

Why Disasters? I

Fred R. Coulter—November 3, 2012

This Sabbath we'll have a combination of different things. First of all the question came up that in a Church of God service someone met a man who had tassels. That was not the way the Green Bay Packers spread their hands, but it was because they were following some things of Judaism and some of the things taken from the Bible. It's like everything else. The Jews have the Bible, the Old Testament, they take it but they add to it. God says *you're not to add to or take away from*.

Here is one of those things I think is interesting the way it's connected. Let's get the story flow to find out where we get the tassels. Remember recently we covered about 2-Cor. 3 and *The Administration of Death*. The sum of that was that within a sovereign territory of a state or nation you cannot have two sovereigns. A sovereign is one who makes laws. So you have a sovereign nation; they make laws. Israel was a sovereign nation under God; He made the laws.

Numbers 15:29: "And you shall have one law for him who acts through ignorance, *for* him that is native among the children of Israel and for the alien that resides among them." Everybody has one law, one standard.

Look at this in relationship to Sharia Law. Our Constitution when it was written was not entertaining or contemplating Islam. It was written as a bulwark against Catholicism and strict Protestantism of the Church of England. The Church of England persecuted Sabbath-keepers and drove them out. If you read the history, Oliver Cromwell was the one who made The Crown submit to the fact that The Crown does not have God-given rights to do anything they desire. That is true. For the children of Israel the king had to obey the law, as well.

So, he started a rebellion and actually the rebellion succeeded quite well and they ruled England for 20 years. During that time they kept the Sabbath, they outlawed the pagan holidays, and of course, it only lasted 20 years.

Now you have a situation here—one law, v 30: "But the one who acts presumptuously, *whether* of the native or of the alien, the same blasphemes the LORD. Then that one shall be cut off from among his people." He's either told to conform or leave. Cut off from among the people means you're cut off from God's blessing.

Verse 31: "Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that one shall be utterly cut off. His

iniquity *shall be* upon him" He cannot come to the priest. He cannot come to the temple. He cannot bring an offering of forgiveness unless he shows himself willing to keep the laws of God.

Verse 32: "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath Day." 'I'm just doing this to keep warm. Surely the Lord wouldn't want me to be cold.' Maybe He would so you would remember next week get your wood in on time. So, this is in connection with the Sabbath Day.

The reason this comes down so severe is because you go back and read all the rebellions that the children of Israel did with the presence of God there in the cloud in the day and the fire by night. God was there. The giving of the manna, so they had manna every week, 6 days for 40 years.

As you can imagine there was not too much variety in your diet because they also had this. They were not to eat bread until they came into the 'promised land.' So, they had manna, bread from heaven. You could eat it uncooked, cooked, baked. You could make doughnuts out of it, deep fry it, make little loaves out of it and bake it, but it was manna.

Here he's out there gathering those sticks, v 33: "And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. And they put him under guard because it had not been clearly said what should be done to him. And the LORD said to Moses, 'The man shall surely be put to death....'" (vs 33-35).

That's rather harsh—isn't it? What is the wages of sin? *Death!* You also have this: How soon do you think this would have gotten around in the rebellious congregation that if you go out there on the Sabbath and pick up a few sticks, that that's all right. Then what would you have? *More and more and more!*

So He said: "...All the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.' And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died, even as the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel...'" (vs 35-38).

Stop and think about this for a minute. What would they do every Sabbath? *They would cease from doing what they should do!* What did they do every sixth day? *They went out and they gathered twice as much manna!* Everybody did this.

Remember when God first gave this in Exo. 16 there were some who went out the following Sabbath looking for manna on the Sabbath. He didn't execute them, but He told them, 'How long refuse you to keep My commandments?' That's associated with the Sabbath.

Here we have the Sabbath Day involved in this instance; He's going to give them a little reminder, v 38: "Speak to the children of Israel and command them that they make fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue. And it shall be to you for a fringe that you may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and so that you do not seek after your own heart and your own eyes which you yourself wantonly go after. That you may remember and do all My commandments, and be Holy to your God. I *am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I *am* the LORD your God" (vs 38-41).

As we know, that didn't work. Why didn't it work? *They were never given the Holy Spirit!* We see that in Deut. 5, and Moses reiterated the Ten Commandments again. Then he also rehearsed the time when God spoke the Ten Commandments. The people said, 'Moses, you go to God. We'll listen to you. We don't want to hear the voice of God.'

