



The BIBLE STANDARD

and Herald of Christ's Kingdom

RESTITUTION

From Destruction to Restoration

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WORLDWIDE COMMEMORATIONS of the destruction of the World Trade Center and the appalling loss of life in that single tragedy have united people of many nations in a shared grief. On the anniversary of September 11, communities around the country and around the planet fell silent at the same instant of time — a gesture touching in its solidarity with the people of the United States. Although most of those killed were U.S. nationals, about 80 countries also lost citizens in the attack, underscoring the global dimensions of that day of terror.

Thrusting confidently skyward, the Twin Towers symbolized New York brashness and the city's position as one of the great financial hubs of the world. Massive in its scale, wicked in its design, and audacious in its execution, the terrorists' assault on those proud buildings awakened the nation to the dangers lurking within.

TERROR AT HOME

Throughout history, rulers of nations have always feared the terrorist, the subversive element in their midst bent on destroying their power, and have employed many methods to root them out.

The guerilla warfare waged by the Tamil Tiger rebels in Sri Lanka, the surprise attacks of the Vietnamese fighters during the French and American wars in south-east Asia, the attacks by the Basque separatists in Spain, or the bloody onslaught of the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland — all are facets of the same multi-sided face of conflict which, though arising from different social and economic spheres, have a similar aim — the overthrow and destruction of the prevailing order. All such attempts spring from motives which are less than pure, but which appear right to the attacker. The depth of prejudice of one group against another is phenomenal and often beyond the power of reason to fathom. Increasingly, civilians are caught up in these vengeful acts — war by another name.

THE SOURCE OF CONFLICT
Though the immediate reasons for hatred, strife, and sneak attacks on the unwary are usually traced to a local or national political situation, the roots go deep into the psyche of man the species. The underlying crime of the fall in Eden unsettled the peace of mind and confident fellowship enjoyed by Adam and Eve. Here were the seeds of today's conflict sown. The first outcropping of this malevolent streak can be seen in the murder of Abel by his brother, Cain. Pushed on by the Adversary, man became a warrior race, and the tendency to run to strife and disagreement was set. *Mankind is basically ill at ease with itself because it has lost fellowship with God.* This disharmony has been the root cause of strife throughout history to the present day.

SATAN THE TERRORIST

Satan is the archetypical terrorist. His most heinous crime was the wilful murder of the human race (John 8: 44). Trapping the first couple, Adam and Eve, through their ignorance and inexperience with evil, he condemned them and their offspring to a process of dying, complicated by the effects of sin, multiplied in its degenerating influences over succeeding generations.

The dimensions of Satanic terror are terrible to comprehend: thousands of millions suffering and dying, laboring under the weight of a planet often hostile to life, mentally, morally, and physically degraded, cut off from the Divine Source of Life, of Whom Satan kept his victims ignorant. No wonder he is styled in Scripture, the Adversary! Antipathetic to all decency and virtue, heedless to the pain and cries of his victims, he has been a sadistic taskmaster. In his unholy ambition to be "like the Most High," the once-glorious Lucifer traded his honored and privileged place in heaven for a self-serving tyranny over earth. Around the time of the Flood he won to his side an army of fallen angels who, under his direction, expanded the domain styled by the Apostle Paul as the "present evil world" (Gal. 1: 3, 4; compare John 12: 31).

"Lift up a standard for the people" — Isa. 62: 10

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The attacks on New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania were the result of evil which has pervaded our world for millennia. This "present evil world" is the work of the arch-terrorist Satan. We explore the effects of his influence and the hopeful outcome.

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Satan despises any progress of mankind collectively and individually toward God's principles and ways, and has employed all means possible to thwart it. His modes of attack include inducements to sin and self-abasement, and corruption or denial of any knowledge which tends to spiritual enlightenment. He even engages in acts of physical and environmental destruction, as in the story of Job (1: 6-22).

Stealthily, disguised as angels of light, Satan and his hosts have ambushed mankind with all manner of sin and corruption, and have twisted and misrepresented almost the whole spectrum of God-given truths, substituting counterfeits. He works in the hearts of men to do evil and claim it as good (2 Cor. 11: 14). Perhaps his most infamous errors relate to the fate of man after death.

HELLFIRE

To the terror of those who tumbled to earth in the collapsing towers, some Christians would add the nightmare of unbelievers' thoughts as they contemplated death and the abyss of eternal torment which was opening before them. That the unrepentant, unbelieving, man or woman of the world will at death be ushered into a flaming, agonizing hell of endless suffering is held as essential doctrine by many otherwise compassionate Christians.

It is trite to say that such a view adds insult to unspeakable injury. Such a perception turns reality on its head. For the destruction of two massive buildings by murderous hijackers and the consequent loss of life would be as nothing compared to the wholesale incarceration of souls in a Godless abyss of suffering, ruled by God's chief enemy. Such a view portrays God Himself as the great destroyer. We should rid ourselves of such a perception and speak out against it. To hold it is to play into the hands of the great terrorist, Satan, the anti-God, and to compound the destructive power of the foul deeds done on September 11.

