

IS THE HEAVEN? DOWN?

by Kim Josephson

I flew into New York City on the Friday immediately following the terrorist attack. I was on one of the first flights out of Tulsa and one of the first into the city. Amazingly, our flight pattern took us directly over the smoking ruins of the World Trade Center. The immensity of the horror cannot be grasped by watching it on television. We passed over it in stunned silence, then banked to the left over the water - over the many ships that were waiting to come into the harbor and landed at JFK. It was a perfect miniature of the events described in Revelation 18.

New York City, in fact, the whole metropolitan area was reeling in the aftermath of the horror. Thousands killed. Thousands injured. Thousands homeless. Thousands and thousands of lives that will **never** be the same. All this in less than an hour on a Tuesday morning.

There are fire stations in every neighborhood, and all of them lost men. I stay on the West Side and directly in front of my building is Fire Station 23 - they lost six. These were mostly young, strong guys with young children. They made memorials for them on the sidewalks - you know, flowers, candles and pictures of the guys - you've seen it all on TV. But what you couldn't see was the emotion. People would break out sobbing as they walked down the streets. It was almost unbearable. Emotions would swing from rage to despair. People were in shock. In the first few days the rescuers frantically searched for survivors. Later, all hope was gone.

And then what happened? Shaken to our very core, we began to pray. People longed for guidance and leadership, and since this was an emergency, there was no time to wait on God! People wanted answers, and they wanted them now! So, as nature abhors a vacuum, the answers came. They didn't have to be true but they did need to be official and so the answers came wrapped in the swaddling clothes of everything we believe in.

Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!
Jeremiah 9:1

First, there was the canonization of all the victims. Nothing could be sadder than the loss of life in this tragedy, but the truth is, many of those who lost their lives on that fateful day were eternally lost. It is quite probable that thousands found themselves in the inferno of the World Trade Center and then in the fires of eternal torment. Now, this is a truth that should have caused the bride of Christ to groan like a mother who has lost her only child, but it didn't. It couldn't, because each flag draped casket was intended to comfort us, to convince us that our loved ones - our fallen, were taken to heaven with or without the blood of Christ. If the bagpipes played Amazing Grace - everything was OK.

Again, prayer was omnipresent. Not one word was spoken against prayer. It was politically correct to pray now - anywhere and

everywhere. Moments of silence to memorialize the victims and the heroes were observed without a hint of dissension. Now, prayer was a weapon to assuage our fears. It was a binder of all our hearts - as one nation under God. As good as this may seem on the surface, what's the truth? The truth is, this too, should have caused the Church to weep. That false prayer would now be used as an opiate to inoculate hearts from a confrontation with God in this crisis, should have broken every Christian heart. To parade Allah and Buddha and Christ before

the people in a sort of pick your own God buffet, should have made us weep, but it didn't. We were too busy being proud of our tolerance and delighted with our ecumenical spirit. What do you think God felt?

And finally, now, we sing "God Bless America" in place of "Take me out to the Ball game". Isn't that a sure sign of revival? I don't think so. The truth is, the song is simply being used as a patriotic device. As such, it works great. It has a great tune and it's much easier to sing than the National Anthem. But what about the words? Don't they mean anything? The song is supposed to be a prayer. It's a prayer that asks God to bless America, to stand beside her and to guide her through the night with a light from above.

Many were touched when they saw members of the Congress standing in front of the Capitol in Washington DC singing this prayer, but what about God? Was He touched? Weren't these the same guys that have done absolutely nothing to stop the abortions that go on mercilessly in this country? Why, they won't

even stop the horror of partial birth abortions! These are the same guys who haven't done a thing to put prayer back in school. Again, these are the same guys who protect pornographers and sex perverts but move to take the name of God off of our money, off of our buildings and out of every public place. Why, according to these guys, the Ten Commandments have

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no place in any school or courthouse. And don't even think about putting a nativity scene on public property! I think I've made my point. God is not moved by our show of patriotism. According to Prov. 28:9: He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. **Without repentance, we don't have the right to use the name of God for anything!**

The sad truth is, in spite of all the flag waving and ceremony, not much has really changed. For all this talk about unity and what have you, unless I miss my guess, the War on Terrorism will grow tiresome and the economic difficulties that we face will ultimately divide the country into political factions.

Some are heralding that this is the beginning of revival. But without repentance, how can it be? Frankly, much of what we are reveling in, is simply symbolism. It makes us feel good, but it doesn't change anything. Come on, is it really a patriotic act to go shopping? Folks, your flag decal wouldn't get you into heaven before Sept 11 and it won't get you there now.

What's the truth?

The truth is, God blessed America. The picture is seen in Isaiah Chapter 5:1-7

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine,

and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of

Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Like Israel, we were God's vineyard. We too, were planted with the choicest vine. Believe it or not, we were a Christian nation. The founding fathers loved the Word of God and did their best to honor God in the formation of this country. Who can deny that America was set upon a fruitful

hill? God has kept us and preserved us through two world wars and even our own civil war. And what have we given Him in return? **WILD GRAPES!** Who can deny it? We should have been holiness unto the Lord, but as a nation we have been just the opposite!

I have said before that judgement doesn't have to be fire falling from heaven. If God simply turns His face or lifts His hand of protection, that too is judgement. In Isa. 5 God says that's exactly what He would do to Israel. Would He do that to us? There is no respect of persons with God. (Rom 2:11) We are the ones who have grieved God's Spirit - we, who have no time for the Bible but all the time in the world for the television - we, who have no time for prayer, but all the time in the world for every entertainment under the sun. Would God lift His hand? He said He would and an honest assessment shows it to be so.

Look at the school yard killings. Look at the murderous sprees of violence that plague our land. Gang violence is no longer limited to large cities, but even small towns are affected by this cancer. Drugs, pornography, STD's, AIDS and who knows what else are virtually out of control. And now we're supposed to believe that the government is going to protect us from terrorism. Folks, the government can't protect us from any of these plagues. America is too large and too free. The fact is, most of the Sept 11th terrorists were in the USA **legally!**

The truth is, the **Church is our only hope!** God said in II Chron 7:14 "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." **Church, the hedge is down and it will get worse unless we repent!** But that is the wonderful grace of God. If we will repent, He will forgive! Put away your pride - humble yourself. Repent for the sins of our nation as if they were your very own. Weep with Jesus over the abominations that are being done in our land and stand in the gap (Ez. 22:30) - **make up the hedge for America.** Nothing else will avail.

It's revival or else. God have mercy!

Last Days Blues

by Kim Josephson

Priest and the harlot all dressed in red
Blood of the babies on somebody's head
Like lambs to the slaughter these innocent beasts,
They got in the way now there's blood on the sheets.
These are the last days blues.

Prophets on pillows cushions of ease
They don't say nothin' that ain't aimed to please
They fill their pockets they feed the disease
They ain't got no time for no time on their knees.
These are the last days blues.

Chorus
Famines and earthquakes and rumors of war.
Plague in the daily news
What it all means
the preachers ain't got a clue. **Do you?**
These are the last days blues.

They got time to spare in their luxury
They got places to go, they got people to see
And the temples they build
They build them Holy Ghost proof
They don't want nothin' from the Spirit of Truth.
These are the last days blues.

Don't ask no questions if you don't want no lies
There ain't no reasons just cheap alibis
And cover your ears if you can't stand the cries
If you can't take sorrow better just close your eyes.
These are the last days blues.

Chorus

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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. 2 Chron 7:14



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