Deuteronomy 5:27: "You go near and hear all that the LORD our God shall say. And you speak to us all that the LORD our God shall speak to you, and we will hear *it*, and do *it*." Keep all of these things in mind when we look at this one instance.

Verse 28: "And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me... [Here's another whole lesson in the whole thing, too. Will God listen to you and take you up on your word? *Yes, He will!*] ...I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They have well *said* all that they have spoken." They are well intentioned, they mean good.

Every time there is sin, what happens in our minds? You've experienced it, I've experienced it; we still experience it. *Whenever there is sin, we justify it in our minds—don't we? 'Every way of man is right is in his own eyes!'* God will understand. Yes, He will understand. But don't tempt God.

God said, v 29: "Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!.... [God didn't give them the Holy Spirit.] ...Go say to them, 'Go into your tents again.' But as for you, you stand

here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I am giving them, to possess it" (vs 29-31).

We need to think about that in relationship to where we are today. Hasn't it been said that we've been given the finest parts of the earth, the choicest ground for food and agriculture and treasure and things in the deep, etc.? *Yes!* God is the One Who puts the nations where they are. God then, expects this even of the modern descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel, because as a nation and promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He still deals with us according to what's in the Bible. He deals with the Church with a higher standard and judges us with a higher standard.

The people and the nations, and descendants of Israel—as a matter of fact all nations of the world—are held to a standard of keeping some of the laws of God. But Israel failed to teach them the *true* Law of God, so God has had the Bible spread through the whole world so that more and more people can understand the Word of God. It has to be in every generation.

So, here in the end-time generation God has given His Word more available to more people than at any time in the history of the world. The nations that follow the laws and precepts as found in the Old Testament, like Paul says in Rom. 2, they are a law unto themselves and God recognizes and honors that even though Israel failed to really teach them the way that they should.

Verse 32: "And you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you so that you may live and that *it may be* well with you, and you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess" (vs 32-33).

Let's read a little bit of Deut. 6 because this becomes important. God wanted Israel to be the model nation for the whole world. The only time that that was really done was when Solomon first took over the kingdom from David. All the kings of the earth and the people came to hear Solomon's wisdom. At that time Solomon was faithful.

As we read these verses, I want you to think about what has happened recently with all the catastrophes that happened just this year—just to the United States of America. We can chalk up three hurricanes: Isaac, Irene, and Sandy.

We won't go through Deut. 28. I have that online at churchathome.org, the *Blessings and*

Cursings, so you can download that and you can listen to it. No use going through that, but you will see that everything there as listed has happened. God talks about the whirlwind. What is a hurricane? A *whirlwind, giant size!*

God wants to do well for people. There are times when things go well for people even though they're not called to salvation, because they keep some of the laws of God. The more of the laws of God that they keep, the more that they will be blessed in their physical life. However, let's think about the people today, the way they act, the way they behave and how they have treated God.

Deuteronomy 6:1: "Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God commanded to teach you so that you might do *them* in the land where you go to possess it. That you might fear the LORD your God... [As we go through, ask: Have we as a nation been fearing God?] ...to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you, and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life, and so that your days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (vs 1-5).

Verse 6: "And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.... [It's not there today.] ...And you shall diligently teach them to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house and on your gates. And it shall be when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities which you did not build, and houses full of every good *thing* which you did not fill, and wells which are dug, which you did dig; vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be full" (vs 6-11).

Verse 12: "*Then* beware lest you forget the LORD Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage." The whole story and history of the Old Testament is that the children of Israel did not obey God. In every generation what happened? *They had wars!* Every generation they turned their back on God. Every generation did not learn the lesson from the generation before.

I remember someone asking me, 'Why do we have all of these wars? Why do we have all of these problems?' The answer, I said, is right in the Bible. If we would follow God, if we would do the things that He wanted in the letter of the law we would be blessed.

But what happens? I think the reaction that we see back there with this latest hurricane is a mixture of good and evil. There are people willing to give, there are people willing to come and help. I just can't get this out of my thoughts. There were electrical crews from Alabama that work on high power lines and restoring electricity and things. Of course, they've had a lot of experience with the tornadoes they've had in Alabama and down south.

They got up there to help them in New York and New Jersey, which I'm sure was the kindness of their heart, felt a duty to do so, and one of the principles God says there, 'If you see your enemy having been trapped under his fallen ox or donkey, you will go help him and you will get him out from underneath.'

Here they see their fellow countrymen needing some help. They drive the 1400 miles to get up there and the union men said, 'Get out of here. You scabs!' So, there's the good, there's the evil.

