



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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My dear readers,

WHERE WAS GOD?

Terror From Without, Peace From Within

Introduction

IN THE AFTERMATH of the World Trade Center attacks and recent Virginia Tech College massacre, many turned to God in prayer. People often do that when confronted with events beyond their control. And some of these same people wondered why God apparently was not in control to begin with.

Could not God have prevented the tragedy from even happening? The short answer is yes. The Bible clearly teaches that God is all-powerful, easily capable of preventing the worst any terrorist could produce. And yet, the question remains, why did not He? Where was He on September 11, 2001 and the day of the recent mass killings at Columbine and Virginia Tech Colleges?

An answer often heard is that "God works in mysterious ways." Some clergymen will often say that God is not to be questioned: "It is not for us to know why." But answers like that accomplish nothing, often casting doubt as to whether God even exists. We do not have to depend on the mere speculation; we have God's Word, the Bible. God did not leave mankind in the dark.

The Bible states: ***"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*** (Romans 15:4).

To understand where God was, we must understand who God is. He is a righteous and thrice holy God who expects no less of His creation. We find an example of this truth in the Book of Isaiah the prophet, where we find God judging Israel. The year is somewhere between 740 and 680 B.C. As a nation, Israel had sinned. They had rejected God.

They had done many things contrary to the will of God. So God looked down and said: ***"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity [SIN], a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."*** (Isaiah 1:4).

Israel had forsaken God through her sinful ways. Even worse, the Israelites were so far away from God, that they did not even realize where they truly stood. They thought they were still in God's favour, and assumed they could appease God through their religious acts. But that's all they were -- ACTS.

Israel would appear to even pray to God, but He was not listening. He told them: ***"And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."*** (Isaiah 1:15). God's reference to "bloody hands" speaks of their guilt before Him. Among other things, they were lying, cheating, fornicating, and practicing hatred. God went on to say, ***"For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness."*** (Isaiah 59:3).

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KEEP IN MIND that sin does not need an outward manifestation; sin is not solely defined by the act itself. By God's definition, sin begins and takes place in the heart. That is why Jesus Christ said, **"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."** (Matthew 5:28).

It did not occur to Israel, as a nation, that God was not looking for religious acts. He was looking for a humble and repentant attitude, a HEART-FELT ATTITUDE of obedience toward Him. God told Israel, **"For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy"** (Isaiah 32:6).

It is important to note the hypocrisy Israel was guilty of. They were praying to God collectively, but individually resisting His Lordship over their personal lives. God called them hypocrites because they needed to hear the truth; they needed to know why God was not truly listening to their prayers.

No doubt, there were times when Israel wondered where God was, but their personal sin was preventing God's protection. And yet, God still loved them. He hated their sin, but still loved Israel. In fact, God's love for them was so great that He even offered to cleanse them of the sin that kept them apart.

God offered forgiveness if they would just repent. He held out His hand and said, **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."** (Isaiah 1:18). What about us? You may be wondering what Israel's status before God thousands of years ago has to do with us and the horrible terrorist attack of September 11. But the fact is, God's attitude toward sin and hypocrisy has not changed.

Israel could not deny their sinful ways and expect God to bless them at the same time -- NEITHER CAN WE. Like Israel of old, God tells us today, **"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."** (Isaiah 59:1-2).

You may or may not acknowledge the sinful state of our country. You may think that collectively we are not that bad. But the truth is, a country is only as strong as its people. Nations are made up of individuals. And if we do not want God in our personal lives, do not expect Him to be interceding on our behalf as a nation.

God kept arms length from the nation of Israel because that is where most Israelites, in their hearts, wanted Him to be. As individuals, they did not want God telling them how to run their lives.

The same can be said of us today. There is no sense wondering where God's hedge of protection was on Terror Tuesday. God was right where many of us wanted Him to be, out of our lives. Where was God during Columbine and Virginia Tech massacre? Right where people wanted Him: **out of the classroom (when we refuse God-centred creation and teach evolution and remove the 10 Commandments and accept homosexuality).**

Double Mindedness . . .

In the aftermath of Terror Tuesday, many Americans prayed to God, but no doubt God looked upon many of those praying lips and said: **"this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me..."** (Isaiah 29:13).

As a nation, we may honour God with our lips during a service or prayer, but it will not do any good if our hearts are far from Him. As we have already seen, God considers it hypocritical. There is another term He uses as well, being double-minded.

Notice what He says: **"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."** (James 4:8). As a nation, we want God's

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blessing. We want Him to look over us, and protect us from evil and harm. But as individuals we do not want Him as the Lord of our lives. That is being double minded. We cannot expect God's guidance upon our nation if we are not willing to submit to that same guidance in our own personal lives.

