

## UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God*  
**IN KING JESUS.**

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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### ***Enemies at the Gate—Do Not Be Dismayed***

This issue has its genesis in a few questions: Are events like the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the USA eighteen years ago judgments of God? Is God responsible for bringing about such things? Or, knowing when they will occur, does He simply turn His back and do nothing to stop them? If so, why? I'm not so sure we can definitively answer these questions for each and every event, but scripture provides some clues as to God's judgments.

Let us begin with the word *judgment*. At its core, it simply means a *determination* with the outcome of the determination based on context—that is, who or what is being judged and what transpires in this regard. When we see or hear the word, it is best to think of it in a neutral sense until given more details, for the judgment could be a commendation or a condemnation, with the reward or sentence running the gamut.

Another view of the word is discovered in one of the common Greek words translated as *judgment*, derived from the transliterated word *krisis* (G2920). Note the similarity to the English word *crisis*. In other words, a judgment (that is, a determination) could lead to a crisis for the recipients of the judgment. A review of biblical history makes it quite clear that when God passes judgment (makes a determination) on nations and people, it often leads to a crisis for them. However, in crisis, the Lord always offers a way out, which usually involves turning from some evil way (making a change) and turning to Him. Of course, this is what repentance is all about.

To think that God has never allowed enemies to come against His people or nations that had some history with Him belies scripture. Let's consider an example from Jeremiah, who was *appointed over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant* (Jeremiah 1:10). Although Jeremiah was raised up as a prophet for this purpose, the Lord, nonetheless, took responsibility for the plucking and planting (see Jeremiah 18).

For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the LORD, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne ***at the entrance of the gates*** of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. And I will declare my judgments against them, ***for all their evil in forsaking me***. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. ***Do not be dismayed by them***, lest I dismay you before them. (Jeremiah 1:15-17 ESV [bold italic added])

Here we discover that the Lord made judgments about Judah; they—the very ones He called out from among the nations to be His kingdom on earth—committed a grievous evil in forsaking Him. Jeremiah was called upon to declare these judgments to Judah. How was the Lord going to administer these judgments? He was going to do it by bringing evil enemies to the gates of Jerusalem.

The word of the LORD came to me a second time saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north." Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north ***the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land***." (Jeremiah 1:13-14 NASB [bold italic added])

In this case, the inhabitants of the land referred to the Lord's people in Judea and Jerusalem. Notice how the Lord said *the evil* would break forth on the inhabitants. In other words, the Lord was sending an evil to deal with an evil. This was a crisis not only for the youthful Jeremiah but especially for his fellow countrymen. It was a tough go for Jeremiah during the rest of his time in that region as his message was rejected and he was persecuted.

There is one more example of enemies brought to the gates of Jerusalem, and it is one that Jesus Himself prophesied. He gave a parable about the wedding feast, directing it to the religious elite of that day. Guests were invited but they refused to accept the wedding invitation.

But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and ***killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.*** (Matthew 22:7 ESV [bold italic added])

The king is God the Father and the ones rejecting the invitation were those Jews who would not believe Jesus and, ultimately, would demand His crucifixion. But take note that the Father was going to send His army against these murderers and destroy their city. The Romans became God's army as they went up against the gates of Jerusalem and completely destroyed the city and the Jewish temple in 70 AD. God brought an evil enemy against His people for their evil in forsaking Him.

So, here we have two significant examples of God bringing evil enemies to the gates of His people when they forsook Him—one before the cross, the other after. Keep in mind; these judgments were on the national level. And, in both cases, it seems that the law of personal injury under the old covenant (law) was applied: *life for life, eye for eye, wound for wound*, etc. (Exodus 21:23-25). However, under the new covenant, Jesus took it to a new level: *I say to you, Do not resist the evil; but whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also* (Matthew 5:38-39).

Now, this leads to the question: Is there another law or perhaps a higher one that God might apply to nations or even the whole earth today? Isaiah 26:9 seems to indicate so: ***For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.*** Could it be that, in His kindness, God's judgments, however they play out, are for teaching all of us in the world righteousness? Could this have been the lesson of 9/11? If so, did we learn it? Have we been seeking the right ways of God? Are we a nation that trusts in God? Do our national leaders acknowledge God in the governance of the nation? I am sure you see where I am driving this. Even though we have memorialized 9/11, outwardly, it appears that we really didn't learn God's way through it. His righteousness is not part of the *national conversation*, as they say. In fact, each day we seem to be drifting further and further away from any such notion of godly righteousness. For example, an intolerant, immoral self-righteousness, all guised as toleration with an air of moral superiority, is striving to become the dominant voice in our land, both politically and socially.

For a short time after 9/11, Americans rallied and came together as one and church services filled up with people that had not been to one for some time. But in the midst of this was a war cry for vengeance. This is what crises do. Unfortunately, the reaction (on the good side) is often short-lived as people soon return to their old ways and the divisions resurface once again with the cry for war (vengeance) having a longer memory. We don't seem to learn, and the next generation has no experience in the matter until a crisis hits in their time. So, the cycle continues and the history of fallen man plods on.

By the way, the godly, righteous reaction to 9/11 would have been to follow Jehoshaphat's lead when his nation had what I call an *Engedi moment*. From the king on down, the entire nation turned to the Lord first when faced with enemies at the gate. See: *Engedi Moment is Coming!* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art55.pdf>

The good news is that this cycle will soon be broken with the arrival of King Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Until then, let us heed the exhortation given to Jeremiah by the Lord. The young prophet was raised up to deliver an unwelcomed and difficult message, but the Lord told him ***not to be dismayed*** by his fellow countrymen and their evil in forsaking Him. The definition of *dismay* is "to make afraid or discouraged at the prospect of danger or trouble; fill with apprehension or alarm." The noun form is "loss of courage or confidence at the prospect of trouble or danger; consternation." In 2012, the Lord spoke this very word to me in light of what is coming. To date, I have been restrained in posting why He told me not to be dismayed. All I can say at this time is that it had/has to do with the coming evil. Keep in mind; this was seven years ago. I leave you with this: ***Do not be dismayed*** with the evil of our day. Jesus said: ***Take courage, I have conquered the world.*** And, He is coming soon to prove it to all.