The teaching of eternal torment, in consort with oppressive religious and secular systems, was devised by Satan to hide the truth on the salvation process. By introducing the thought of the unforgiveability of sin and its awful consequences, Satan increased the burden on man's collective conscience, diverting their attention from the clear and hopeful promises of forgiveness and salvation coming from a compassionate God.

In the ancient world, as today, uncounted multitudes lived their often futile and brief lives in the vain hope of pacifying angry deities. Jehovah God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift, was portrayed by Satan in the same way. Ready to strike out with thunderbolts of anger on provocation, He was to be appeased by offerings in the form of good works. *And at the end of life was the possibility of eternal fire.* No wonder so many educated people have today abandoned such a teaching and the Christianity which is thought to support it.

The World Trade Center

It was home to about 500 companies, comprising national and international businesses and shipping companies. About 50,000 people worked there. It is estimated that about 250,000 passed through the two buildings each day, including tourists.

The World Trade Center was opened in 1973, and at the time, the two towers of the Center were each the tallest skyscraper on earth. The Sears Tower in Chicago later claimed that title. The Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at 1,483 feet are now the world's tallest buildings.

WTC Statistics:

Weight of towers: 1.5 million (U.S.) tons
Area: 50,000 square feet per floor
Construction time: 7 years (finished 1973)
Cost of Construction: \$1.5 billion (1973 dollars)
Occupants: 50,000 approx.
Electric cable: 12,000 miles
Height: 1,368 feet (Tower One), 1,362 feet (Tower Two)
Stories: 110

- Constructed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in the early 1970s, the World Trade Center towers were, for their time, the best-known examples of tube buildings. Tube buildings are strengthened by closely spaced columns and beams in the outer walls. The columns and beams in each tower form a steel tube that, together with an internal core, withstand the tremendous wind loads that affect buildings this tall. Each tower swayed approximately three feet from true center in strong wind storms.

- Apart from withstanding enormous wind loads, the World Trade Center towers were also constructed to withstand settlement loads. Because the towers were built on six acres of landfill, the foundation of each tower had to extend more than 70 feet below ground level to rest on solid bedrock.

- On February 26, 1993, a bomb exploded in the underground garage of One World Trade Center, creating a 22-foot-wide, five-story-deep crater. Six people were killed and more than 1,000 were injured. The towers were cleaned, repaired, and reopened in less than one month.

In Luke 13: 4 (NIV), Jesus says, "those eighteen who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." All of us will perish — die. It is not the manner of death to which Jesus here refers but to the condition in which one will be at death. The repentant believer dies in hope and in God's hands. Time and chance happens to the rest, as we read in Ecclesiastes (9: 11). For the unbeliever, the opportunity for salvation is *deferred* at death, not made null and void. None will gain salvation who does not exercise faith and repentance. But God has appointed a separate day of salvation for those who lack faith now (Acts 3: 19-21; 17: 31).

RESTITUTION

Knocking Down — Building Up

In Acts 3: 20, 21 we read:

Jesus . . . must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he prom-

ised long ago through his holy prophets." (New International Version)

This text supplies the key to understanding the present situation. The Adamic curse has terrorized the human family for thousands of years, laying waste their hopes and dreams, the fabric of society, and toppling their individual and collective schemes. It is no wonder that in these frightful circumstances most people have difficulty in finding God. But He has already designed a rebuilding program, and part of that blueprint is found in this Scripture.

There is a world of meaning in the word "restore." It promises a restitution to all things lost in the Garden of Eden — those things that were and those things that never came to pass, for God withheld His choicest blessings from an errant world. At man's fall, the race was launched into this long night of sin, in which God has permitted evil to dominate. This permission of evil was never destined — and will never be allowed — to destroy the human race. Rather, its design was to educate mankind as to the relative value of virtue over vice, life *versus* death, that they may store up the knowledge so gained against the better day of restoration, which is to come.

It is not possible for us to learn thoroughly without experience. Every aircraft, no matter how well-conceived at the computer-design stage and tested in the most advanced wind tunnel, must at some point be built and flown. Only then can it be fairly evaluated. We learn by doing. No theoretical knowledge could have taught the race the "exceeding sinfulness of sin" (Rom. 7: 13). Out of suffering comes compassion and the bitter knowledge that life in this present world is not satisfactory. And for the relative few among earth's present billions who enjoy a prosperous and comfortable existence, with their needs and wants largely met, there exists the compassionate understanding and the vague unease that life's bounties are not fairly apportioned. This sympathetic understanding motivates the relief works and charitable donations which were displayed admirably in the months following the New York tragedy.

