by the entire world!

Church away! “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever.” Talk about an awesome deed in righteousness! This is no fantasy! As Jesus was caught away into the clouds fifty days after His resurrection, so in the same manner He will return to gather His bride, the believing Church!

While we await this pinnacle of mighty deeds, we must be found faithfully living for Jesus Christ. And living for Jesus also means that we be found living out with Him His life and ministry of intercession! (Hebrews 7:25). “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

As the world faces the increasing troubles and birth pangs of the creation, we must not only be faithful to serve, help and proclaim the Gospel, but we must also enter into our closets of prayer. Such prayer agrees with the mind of God and often then resists the evil

It is here in this secret place of Divine agony that we learn to share in the sufferings of Jesus as He labors in prayer for the world full of people who have been ravaged by sin!

intent of the devil or the natural elements that would sweep over untold thousands of people’s lives, many of whom are not yet ready to face eternity!

The intercessor prays for the hurting, the victim, and the needy as though he is himself in the middle of the crisis. “Don’t forget about those in prison. Suffer with them as though you were there yourself. Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, as though you feel the pain in your own bodies.” (Hebrews 13:3 NLT). This place of intercession is found only in the presence of God and is graced and sustained only by the enabling of the Holy Spirit! But it is here in this secret place of Divine agony that we learn to share in the

sufferings of Jesus as He labors in prayer for the world full of people who have been ravaged by sin!

Pray on dear saint of God! Pray on with an expectant eye on Heaven and heart heavy with compassion... pray on! In the face of calamities and tragedies... pray on! In the face of violence and war... pray on! In the face of the Earth's continuing and increasing birth pangs... pray on! In the face of His soon return... pray on!

BtT – The End



ⁱ Author's comments – The War on Terrorism is a clash of cultures, a war of values, and we must make no mistake about it, it is a war to the death. These comments though not politically correct, are the truth. It is a war that will determine which culture will ultimately rule the lives and destinies of countless people for the foreseeable future! Even more pointed, it is a war of such magnitude and proportions that those same untold and unnamed multitudes may experience the glories of eternal life with Christ or the horrors of a Christ-less eternity, solely dependant upon the final outcome of this "religious war"! It is a clash of kingdoms! The kingdom of God verses the kingdom of darkness! Don't be misled by the humanistic thought that says all religions are the same, etc, etc. Clearly they aren't! "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6) Those people unwilling to seek the truth and then, when they are confronted with the Truth reject Him, inevitably fall into deceptions of the darkest kind. (see 2 Thessalonians 2:10))

ⁱⁱ Don't judge with unrighteous judgments. That is not to say other places in the world are not as deserving of judgment! The real question is, "are you prepared to face the Living God should that sort of judgment come to your corner of the world?"

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