Look at the population wherever these things hit and it's hit the whole nation. We've had drought in some places, *just like God said*. We've had floods in other places, *just like God said*. We have had windstorms and hurricanes, *just like God said*. We've had destruction. There have been many, many warnings. 'Get out, don't stay.' One man decided to stay with his 13-year old daughter, in addition to others. Now they don't even know where they are. The destruction is so absolutely unreal. Here are all those people out there.

Were the minds of these people on God before this event happened? *Their actions show it wasn't!* God sends some correction. Here's what we need to learn out of it. What you have right along the east coast, you have the highest number of the most wealthy people in the world, you have the highest standard of middle class, you have all of these things there, all of these homes. These things come along because that's where their hearts are. *Their hearts are not on God! This is a wake-up call!*

God again says here, Deuteronomy 8:1: "All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and to* do that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way..." (vs 1-2). He's saying **remember everything you went through**. All of those going in were those who were 20 or younger when

they came out of Egypt. They had 40 years of watching all of these things of God. He said **remember!**

“...which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness in order to humble you, to prove you, to know what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know, neither did your fathers know *it*, so that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone; but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live” (vs 2-3).

As we go through here, let’s ask: Is this what the people were doing there? *No!* They were all preparing for Halloween and the parties and trick or treating. That’s why they called this storm the ‘Frankenstorm.’ It was a combination of two other storms coming out of Canada down over the northern part of the Midwest and they met right there in New York City.

Verse 4: “Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” Think about that. I don’t know, but if it’s anything like Americans you open up your closet and you’ve got a lot of clothes there. Maybe you’re not like Imelda Marcos with 3,000 pairs of shoes, but how many pairs of shoes do you have? For the women, all the dresses and skirts and blouses, socks, shoes, everything like that. Most are so spoiled they open up the closet door and it’s all full of everything and they say, ‘I don’t have a thing to wear.’

Even my wife Dolores has bought some things and has hung them up in the closet. So, one day she puts it on. I said, ‘Oh, I haven’t seen that before.’ *I’ve had this for a long time.* ‘Really?’ *It’s been hanging in my closet.* Where are all those clothes now? *Closet is gone! They are gone!* everything you worked for! Everything you struggled for! Some people were spared. Some lived in different locations, so we can’t say that those who received the most destruction were greater sinners than anybody else. That’s what Jesus warned us of.

Why did it come? *An opportunity for repentance!* Isn’t it profound that it came upon the section of the country that is most heavily Democrat? This is not against Democrats, but maybe some of the Democrats need to consider that your leaders really wanted to get rid of God at your convention to state everything you stand for and vote for. To get rid of any reference of God.

There was enough of an uproar that they had to put the name of God back into the plank. When it was finally deviously added back in, there were those out there shaking their fist because it was put

back in, and booing God. You remembered God but not the way He said.

Isn’t it interesting that the most socialistic states, the most Democrat states in this country *got visited by God.* Also think of this. How many watch the History Channel? Sometimes there’s nothing else to watch. Have you watched the series of programs where they’re tracing about all of the monuments and artwork of New York City and all the things that were written about that? *All of these strange things that indicate that the occult is behind it!* They searched out all the main places in New York City—even the Statue of Liberty—the experts got together and they talked about it. Their final conclusion was—because all of these things are there, asked the leading expert in occult—after considering everything that we’ve discovered about New York City: Would you say that this city is dedicated to Satan the devil? *And he said ‘yes!’*

Let’s turn the coin on the other side. Is it dedicated to God? Where has most of the lying and cheating and conniving and stealing taken place? *Wall Street, the high-rise office building!* Amazing, isn’t it? The Twin Towers! That was just one instance. There is more destruction with this hurricane than the Twin Towers. All of those things are there. It’s amazing. We’ll cover some other reasons why these things have come upon the land.

God says, v 5: “...so the LORD your God chastens you.” ***This is chastening from God!*** Did they lose some lives? *Yes, they did!* Can God take care of that? *Yes, He will!* But you won’t know how unless you understand the plan of God.

Verse 6: “And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him, For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness....” (vs 6-9).

We have so much food that we feed a great portion of the rest of the world. Look at how spoiled we are with our food. Our cupboards are full and we open it up and look at it and say the same thing we do with our closets filled with clothes, ‘We have nothing to eat.’

