

9-11, If Not Now - - - When?

- - if my people, who are called by my name, will 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. II Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)

September 13, 2001

This was written to a pastor on September 13, 2001, two days after the attacks upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and several days before a planned community rally in response to those attacks.

Dear Pastor:

Wednesday evening was a difficult service for me. I saw numerous themes moving through the evening but there is one that was conspicuous by its absence. It was the theme of repentance.

I'm not speaking of repentance for some sin we committed – but for loving the world more than we love God. The call to repentance for our incredibly selfish lifestyles. For allowing luxuries that few in the world can even dream of, to become necessities. For permitting secondary theological issues to separate Christians. For our near-silence about the immorality that increasingly characterizes America and for our level of participation in it. And for rationalizing the many compromising affections of our hearts which are given such opportunity because of the wonderful land we live in – and which so actively work against the rule of God in our hearts and hamper our effectiveness in ministry.

I came home from the office Tuesday soon after the first airplane was flown into the World Trade Center. I sat down and watched events on the TV for some time.

One of the first things I did was to ask God to show me what this was all about. I asked Him for a scripture, and Ezekiel 13 came to mind. I had absolutely no idea what it said, but I read and considered it as I watched events unfold.

On the TV I saw the fruit of immeasurable hatred and treachery. Devastation beyond description. Shock, pain and sorrow that exceed comprehension – yet only a foretaste of that to come as the full reality of what happened, sinks in. What does it mean?

No country has ever been more idolatrous than America. The World Trade Center and the Pentagon epitomize that idolatry. Of the three potential false gods mentioned in Deut. 17:16-17, only Hollywood escaped on Tuesday. The WTC symbolizes gold; the Pentagon, horses; and Hollywood, the sexual satisfaction of having many wives. If you read I Kings 10:26 to 11:8 you will see that Solomon violated all three and paid a terrible price. They captured his heart and led him away from God. The same has happened to America. We are a nation who has sold her soul to the gods of money, sex and power. The church is little different from the world. Too often, church leaders are little different from the church.

Certainly, God did not move those terrorists to commit such horrible deeds Tuesday. Only Satan would do that. But it is all servant to God's purposes and He will use it for His glory – and our good if we will hear Him.

I would *not* say that these acts express God's judgment against America. Maybe they do, maybe they don't. But I say with confidence that this is a warning to America, and if we don't take it as such, much worse things will follow.

Ezekiel 13 speaks of prophets who prophesy from their own inspiration (v2). They are foolish prophets who are following their own spirit (v3). They have run around like foxes in the ruins (v4), probably looking for something to satisfy their own appetite.

They have not gone up into the breaches – into the areas of weakness, so they could repair them. Nor have they accepted responsibility to help build a wall of protection (v5).

In v10 we are told that they speak "Peace!" when there is no peace, and v9 says that God's hand will be against them.

Pastor, I will be disappointed if I hear "Peace, Peace!", on Sunday evening – because there is *not* peace. We are a church and a nation engaged in a life or death, spiritual battle.

Many Men of God across our nation will speak "Peace!" this weekend because their loyalty to America exceeds their love for God. Because they define "life" more by today, than by eternity. And because they are more interested in pleasing people by speaking soothing words, than in pleasing God by speaking words that call for repentance that reaches to the bottom of our hearts and alters the very footings of our culture.

I will be let down if those who so fervently call us to worship God and to pray for revival, join in anything less than a passionate call to humble repentance. If this event is characterized more by preaching and singing in celebration of God's power and goodness (as we did last evening), than by calling us to crawl to the altar on our hands and knees – we are in deep trouble!

If it is marked more by a challenge to tell our unsaved friends and family about Jesus, than by the call to take up our cross and follow Him in a radically new dimension, we will have missed the point!

If it reflects a greater identification with America, than with the Kingdom of God and what He would say to the church in this day, we are incredibly dull of hearing! If it fosters a greater increase in nationalism than in our sense of being citizens of God's kingdom and "strangers and pilgrims" on this earth, we are stone deaf.

If we cannot hear God now – when *will* we?

Last night we sang of God's love for us, and our love for Him. I believe He would say to us, "I love you enough to warn you of your sin. Do you love me enough to repent of your sin?" I believe He would say to us, "You sing to me of your love. You declare it again and again, yet you love the world so much more than you love me!"

Our church talks a lot about revival. Probably some in our church pray with tears for revival. But if we are so in love with the world and with the American way that we can't hear and heed God's warning in Tuesday's events, we are hardly candidates for revival.

America and our world changed on September 11, 2001. Nations are joining together in deep offense at such events. Alliances, some seen and others unseen, will be formed. The lines between international monetary systems are being blended. Americans will accept restraints upon our freedom for the sake of personal and national security. Movement toward the elements of end-time events is happening right before our eyes – yet many church leaders will say, "Peace, Peace!" rather than calling us to repentance! II Peter 3 was not written for our entertainment!

That the historic Arab/Jew conflict is most certainly behind Tuesday's actions should be instructive to us. If one needs help to connect recent events with the hand of God and things to come, consider that they occurred on the anniversary of the signing of the Camp David Peace Accords. And consider the recent threats from radical Muslims who are angered by our support of Israel. And remember that, according to the scriptures, these tensions will play a major role in end-time events.

Pastor, will you look at the breaches in our walls and call them what they are? I'm not speaking of America's walls – but the breaches in the walls of our church.

Will you help us build the walls that are so needed in order to help us remain faithful, and to make us fruitful in these days and through events that are surely coming? Will you pay the price, with us, to hear God?

Or, ----- ?

Yours truly,

Ken Stoltzfus

Born in 1940, Ken Stoltzfus has worked as a pilot, ordained Christian minister, businessman, missionary to Africa and writer. This is #1 in his series "Prophetic, 9-11," and is one of many short articles that can be found at www.John2031.com

© 2010, Ken Stoltzfus, www.John2031.com, P.O. Box 228, Kidron, OH 44636 USA. May be printed for personal use and may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes without further permission if proper acknowledgment is given.