

## A Lesson in Disaster Is God Trying to Tell Us Something?

In just four short years, the United States has suffered the two most devastating domestic tragedies since the bombing of Pearl Harbor. On September 11, 2001 it was violently attacked by 19 Islamic terrorists under the spell of a cadre of psychopaths bent on destroying anything remotely connected to the word "Israel." In the wake of this horrific act, America has sought vindication in foreign lands—deposing two governments and capturing one of the world's most despotic tyrants. OK, chalk one up for the good guys. But wait! Not so fast.

Two years later things are beginning to look different, VERY different. After making quick work of Saddam Hussein and his highly touted Republican Guard, the most powerful military machine on the planet now finds itself being tormented by a collection of primitive fanatics bent on spilling Yankee blood. It appears that we have come a long way since the words "Mission Accomplished" were displayed aboard the *USS Abraham Lincoln* for all the world to see. Some leaders on capital hill are even beginning to suggest that we may actually be losing the war in Iraq, while others are beginning to liken this struggle to Vietnam.

Then, just a few short weeks ago, Louisiana and Mississippi were struck by a category 5 hurricane that laid waste to thousands of homes—leaving an estimated 1 million people displaced. The carnage in New Orleans was so intense that it has been described by some analysts as "nuclear." This now brings us to a critical point.

Is there something to be learned by these horrible events and the suffering they bring? Furthermore, is it possible to stem the tide of destruction that seems to have gripped this once great nation? Or, should we just brace ourselves for more of the same? Is there another mega-disaster waiting for us just beyond the horizon? Finally, is it possible that the most richly blessed nation in human history has spent her last "good luck" chip? To put it bluntly, has America's fortune simply run out?

### Where Was God?

While New Orleans struggles to put its life back together many are questioning the wisdom of the Almighty in handling this disaster. After all, He could have changed everything with just three simple words, "Peace, be still." Isn't that what Jesus said when calming a great storm (Mk. 4: 39)? But alas, there was nothing from our Savior this time. Not a peep. The Great Creator of Heaven and earth was nowhere to be seen as death poured through the streets of one of America's favorite "hot spots."

Now as we wade through the wreckage left by Katrina, some are beginning to ask the same old question: Where was God? After all, aren't we suppose to be the nation He favors? That's what people keep telling us anyway. Well, where is the favor? What was God doing while we were getting our collective teeth kicked in by this killer storm?

### Shut up and Listen!

Perhaps a greater tragedy than Katrina's death march through the Gulf is the fact that, with all our "smarts," we just can't seem to figure out why God doesn't hop-to-it when we summon Him. Who does He think He is anyway? Even third world countries are trying to help us by sending relief packages. Imagine that! Countries that can't even feed their own children are offering assistance to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, no less. Meanwhile, the Great Creator of the

universe doesn't seem to have the time—or is it the inclination, to give us some much-needed HELP! He just seems to have stood down on this one. Or, has He?

While countless Americans want to beg God to come to their rescue every time things don't go their way, maybe we should take a moment and listen to Him for a change. This might be difficult to do for people as enlightened as the good old USA, but let's face it; our country seems to be falling apart. Furthermore, we haven't been very good at fixing things lately.

## Some Tough Questions

As millions of people ponder how Katrina's crushing blow could strike our land and why God would allow this to happen, let's ask ourselves some tough questions. For example: what does God think of places like Bourbon Street and the French Quarter? Are these the kind of "hang outs" He would be proud to be associated with? Additionally, how impressed do you think the Holy One of Israel is with a city that hosts a "decadence festival"?

There are few who would suggest that New Orleans is a bedrock of morality. After all this is the city of Voodoo, Mardi Gras and "Girls Gone Wild." Few places on earth wink at sin with as much impunity as "The Big Easy." Despite this fact America continues to beg God to deliver her from the effects of a killer storm. This is just a thought, but do you suppose Sodom and Gomorrah cried out to Him when calamity was raining down on them?

Now we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** are not suggesting that this was God's judgement being executed on some sinners from the south. In reality, it may have been far more than that. Is it possible that this time it was His indifference that spoke with such great force? And quite frankly, this question should terrify all of us. Has anyone ever considered that perhaps this silence was God's way of saying He is FED UP with America's willful and arrogant contempt of Him and His great moral law. If history is any indication this is not the first time the Eternal has withdrawn His protection from a people committed to desecrating everything He calls holy.

The scriptures reveal that the ancient nations of Israel and Judah once found themselves on the wrong end of calamity. As a result the great blessings they had enjoyed, including their weather were removed from them and replaced with utter devastation. Ultimately they were routed in war and led away as captive slaves. These were God's people too. They had also been the recipients of His great blessings. Tragically, their cities were overrun, their treasure stolen and their people humiliated. WHY? Because they failed to understand that God's blessings came with conditions. Now for the BIG question. Are we making the same mistake God's people made over 2500 years ago? Do we somehow think that we can "party" recklessly with our moral pronouncements and then ask God to protect us from a "hangover?" If we do we have made a BIG mistake.

## A Powerful Indictment

The book of Isaiah contains one of the most powerful prophetic indictments ever leveled against a nation God would bless. It speaks of violence in her streets, corruption in her courts, evil proliferating at an unimaginable rate, and the total rejection of her Creator and Sustainer. It reveals how a great nation could fall out of favor with the God who made it great—and why He will not hear her cry for help when calamity strikes. This indictment exposes a society as arrogant in its approach toward justice and brazen in its practice of sin. It then explains how a JUST GOD is going to deal with this nation. As you read these words, ask yourself if the sins of this people sound familiar.

For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

None calls for justice, nor any pleads for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

They hatch cockatrice' eggs and weave the spider's web: he that eats of their eggs dies, and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper.

Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall know no peace.

Therefore is judgment far from us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

And judgment is turned away backward, and justice stands afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. (Isa. 59:3-14)

## What Will God Do to Such a People?

Contrary to what our actions suggest, God is not blind. He is not some distant concept residing in some far away place. God is VERY REAL and so is His law. That law is His great moral code that He has woven through the fabric of time and space. What it says is powerful and absolute. IF YOU BREAK MY LAW, MY LAW WILL BREAK YOU.

Therefore hear now this, you that are given to pleasures, that dwell carelessly, that say in your heart, I am, and there is none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

But these two things shall come to you in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon you in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of your enchantments.

For you have trusted in your wickedness: you have said, None seeth me. Your wisdom and your knowledge, it has perverted you; and you have said in your heart, I am, and there is none else beside me.

Therefore shall evil come upon you; you shall not know from whence it rises: and mischief shall fall upon you; you shall not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not know. (Isa. 47:8-11)

### **A Final Thought**

Has God given up on America? Are His blessings a thing of the past? The good news is NO. The scriptures declare that God is a forgiving Father who wants with all His heart to embrace His people and bless them. He even explained how a nation obsessed with sin could return to His favor.

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 from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2Chr. 7:14)

This is His cry to America. And it is one that our nation's leaders and citizens should heed. If they do not, we at ***Blow the Trumpet*** regret to say that it will just be more of the same.