

Article: DS911

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There is no need to paint a word picture describing the horrors of 11 September 2001. The images will forever be emblazoned on our collective consciousness. Americans have long considered their country impervious to the atrocities of terrorism. To awake to a headline that screamed "DAY OF EVIL" was unthinkable.

This was precisely the condition of a man described by Jesus in Luke 16. One day he lived in pampered luxury, purple linen caressing his skin; the next he was in eternal torment. As an affluent nation woke up too late to the reality of terrorism, so too this affluent narcissist woke up too late to the reality of eternal conscious torment. Too late he perceived the unbridgeable chasm between heaven and hell. Too late he proposed to be a witness to his brothers. Too late he postponed repentance. Too late, too late, too late.

As I watched the twin towers of American invincibility and ingenuity crumble and collapse, I could not but pray that this would be a catalyst to arouse Western Christians from our luxury-induced stupor and incite us to rush to the aid of those trapped within the ruins of sin-sick souls. Even as I write, I am reminded of the words of Christ regarding those who perished when the tower of Siloam crashed down upon them: "Do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:4-5).

As the truth of what happened on September 11 sets in, may it also sink into our hearts that those who turn their backs on Christ's love and mercy will experience hell's irrevocable reality. The Master Himself will say to those who spurn his sacrifice, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels....Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life" (Matt. 25:41, 46).

Today as never before, Christians must be prepared to declare hell's reality to all who are steeped in doubt and unbelief. As Eastern religions have become popular and influential in Western regions, common-sense distinctions between good and evil are not only being blurred, they are being obliterated. In the face of political correctness, it is increasingly difficult to communicate such common-sense verities as the existence of hell; yet, without the reality of hell, wrongs ranging from terrorist attacks to terrifying abortions will never be righted. Surely, there would be no real justice were there no place of punishment for those demented souls who have initiated the merciless slaughter of multimillions. Surely, God's justice demands that there be a hell.

We must remember that while the Creator made evil possible by granting us freedom of choice, it is humanity that has actualized that evil. It may be popular to refer to terrorist acts as "unthinkable," but the history of humanity graphically demonstrates that there is virtually no limit to the evil that lurks within the human heart. September 11 should serve as a potent reminder of the human condition and our need for a Savior.

It is my prayer that the images of blazing fire and billowing smoke emanating from New York and Washington will arouse us from our lethargy and renew our passion to rescue the perishing from an inferno that will never be quenched.

— Hank Hanegraaff