WE MUST REPENT AS INDIVIDUALS, and acknowledge our personal accountability to God. We must submit to Him, making Him our personal Lord if we expect Him to be Lord over our country. We must **"Draw nigh [near] to God", individually, before we can expect Him to draw nigh to us collectively.** Prior to the first plane that hit, how many of us had gone days, weeks, and months without thinking once about God? And we wonder where He was when the terrorist attack unfolded? Why should God intercede where there is no heart-felt desire for Him? Is God so shallow as to respond to those who, under normal circumstances, would not give Him the time of day? How many of us rarely, if ever, thanked God for our great country, only to turn around and wonder why He let terrorists snatch a little part of our freedom away? **"purify your hearts, ye double minded."** (James 4:8).

ASSESS YOUR OWN HEART . . .

How do you personally stand with God? Is He the Lord of your life? Have you ever seen yourself the way God sees you? According to Him, **"There is none righteous, no, not one:"** (Romans 3:10). This includes all of us. We have all sinned against God, and to not admit it is a sin in itself. **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"** (Romans 3:23). Furthermore, all the righteous acts in the world won't make us right before God. None of us can cleanse ourselves of our own sin; we need God to do it for us. **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us"** (Titus 3:5). That is why He sent His Son to die on the cross in our place: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** (John 3:16).

Once we, as individuals, admit our hypocrisy and double-mindedness, and see ourselves as the hell-deserving sinners we truly are, we can call upon God to save us. As a saved individual, God takes up residence in your heart; you will never have to wonder again "Where was God?" **IF you were to die today, are you 100% SURE you would go to Heaven?** The Bible says **YOU CAN BE SURE** (1 John 5:13)

BUT FIRST, you must realize that what keeps you from going to Heaven are your sins, because: **"...your iniquities [sins] have separated between you and your God,"** (Isaiah 59:2). In fact, in God's eyes YOU ARE A SINNER: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"** (Romans 3:23).

SECONDLY, you must realize that there is NOTHING you can do to save yourself and earn Heaven: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."** (Ephesians 2:8-9). Baptism, good deeds, church membership, self-righteousness are all examples of good works that cannot save you, because: **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he [Christ] saved us,"** (Titus 3:5). **THE ONLY WAY** you can get saved is through Jesus Christ. He said: **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** (John 14:6). **THAT IS WHY:** **"...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."** (Romans 5:8-9).

Conclusion

THEREFORE: You must REPENT (change your mind); admit that you are a Hell deserving sinner and cannot save yourself. Call upon Christ, and Him alone, to save you. **"if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [REPENT], and shalt believe in thine heart [TRUST] that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."** (Romans 10:9). Do it now before it is too late!

Adapted by a Canadian brother

Rev Jack Sin
Maranatha B-P Church, S'pore

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

CHURCH THEME: WALK IN THE NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:4)

Our **worship services** begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm**.
Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 06/05/2007	Next Week: 13/05/2007	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Speaker:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	Idolatry And The Fear of God	What is the Kingdom of Christ?	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Text:</i>	2 Kings 17:33	Colossians 1:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme for Morning Worship for the 2nd Quarter (May- July) is: Serving in the Kingdom of Christ. • Theme for Evening Worship for the 2nd Quarter (May – July) is: Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts. • Family Worship for the month of May will be held at Jee & Yanning's home on 6th May 2007. Those who are interested please see Pr Mok. • Students Examination: Pray for the students that God will grant them health and wisdom as they prepare for their coming examinations. • Our Daily Walk by F.B. Meyer (Apr – Jun 2007): Please help yourself to a free copy which is available at the Book Table. This is to assist you in the study of God's Word more systematically. • New departure procedure after morning worship service: With effect from today, after the morning worship service, kindly adjourn to the Fellowship Hall through the church entrance and along the passage way. • Tracting on the Lord's Day: Those who are interested, please gather at the main entrance at 10.30am. • School of Theology at Metropolitan Tabernacle: The theme for this year programme is "The Glory of Christ in the Working Church". It will be held from 3rd – 5th Jul 2007. For further details, please help yourself to the application form available at the Book Table.
<i>Organist:</i>	Yanning	Yanning	
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Speaker:</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
<i>Message:</i>	The Names of God: Jehovah-Ezer	Me, A Gifted Child?	
<i>Text:</i>	Psalms 33:20	1 Corinthians 12:1-11	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Grace Lim	Joy	
Other Duties			
	Today: 06/05/2007	Next Week: 13/05/2007	
<i>Ushers</i>	Chin Kiong/Susan Teoh	Chin Kiong/Jee	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Carol Mok	Joyce	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Volunteers	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	BBK	BBK	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 11 May	7:30 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Led by: Pr Mok	
Sat 12 May	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr: Pr Mok	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £157.92		Lunch: £26.85	
<h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Memory Verse</h2>			
<i>Previous Week (Apr 07 Wk 4): Matthew 10:32-33</i>			
Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.			
<i>This Week (May 07 Wk 1): Psalms 19:9</i>			
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.			