Here’s a promise: “...You shall not lack any *thing* in it...” (v 9). Have we lacked anything? *No!* We throw away more food. What happened during this hurricane with the destruction of homes and people out of their homes and everything? Some of them are even doing what they call ‘dumpster diving’ looking for food. Weren’t prepared.

Whatever they had was all blown away. You can't depend on everything staying the same.

So, He said, "...*It is a land who stones are iron...* [You can have brass and copper, tin, oil, coal; add all of that to it.] ...and out of whose hills you may dig copper. When you have eaten and are full..." (vs 9-10). Are we full? *Yes!* Read Deut. 32 about Jeshurun waxes fat. I think there's something to the obesity we have today.

"...then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you" (v 10). Be thankful! Were people thankful? I imagine a good number of them were thankful that they were still alive after that. Now let's see if there's going to be enough repentance that they will forsake their ways and turn to God.

One thing for sure, there are going to be a lot of people not keeping Halloween. That's already past. There are going to be a lot of people not keeping Thanksgiving and Christmas. They should keep Thanksgiving, especially if they're alive. We need to thank God and bless God "...for the good land which He has given you.... [Here is a warning for human nature.] ...Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments..." (vs 10-11). What's the first thing that people forget? *The Sabbath!*

Remember what we read? Num. 15—that was tied to the Sabbath breaking. It's just like one of the brethren said when he takes people to their medical appointments and they're all religious, a lot of them, one way or the other. They all keep Sunday, at least most of them. You asked them about which day should we worship on and they say Sunday. Which day is the Sabbath in the Bible? That's Saturday, so they all know.

But, yet, in the distress of their sickness they don't connect that with what God has said. They still want to go their own way. This is why we have these things come along. You can read all of Deut. 28, all of Lev. 26. All of these things have been happening.

Verse 12: "Lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*." Is that true today? Look at the homes of some of those. Look at the homes of the so-called 'emerging middle class' in India. Those are lean-tos with electricity, that's about it. We all live in goodly houses whether they are by the standard that we look at the world, not so goodly. If God is there and you love God and you honor God and you thank God, *you have more than the wealthiest* with all of their mansions and everything that they have.

This is what we do: ***We get too busy for God, but***

- we demand from God all His blessings

- we demand from God no troubles
- we demand from God that He bless our lives
- we demand from God that He bless our holidays
- we demand from God that He help us cheat in business

How about those 'hucksters' who come and take money from little ole churches on Ponzi schemes and take away millions and millions of dollars? They've done it to black communities, Hispanic communities and white communities. I don't know if they would dare do it among the Muslim communities because heads might be quickly removed. But the exploitation of men and women, in slavery-type situations is still evident in many places in the world and God's judgment is going to come. God is long suffering and merciful and He doesn't want any to not understand. So He doesn't bring it immediately.

God works this way. You sin, if you have enough consciousness of what is right you have a guilty conscience. You say to yourself, 'I'm not going to do that again.' God will accept that. However people in the world conduct themselves they need to come to the point of *remembering God*. That's what He says. He says, '*Don't forget,*' and He says, '***Remember.***'

Verse 13: "And *when* your herds and your flocks multiply..." Do we have that? Look at our stockyards. What happened because we weren't thankful with that? We just experienced a drought in which they had to eliminate thousands and thousands of cattle and goats.

"...and your silver and your gold is multiplied..." (v 13). We don't have that today and we've spent ourselves in debt because we've forgotten God. Everybody is loaded and saddled with debt, the whole world.

"...and all that you have is multiplied" (v 13). Think about this. Think of all the stuff you have in your house that if you were to move—let me explain what happened to us. When Dolores and I were first married, we left Pasadena. We had the back of the car full, all the clothes hanging up on this crossbar in the back. We had the trunk of the car full. We drove up to Eugene, Oregon. That's where I was assisting the minister up there. We lived there in a small apartment. We paid \$85 a month for rent. It was on the second floor, on the street where there was a railroad track. Three times a week the train would come by very quietly with a flashing light, which was right window level with the second story.

We didn't have enough for food, so we visited the brethren we were thankful that they fed

us. Then I was ordained an elder and we went over to Boise. When we moved over there, we had the car full in the back, we had the trunk full and we had a large U-Haul. So, we drove over to Boise. We lived there for about a year and then they wanted us to go down to Salt Lake and hook up Boise and Salt Lake on a flying circuit between the two churches.

We had a moving van come and take all of our things and we filled it up. So, we moved down to Salt Lake City. We had our two boys, Jonathan and David, at that time. Stephen was later born down in Pasadena as well as Rachele. We lived there in Salt Lake in a nice two-story home. We acquired things and acquired things.

