

## Remembrance 2002

Yesterday's memorial service was a painful reminder of what we can expect when our lives are not yielded to our Creator and Messiah Jesus.

This was my first return to ground zero since last December when I escorted a friend from Israel who was visiting his sick father in a NY hospital. The literal 16 acre hole that remains where the complex once stood, reflects the hole in my heart for those who perished that day.

Those murdered that infamous day number in the thousands ... those who are perishing today number in the millions. The hole in my heart is deep because of the massive numbers of people estranged from their Creator. In spite of all that has happened, the hardened hearts remain harder still. The carnal mind is incapable of looking beyond their 5 senses. The real pain is the majority of those who perished on September 11, 2001 perished without hope and without knowing their God.

I don't know what I was expecting when I began my journey to ground zero. I call it a journey for that is precisely what it was. I packed my duffel bag with about 100 hope bibles donated by Christianbooks.com with a God Bless America bumper sticker inserted in each bible, and a 3x5 America flag for me to carry. Yes, not all flag wavers are lost souls. In only many professing Christians understood the relationship with God and ALL governments, they'd be much less critical. Just another example of the failure of those proclaiming to be God's shepherds to rightly teach the Word of God.

The commemoration began at 1am with bagpipers marching from each of the five borough's of New York City to converge at ground zero early that morning. I stopped at several points along the 13 mile parade route on Staten Island to demonstrate support. This was a work day for most, so the number of people who came out were very few. Nonetheless, it was still rather disappointing and discouraging to see how few Staten Islanders care about God and country. From there I went to Rescue 5 on Staten Island where many firefighters lost their lives attempting to save others. I dropped off about 50 bibles at the firehouse (I always have a case in my car ... you never know when there will be a need) before going to ground zero to distribute more bibles.

The thing that got me that day was how few people would take the bible. One person was interested in having the bumper sticker without the bible. I said, "No, this is a package deal. You should know the God you plan to promote." The man left without taking the bible but not before he deposited a few parting words that shall not be repeated here. It makes me wonder why the fascination with a God Bless America sticker when one is so hostile to God?

In any event, all the bible were distributed before the tribute began at 8:46 ... the time the first plane hit the tower. Security was VERY tight as one would expect. The families of those who perished, along with firefighters and police rescue units were in the *pit*, the area within the retaining walls that once supported the buildings but is now the location of the memorial service. Above the retaining wall at Church Street were two viewing areas, each partitioned by two 20 foot fences, with each entry requiring special security

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to enter. The first area located at the supporting wall was for uniformed services only. This was the only location at ground level that had a view of the memorial service. The second level was for the iron workers, medical, and volunteer workers. This is the section I was granted access due to my volunteer efforts during week one of the murderous attack. The third level was across the street on the eastern side of the Church Street sidewalk. I think that was for the general public. The number of people allowed there was relatively few. Once the Church Street sidewalk was full, no one else was permitted access. No one was allowed on the side streets leading to the ground zero, nor could anyone stand in any of the streets. All northbound streets (except for Church Street) and all downtown cross streets within to get a view of the memorial service was closed to traffic.

The memorial service was simple, solemn and quite moving. There were speakers placed around the perimeter large enough for people several blocks away to hear. There were no speeches but for a short reading of the four freedoms by Mayor Michael R Bloomberg for the focus was rightly upon remembering those who perished and those who still needed to grieve. The service consisted of surviving family members and selected dignitaries reading the 2800 plus names of all those who were murdered in New York, DC and Pennsylvania. The sounds of the towers collapsing was simultaneously played during the reading of the names. For many, the reality and horror associated with 9-11-01 was relived. Tears were freely flowing this day.

In spite of this deep pain, how many hearts have turned to God through this? Not many I fear. The opportunity for self examination was missed. The only message we heard was, "go back to the way you were." As a servant of the Most High God, that message was the wrong message. This was a Wake-Up Call for America but all that was accomplished for the majority was a return to slumber ... how sad indeed.

John 1:5

"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The presence of God was felt by many of the people at ground zero that infamous day one year ago. They sensed Him near and felt His guiding and loving hands then ... but not now it seems. Yes, there is a hole in my heart deeper and wider than the pit that remains at ground zero. The void and hole in peoples hearts is the absence of God in their lives. They still prefer to fill that hole with the temporal pleasures of life that rust, fade and collapse just like the towers did that fateful September day.

Jeremiah 14:7

"Although our iniquities testify against us, O LORD, act for Your name's sake!  
Truly our apostasies have been many, We have sinned against You.

If only people would once again turn their hearts to their Creator God ... but the thick scales upon our eyes prevents us from seeing our inequities and sin. We are the spiritually blind groping in the darkness of sin and despair ... anxiety and fear ... frustration and hopelessness. We cannot heal that which we refuse to see. We will

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never repent from sin unless we acknowledge that we are sinners and in need of Divine healing, guidance and forgiveness. There will never be a lasting peace unless we turn our hearts and minds to the giver of peace ... our Lord Jesus.

We all seek peace ... yet deny the source. We all seek love and healing ... yet refuse to acknowledge the origin and sustenance of eternal love and peace. God is standing with arms wide open ... anxious to soothe the broken hearts and restore lasting peace The promise for repentance and healing is but a heartbeat away.

2 Chronicles 7:14

and [if] My people who are called by My name **humble themselves** and **pray** and **seek My face** and **turn from their wicked ways**, **then I will hear** from heaven, **will forgive** their sin and **will heal** their land.

The promise of God is a **conditional** promise. "IF" we humble ourselves ... "IF" we turn away from our foolish pride and seek God in prayer ... "IF" we repent from our evil and wicked ways, "THEN" God **will** hear our prayer, **will** forgive our sins and **will** heal our land. The promise is absolute only if the conditions are honored.

Is that really too large a price for peace and safety? ... Is the arrogance and pride of man too great for us to humble ourselves? From what I've seen at the ground zero memorial one year later it would seem yes, it is ... and yes, we are.

I witnessed a stark contrast in attitude and demeanor between then and now. God did *not cause* the horror of September 11, 2001 ... but He did allow it. We see just how vulnerable we are apart from God's Divine protection. In spite of what we have gone through, man still refuses to repent and turn their hearts and minds to God, the only true source of peace and healing that will never fade nor rust ... collapse nor perish.

May God have mercy upon us all.