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## *The Judgment of God?*

*"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.  
I have come that they may have life, and that they  
may have it more abundantly."  
~John 10:10*

### **September 11, 2001**

On December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor was bombed without warning. It was called "A date that will live in infamy". The events of that morning changed the lives of a generation. September 11, 2001 is also a date that will live in infamy. None of us will ever forget where we were when we heard the news. And, for most of us, our lives will never be the same.

As we search for answers, one of the questions that inevitably comes up is: "Why does a good God allow bad things to happen?" This is a deep and far-reaching question that couldn't possibly be answered here. Instead, we would simply like to try and bring some perspective to the devastating turn of events.

### **Good God, Bad Devil...**

Let us remember that every good and perfect gift is from the Lord and that it is the Devil who steals, kills, and destroys. Some have said that these attacks are God's judgment on America and I must disagree. If God were judging America, He would judge the whole country not just New York and Washington. I think a better observation is this: By our choices, we as a nation have left the protection of God.

## Here are the Facts:

- The twin towers of the World Trade Center should have contained more than 50,000 people that time of day. That means that about 90% of the people targeted survived this attack.
- Likewise, the Pentagon holds some 23,000 people. Meaning that about 99% of the people targeted here survived the attack.
- American Airlines Flight 77, a Boeing 757, could have carried up to 289 people, yet only 64 were aboard leaving 78% of the seats empty.
- American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767, could have carried up to 351 people, yet only 92 were aboard leaving 74% of the seats empty.
- United Airlines Flight 175, another Boeing 767, could have carried 351 people but had only 65 people on board. It was 81% empty.
- United Airlines Flight 93 was another Boeing 757; out of a possible 289 passengers and crew 84% of the plane was empty. Additionally, it is believed that the people on board stood up to the hijackers thwarting a fourth target and thereby saving an untold number of lives.

## Judgment or Mercy

As we examine the facts, better than 90% of the people involved either avoided or survived them. Does this sound like God's judgment or His mercy? I think it is important that we keep a proper perspective of who God is and what He has already done for us. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it in greater abundance, not to steal, kill and destroy. I think it is rather dangerous ground to begin to credit God with the Devil's actions. This dangerous ground is where we find a better understanding of the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is not a terror that my Father will harm me unprovoked... it is a reverent fear that keeps me safe from sin, which may result in discipline.

## The Love of the Lord

The other day, my son asked me what the fear of the Lord is. I asked him in reply if he loved me and he said yes. I asked him if he knew that I loved him and he said yes. I then reminded him of his unwillingness to obey me earlier and asked him what he thought I should do about it. His eyes began to fill with tears, because he knew the right answer was disciplinary action. I then told him that he now understood the fear of the Lord. God is not out to terrorize us, He wants us to love Him and to know that He love us. He does, however, require us to obey Him. If we choose not to, we are subject to His discipline (and everyone He considers a child undergoes discipline). It is the fear of that discipline that keeps us from doing wrong.

## Judgment Day

For those who do not know God as Father (those who have not made Jesus their Lord), there is a day that will be terrifying. That is the day of judgment where each man will answer for what they have done with Jesus (whether they received Him or rejected Him). Just like my son, they will know what their actions deserve, but they will also realize that it is too late to make things right with God. You see, you have your whole life to decide what you are going to do with the knowledge of Jesus, but once you leave this life your decision stands for eternity. Choose life today! Tomorrow is not promised to anyone... Those who lost their lives in the tragedies of September 11th had no advanced warning... they had no "time out" to make a decision, and I assure you, there are no "do overs".

## Choose life

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