It came time to transfer us out, then we had to have a moving van come and take all the things and another smaller moving van come and take the rest. All of our things had multiplied. Think about it with your kids. They are born, you buy them this, you buy them that. They get a little older, you have this toy, you have that toy. They get a little older they want this, they want that, they want the other thing. Pretty soon you've got a box of toys.

You have all of this over here and they don't like that so you've got to get them something else. The other kids down the block get something so you have to get them that. They have to have the clothes, shoes, shirts, all of these things—right? Same way with our lives. Then they grow up and have children and now the children have children. What happens? Grandmas and Grandpas. So, here the thing keeps expanding. All that you have is multiplied.

Now here is what has happened; this is why we have this all the time, v 14: "Then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage." ***You forget God!*** That's what has happened. We have forgotten God. Even in the things that we used to do to honor God, even though we did it without honoring the Sabbath.

One of the main economic drivers of the economy is pleasure and sports and entertainment. We are truly ***lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.*** This correction has come because of that. We'll see what else God has done that is going to bring much more severe punishment upon us if we do not take action.

(go to the next track)

Before we continue on with the Scriptures I just want to pass on a little tip from my lovely wife Dolores, on how she takes care of ever-growing things in closets, drawers, bookcases and storage. Every once in a while she purges many different places. Could be the closet one time, the bookcase another time, etc.

Her formula is this: When she looks at it or picks up a book or whatever it is, she asks herself: Is it a friend? That means, can I really use it? Is it an acquaintance? I need to consider getting rid of it. Is it an enemy? Meaning something hanging around you really don't need. That's how she purges it. Is it a friend? acquaintance? an enemy? She gets rid of most of the clinging-on acquaintances. That's how she does it.

Isaiah 30 tells us the cause as to how these things become accepted and part of our way of living and society. It is because those who teach us really do not teach us.

Isaiah 30:8: "Now go, write it before them in a tablet, and note it in a book, so that it may be for the time to come forever and ever." This is why we have these things come upon us and we all think we're good people. We all think we're doing God's will. If we're not doing God's will, then we see who we can blame as the cause of it. We always blame the wrong person. Each person is responsible to God, him or her self. But they have to be taught. We all have to be taught. When we're born we know nothing.

Here's what God says, v 9: "That this is a rebellious people, lying children. They are children who will not hear the Law of the LORD." I wonder what would happen if someone would stand in the middle of Times Square and say, 'Repent or a worst evil is going to fall upon you.' They would drive him away. They would think he's a nut or a loon. They would have the police arrest him. 'You must cease all *your* holidays.' It has to start with Cardinal Nolan. 'You have to repent and teach the Law of God, not just use it to your advantage so your sermons sound like they're good.'

But here's what happens. They're all political and they all give way to sin, v 10: "Who say to the seers, 'See not,' and to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy to us right things, speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions.'" That's just exactly what we get on television—isn't it? All an illusion! All the programs are pre-scripted from start to finish. The news is edited to fit the political content of the commentators. All of the ads are a false reality of everything. But everything is happy, *happy, happy!*

There's one ad for UPS that you will see about logistics. There's a meeting where they're all sitting around the table, they are shipping things out, and so forth. The boss says he's happy. The secretary says she's happy. The shipping clerk says he's happy. The order taker says he's happy. So it's *happy, happy!* Then they find out there's a package that is not going to be delivered where it should be delivered. The errand boy comes in with his cart and he says, 'If you use UPS you can have them go

ahead and re-route it and give it to her so she will receive her package.’ It shows her receiving her package and she says, ‘I’m happy.’ Then it comes back to the board room and everybody says, ‘Happy, happy, *happy*.’

I think that is the epitome of all of the ads on television. They’re to make you wiser, smarter, slimmer, stronger, more beautiful, lift you up. ‘Mirror, mirror on the wall, don’t lie to me at all. Who is the fairest of all?’ *It’s you. Illusions!* That’s how people get themselves in trouble. They don’t believe things. It’s make believe! To say nothing of all the medical and near-medical ads: this will make you happy; this will help you stop smoking; this will get rid of your low blood pressure, but you may have thoughts of suicide, etc.

Think about this because every part of our society is geared to this next verse. Not only don’t speak to us right things, speak to us smooth things.