HIS MERCIES FAIL NOT

Just so is our God: compassionate and giving. He so loved mankind that, while they were yet His enemies, He sent His only-begotten, the treasure of His heart, to die for all (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8-10). Under the guarantee that this sacrifice brings *all* of mankind, in every nation, all are assured of a *full and fair opportunity to gain eternal life*, not in this present world, but in the world — the earthly Kingdom — to come. Those who die in unbelief do not agitate in hellish suffering, but rather, as the Scriptures so beautifully portray it, sleep in death — they are unconscious (Eccles. 9: 5). This death condition is the true meaning of *hades* as used in the New Testament (*sheol* in the Old Testament). (For more information on this subject, see our September issue.)

As we read in Isa. 25: 6-8 (NIV), under the figure of a mountain — representing the coming earthly kingdom of God — the Almighty intends to

prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines.

On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples . . . he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.

The "Lord has spoken" is the phrase which is recorded for our assurance, for the plans and purposes of God cannot be hijacked nor destroyed. He has sworn by His own integrity that His will shall be done, and despite the apparent chaos and appearance of hopelessness around us, He will not fail to accomplish what He has set out to do (Isa. 45: 22, 23; Heb. 6: 13-18).

RACHEL WEEPS

"A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more" (Jer. 31: 15, NIV).

So has the nation and the world mourned for its dead. And we do not doubt that the days of tears are not done. This world is fickle and offers no permanent security. We mourn the vast multitudes who have died over the grim centuries, and those who will yet die, many of them feeling themselves without hope. Our hope lies not in governments nor guns, but in the God of Heaven. His inspired writer goes on (vs. 16, 17):

Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded, declares the Lord. They will return from the land of the enemy. So there is hope for your future, declares the Lord. Your children will return to their own land.

We lift our heads and rejoice for the hope which the gracious God of Heaven has planted in the hearts of mankind, and know that a better day is coming, when Satan will be rendered powerless and when all people will be measured not by their wealth and power, but by their faith and repentance, and their tender compassion to their fellow-men. To all such people of good will, the Lord holds forth the promise of life, peace, and security without end. To achieve these ideals Christ died and rose that He might draw all unto Himself (John 12: 32; Rom. 8: 19-21).

Because of the special nature of this issue and the publication of our catalogue, we will continue our series on Habakkuk in the November issue.

THE BIBLE STANDARD
and Herald of Christ's Kingdom
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announcements

GENERAL CONVENTIONS FOR 2002

At-a-glance (in alphabetical order)

England: *Sheffield*, October 26, 27

France: November 2, 3

Nigeria: *Danfodio Road Primary School, Aba*, Abia State, November 22-24; *Akwa Ibom State*, Nduetong Oku, November 22-24

United States: *Illinois*, October 4-6, *Oklahoma*, November 8-10

Details

United States

Chicago, Illinois, October 4-6 *Site:* Holiday Inn, 3405 Algonquin Road, Rolling Meadows, Illinois 60008; telephone: (847) 259-5000. *Rates and Reservations:* \$72.15 per room (\$65 + tax at 11%); up to 4 per room. Reservations can be made direct with the hotel. *Reservations must be made by September 19. Be sure you tell them you are attending the LHMM Convention to obtain the discount rate.* A luncheon will be provided on Saturday, October 5.

Rolling Meadows is west of Chicago and 20 minutes from O'Hare International Airport; courtesy limousine available. If you want limousine service from the airport, please give your arrival time and airline when making reservations. Make all other inquiries to the class secretary: Mrs. Audrey Hammer, 1702 Highland Ave., Arlington Heights, IL 60005.

Tulsa, Oklahoma, November 8-10 *site:* Tulsa Sheraton Hotel, 10918 E. 41st St., Tulsa Oklahoma 74146; telephone: (918) 627-5000. *Rates and Reservations:* \$68 (plus tax at 13%). Make enquiries to the class secretary: Mrs. Laverna Shaw, 1221 E. Forest Drive, Sand Springs, OK 74063.

SERVICES BY VISITING MINISTERS

Carl W. Seebald

Chicago Convention, October 4-6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Ralph Herzig

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Richard Blaine

Chicago Convention, October 4-6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Jan Wojnar

Springfield, Massachusetts, October 6; Auburn, Massachusetts, November 10

John Detzler

Chicago Convention, October 4-6; Chandler, Arizona, November 3; Independence, Kansas, November 6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Leon Snyder

Chicago Convention, October 4-6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Baron Duncan

Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Tom Cimbura

Chicago Convention, October 4-6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Don Lewis

Chicago Convention, October 4-6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

James Shaw

Chicago Convention, October 4-6; Tulsa Convention, November 8-10

Evangelists' Services

Robert Branconnier, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, October 13; Colorado (North), November 23, 24

Jon Hanning, Beechgrove, Tennessee, November 16, 17

Daniel Herzog, Boston, Massachusetts, October 27

David Lounsbury, New York City, October 20

Harold Solomon, New Haven, Connecticut, October 20

Robert Steenrod, Erie, Pennsylvania, October 12, 13

E. Tomkiewicz, Muskegon, Michigan, November 2, 3

Jack Zilch, Derry, Pennsylvania, November 9

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