

## Publishing Editor's column

*MUCH has been said and written about the dramatic terrorist assault on America on 11 September, and comment upon it is prominent elsewhere in this magazine. One of the great subjects for debate and discussion is to what extent the world will actually be changed as a result of that terrible day. Some say that American military action will be limited to an attack upon the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which no one has any time for; others foresee prolonged warfare, with the Muslim world being set aflame. Given that Scripture speaks of terrible times of trouble in the world, and warfare centred on the Middle East, before the return of our Lord, we naturally incline to the latter view.*

*With this perspective in mind, I was particularly struck by an article that I read soon after the event, which said that 11 September 2001 would turn out to be as significant to the world as the days on which the two world wars of the last century broke out. It went on to point out that, when the dust cleared at the end of these wars, the world was a very different place from what it was at the beginning. By the end of the First World War, the tank and the plane had become the main instruments of war, empires and monarchies had been overthrown, and the map of Europe and the Middle East had radically changed. At the end of the Second World War the nuclear age had begun, half of Europe had fallen into the grip of the Soviet Union, and the processes of European union and the withdrawal of the West from its rule over the Third World were beginning. We would add to these the way these two great wars led to the return of the Jews to the land and the establishment of the State of Israel.*

*These major changes to the world took place over short periods of time, four years in the case of the First World War, six years for the Second, and went far beyond what was anticipated when those wars broke out. During those times the lives of huge numbers of people were drastically affected. Since then the Western world has gone through a time of enormous growth in prosperity, so that today many people enjoy a very good standard of living and unparalleled opportunities for pleasure and enjoyment. But if indeed we are entering a period of change comparable to the two world wars, all that will change and all our lives will be affected.*

*However, are we prepared for this, or have we come to expect that we will live in ease and comfort till our call to judgement takes place? If we think of the examples of Scripture, we will see that at times when God's judgements came, God's people suffered the initial stages of the judgements, but were saved from the rest; think of Israel in Egypt, the time when Babylon brought the kingdom of Judah to an end, and A.D. 70. Perhaps it will be the same for us. And let us hope and pray that, when the dust clears this time, the vastly changed world beyond the time of trouble will be the newly established Kingdom of God, something which is indeed completely unanticipated by most of the world today.*

**Tony Benson**

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*Publication of articles in The Testimony does not presume editorial endorsement except on matters of fundamental doctrine, as defined in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith.*