

### Disaster in America

We were all shocked by the dreadful atrocities inflicted by terrorists on America on 11 September. It is impossible to imagine the horror first hand, though we saw the dreadful images on the screen, images which haunted and traumatised us all. Nothing comparable has happened before in history, nor has man had the technology until recently to broadcast the shocking news throughout the whole earth. One searches the Scripture to find an answer to the questions we have.

In our readings on 11 September we had the following: "their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD" (Ezek. 7:19). The whole world economy is bound to be affected by America being brought down. Is this a judgement on Mammon rather than on America in particular? We know that the godless nations are worshipping the mighty dollar rather than the Creator, and all covetousness is idolatry. The World Trade Centre, with its twin towers, was very much akin to a heathen temple.

In Zephaniah 1, a chapter which also contains a reference to silver and gold not being able to save (v. 18), we read of "a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers" (v. 16). This reminds us of Isaiah's reference to "the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall" (30:25), and Ezekiel's prophecy of the great shaking when "every wall shall fall to the ground" (38:20).

It is sobering to realise, however, that, applying the principle of John 19:11, the terrorists would have had no power to wreak destruction unless God had given them authority. What happened was a sign of enormous magnitude whose import we can only guess at this moment. In Lot's day they bought and sold, just as they were doing on the American stock market, when it "rained fire and brimstone from heaven" (Lk. 17:28,29).

We must be prepared for the Lord's coming, or, like those on whom the tower of Siloam fell, we will all likewise perish (13:5). There were scenes of rejoicing in the Palestinian camps when the news broke, but the Almighty will recompense them, for "he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished" (Prov. 17:5), and, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth" (24:17).

We who are awaiting that great day of our Lord's appearing do not rejoice at America's tragedy, but we do take comfort from seeing God's

arm made bare, a foretaste perhaps of that momentous time still to come when the stone made without hands will smite the image on the feet and break it in pieces. Until then let us strengthen the things that remain and build and defend the walls of Zion.

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