- we don’t want any correction
- we don’t want any discipline
- we don’t want any hardship

We want to be better and better and ‘gooder’ and ‘gooder.’ If we’re bad and ‘badder’ and ‘baddest,’ then we’re still okay. Here’s the sum total of everything that happens in the churches, schools, finance, community life, neighborhood activities, things that we teach our children.

Verse 11: “Go out of the way, turn aside out of the path. Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.... [‘Don’t tell us about God, we want our own way.’] ...Therefore, thus says the Holy One of Israel, ‘Because you have despised this Word... [There’s judgment. That’s what just happened. If there are not enough people who turn back from that judgment and quite their sinning and conniving, lying, cheating, stealing, robbing, committing adultery, perversion, fornication, etc.] ...and trust in oppression and perverseness, and rely on them” (vs 11-12). ***That one verse is the sum total of our modern experience!***

Someone sent me a little e-mail. You can still get some good things on e-mail. Here’s a picture of a little boy trying to hold the Bible while it’s a picture in class, but he’s got chains on his hands. It said, ‘This is forbidden.’ Then here is a whole group of dedicated Jihadist worshipping in a mosque in America and it says, ‘This is permitted.’ I thought that tells the whole story.

Think of this now: None of these people enjoyed being out of their homes. As a matter of fact, it’s very difficult; it’s painful. There are some people who are kind enough to help others and put them up and let them stay with them. There are some good things that come out of it. There are some

people who are trying to do some good and right things.

But Mayor ‘Doomberg,’ as he is called, wanted to have the New York Marathon because he wanted the \$300-million income coming into the city. They were putting people out of the hotels who were put in there because their homes were blown away. The uproar made him cancel it. But it just shows you the absolute Godless thinking of people in the leaders. It’s the ministers, the teachers, the political leaders; there are a few trying to do good, but if they try and do good, ‘Oh, you’re a right-wing extremist.’ Or you’re this, you’re that, you’re the other.

Verse 13: “Therefore, this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall...”

- Isn’t that what happened in New York City where they prepared for this? *No!*
- Did they ever think that their subways would be flooded? *No!*
- Did they ever think that their tunnels to New Jersey would be filled with 75 feet of water? *No!*
- Did they ever think that their homes would be blown away by the hurricane? *No!*

“...swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant” (v 13).

We’ve seen that how many times, repeated over and over again. You can look around the world and you can see the same thing, too. But God has special punishment for those who are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and those who live in the country with us. God says you shall have one law for everyone:

- you shall not discriminate
- you shall not oppress
- you shall not rob
- you shall not take

But we’ve done all of that—haven’t we?

Here’s what God says is eventually going to happen, v 14: “And He shall break it as the breaking of the potters’ vessel that *is* smashed in pieces. He shall not spare, so that there shall not be found in the fragments a shard to take fire from the hearth, or to take water out of the pit.”

If there is repentance, God will restore. Remember that! God doesn’t delight in the death of the wicked. God doesn’t want us to be exterminated. Let’s see the purpose of correction—Ezek. 33—and let’s apply this likewise. This also shows that God does not want the wicked to die. God brings out about the one to warn. Think about all the warnings that they had for this hurricane: It’s going to be big, devastating. You better get out. You better go

someplace safe. All those of you who live along the water, this is going to be worse than you ever experienced. They *were duly warned*.

Likewise, with God, Ezekiel 33:7: “And you, son of man, I have set you as watchman to the house of Israel.... [Everyone who is a teacher of the Word of God is a watchman to the people that he serves.] ...Therefore, you shall hear the Word from My mouth, and warn them from Me.” Any time you bring them the Word of God, it’s from God. It’s His warning.

Verse 8: “When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked one, you shall surely die;’ if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked one shall die in his iniquity; but I will require his blood at your hand.” ‘Cry aloud, spare not’ (Isa. 58:1). People who live in the illusions of ‘happy, happy, happy, goody, goody,’ ***be careful that you do not reject warnings that come from God!***

Verse 9: “But, if you warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul. And you, son of man, speak to the house of Israel. Thus *shall* you speak, saying, ‘When our transgressions and our sins *are* on us, and we are wasting away in them, how then shall we live?’” (vs 9-10). *The way you’re going to live is return to God!*

Verse 11: “Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD... [This is God saying, ‘Because I live for eternity, what I’m saying I’m basing upon my very existence. I’m a God of love, God of Truth, also a God of vengeance and destroyer of the wicked.] ...’I have no delight in the death of the wicked...”

People in the world have no comprehension of how God is going to solve this problem because they reject the Word of God, though they claim they’re Christian, and they know nothing concerning the second resurrection. God is going to take care of all of those things. But that doesn’t relieve us of our duty and obligation before God to make these things known.

“...‘I have no delight in the death of the wicked, except that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?’” (v 11). This is just to the nation. A call to salvation is beyond that. You have to answer the call. The requirement becomes much higher. The standard is spiritual. This is just for the nation.

Verse 12: “Therefore, son of man, say to the children of your people, ‘The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression. As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it in the day he turns from his

wickedness. Nor shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sins.”

- God is fair
- God is righteous
- God looks down and judges the nations

Jeremiah 18—we’ve covered this before, but this is good for us to remember, because God is actively involved in the nations through His angels and the demons, through the leaders, through the people.

Jeremiah 18:7: “If at any time... [That’s on down through time and history. We use the Word of God to warn. That’s the same as God speaking.] ...I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy *it*; If that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil... [We’ve seen that with Jonah and the nation of Assyria and the men of Nineveh. They turned from their evil. The only account of real, real repentance and that by those who were not the children of Israel.] ...I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them” (vs 7-8).

Look at what He did with Ahab. He sent Elijah to tell Arab, ‘You’re going to die. You’re the most wicked person that there ever was and you’re going to have your blood lapped up by the dogs as well as Jezebel your wife and you are going to expunged from this earth.’ What did Ahab do? He repented, put on sackcloth. It says he walked tenderly.

What did God do? Elijah was out there. He came and gave this stinging rebuke to Ahab, told him this is going to happen. God saw what Ahab was doing and God told Elijah, ‘Look at my servant Ahab, from being so wicked now he’s my servant. You go tell him.’ That deferred Jezebel’s death for a while, too. God said, ‘You go tell him that the punishment is deferred.’

Just like right here. How quick did God change His mind? That can happen to an individual. That can happen to husband and wife. Can happen to a family. That can happen to a community; that can happen to a church. *If we turn, God will instantly forgive*, but we don’t go back and do it.

Verse 9: “And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant *it*; if it does evil in My sight, that it not obey My voice, then I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good. Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah, and to the people of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Behold, I am forming evil against you, and devising a plan against you. Return now, each one from his evil way, and make your ways and your

doings good.” And they said, ‘There is no hope...’” (vs 9-12).

See how God in all of these instances brings this correction so that there will be change? How about being nice to your neighbor? How about helping your neighbor? How about saying to those who drove all the way up from Alabama to help bring and restore electricity to 2-million people, ‘Thank you for your help. We’re glad to work beside you.’

Ezekiel 33:14: “Again, when I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’... [that’s what God said to Ahab] ...if he turns from his sin and does that which is lawful and right; *if* the wicked restores back the pledge, gives back again what he had robbed, walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, then he shall surely live; he shall not die” (vs 14-15). That’s how God will deal with people in the world. He hasn’t called them to salvation, but you’ve got to have some sense of right and wrong, good and evil, and rehabilitation as well.

Verse 16: “None of his sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. Yet, the children of your people say, ‘The way of the LORD is not fair...’” (vs 16-17). ‘Why does He require the Sabbath? Our Sunday is good enough for Him. You mean I’ve got to quit working on Saturday? You mean I’ve got to keep the Holy Days?’

“...But as for them, it is their way that is not fair.... [because they’ve been living in sin] ...When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall even die in it. But if the wicked turns from his wickedness and does *what is* lawful and right, he shall live in it. Yet, you say, ‘The way of the LORD is not fair.’ O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways” (vs 17-20).

That’s how God deals with them. We don’t know how God does it. We don’t know how God looks at it. I’m always amazed when there are these fires that sweep through areas and all of a sudden here’s a home that wasn’t even touched. Same way in a path of a hurricane, or path of a tornado. Everything is devastated all around, yet, here’s this house still standing. I don’t know. I’m glad God is the One Who does it.

- there is always mercy
- there is always forgiveness
- there is always a way back to God

that is really very important for us to understand.

When these things occur, it’s an opportunity for all of us to say, ‘God is the One Who controls

everything that there is.’ If we see this happen to those people:

- we need to pray for them
- we need to help them
- we need to assist them

We need to let them know what the Truth is, whether they will hear or whether they won’t hear. Those things come along that way.

Let’s come to Psalm 103; this is a great Psalm; this is what we to do. All of what we’ve been covering here is the result of forgetting God, the result of not remembering Him. Let’s look at the promise here. Let’s look how He deals with us.

Psalm 103:1: “Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.” We need to have our whole lives dedicated to God, everything that we do. *There’s nothing we didn’t receive and we live and move and have our being because of Him.*

Verse 2: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” Benefits are not determined by the number of things. Benefits are determined *by the blessing of God* that He gives to you, which automatically comes.

Verse 3: “Who forgives all your iniquities... [That’s why the daily prayer is: Forgive us our sins.] ...Who heals all your diseases.” *Yes, He does!* He watches over us.

Verse 4: “Who redeems your life from destruction... [Look back and see how many times that God has spared you from a catastrophe.] ...Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.” This is what God wants us to focus on. This is why these things happen so that we can see the result:

- What happens when there is sin?
- What happens when people forget God?
- What happens when things are taken for granted?

Look at what happened even to the Churches of God because of that. I got an e-mail from a man wondering why what happened to the WCG (Worldwide Church of God). He couldn’t understand it. I said, ‘If you really believe in God and God’s judgment, please understand that that did not happen because they were doing well.’ God judges for iniquity. God judges the heart. The fact that it’s not there, we don’t need to go into all great detail as to who did what, when, and how. What we need to do is focus on where we are going ourselves. But God has taken care of it. It’s not equated in the things that we have.

Verse 5: “Who satisfies your desires with good things... [all of those are not necessarily possessions] ...your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.... [Stop and think! How has God blessed you in your life? Even in spite of your circumstances.] ...The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all who are oppressed” (vs 5-6). He’ll take care of it eventually. Think of the second resurrection. Is that not the greatest relief from oppression that people have lived through? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 7: “He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in mercy” (vs 7-8). Remember, that’s what God told Moses when he went up to plead for the life of the children of Israel and to see some of His glory.

Here’s another promise, v 9: “He will not always chasten, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (vs 9-10). *No, He hasn’t!* He’s been merciful and kind.

Verse 11: “For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (vs 11-12). That’s why you see repentance, yielding to God, relationship with God is so important.

Verse 13: “As a father has compassion upon his children, so the LORD has compassion upon those who fear Him. For He knows our frame... [Yes, indeed, He made us.] ...He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes, for the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and its place shall know it no more” (vs 13-16). What a summary of life. I think the older you get the more that comes to a realization.

But remember this, v 17: “But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness is unto children’s children.” Think about this. That’s why it’s important that we concentrate in asking God to help us love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and being, love our neighbors as ourselves. Love each other as Jesus loved us. Love our enemies and pray for them.

Notice, here’s another special thing that comes, v 18: “To those who keep His covenant... [think about the covenant of eternal life that God has called us to] ...and to those who remember His precepts to do them.”

Let’s see how that out of all of this tragedy, all of this destruction and death, doom and gloom

and all of that, the whole purpose is *that people would examine their lives and return to God*, even the ones in the land who are not called to salvation. That they will learn to do good; that they will put away the evil of their doings. Unfortunately, those union members who were so staunch for their union didn’t realize they had a chance to really be kind and say, ‘Glad you’re here to help us relieve all of those who are without electricity.’ Today electricity is more needed than food and water because everything we do is dependent upon electricity. This all comes from God.

Verse 19: “The LORD has established His throne in the heavens... [Rev. 4 & 5] ...and His kingdom rules over all.... [God is in charge of everything, everywhere, at all times.] ...Bless the LORD, O you His angels, mighty in strength, who do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word.... [to carry out what God wants done on the earth] ...Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, ministers of His who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!” (vs 19-22).

When these things happen, we need to see God’s hand in it; we need to see what we need to do. These things continue to come because every generation has turned its back on God to one degree or another. That’s why these things continue to come.

- Let’s hope there are others preaching the same message.
- Let’s hope there are people who are coming to their senses.
- Let’s hope that there are those who have been committing iniquity and sins that they cease from doing it

—so that *God can bless them just even in the letter of the law* in the land.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Numbers 15:29-41
- 2) Deuteronomy 5:27-33
- 3) Deuteronomy 6:1-12
- 4) Deuteronomy 8:1-14
- 5) Isaiah 30:8-14
- 6) Ezekiel 33:7-12
- 7) Jeremiah 18:7-12
- 8) Ezekiel 33:14-20
- 9) Psalm 103:1-22

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Corinthians 3
- Exodus 16
- Romans 2

- Deuteronomy 28, 32
- Leviticus 26
- Isaiah 58:1
- Revelation 4, 5

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *The Administration of Death*
- *Blessings and Cursings* (churchathome.org)

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