

A Prayer to the Almighty in regards to the recent Death and Destruction in the United States.

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“The Lord is with you while you are with him. If you would seek him, he will be found by you; but if you would forsake him, he will forsake you” (2nd Chronicles 15:2).

“The nation and kingdom that will not serve you will perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined” (Isaiah 60:12).

“I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it” (Ezekiel 22:30).

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O Almighty God, in regards to this recent death and destruction, I will stand in the gap, and offer up this prayer (1st Timothy 2:1-3). Hear it as you have promised! (Psalm 10:17.)

You have commanded your followers to do their Christian duty (Matthew 22:39) and, wherever they may find or hear about sufferers, to act as a Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33). Yet they are also to confess the grievous sins of their country (Daniel 9:8), to plead with you that they might be forgiven (Daniel 9:9, 19-20), to pray for the peace of their land (Jeremiah 29:7) from your pending punishment (Amos 3:2), to have mercy on their bodily needs, to relieve, to sustain them, to protect them from all danger (Luke 6:31, 35-36), and above all, to assure them of your gospel promises which will save the soul (2nd Peter 1:4; James 1:21).

May the sufferers realize that it was not the forces of nature alone that brought this devastation upon them. It was you. Not accident, fate, or luck, but you are the one who is responsible (Isaiah 45:7). Since you are the ruler of the universe (Amos 4:13) nothing could ever happen on its own, as you have warned, declaring, “If there would be calamity in the city, will not the Lord have done it?” (Amos 3:6.) “I am the Lord, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all of these things” (Isaiah 45:6-7).

In the past you have shown such mercy and patience with our people. It has your Bible in abundance. You waited patiently, giving them time to repent, to give up their fascination with worldliness and unbelief, to turn away from the false preachers who preach wealth, earthly success, and themselves, and to return to you in true gospel faith. As the orchard owner in the Bible who waited patiently for his tree to bear fruit

(Luke 13:6), so you have waited for our people to bear fruit, that is, to show their repentance and faith of the heart by leading a godly life, urging, "Return to me!" (Malachi 3:7.) Indeed, year after year you have waited, but nothing has happened. You have tried minor irritations and troubles to get them to give up their worldliness and unbelief. Still, nothing happened. Then you tried more pronounced afflictions (Amos 4:6-10; Ezekiel 5:12), at times more frequently; at other times, for longer duration. In amazement you wondered how a people could be so stubborn and senseless; why it would prefer the course of misery to possessing your protecting peace for body and soul.

To be sure, after men stubbornly would refuse to repent and to believe, you will remind them that nowhere have you promised that you would remain patient forever. Instead, you will threaten to punish the unbeliever, not just on Judgment Day, but already starting in this life. As the Bible points out, "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). "His soul hates the wicked" (Psalm 11:5). Therefore, you have promised, "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity" (Isaiah 13:11). "All nations that forget God will be turned into hell" (Psalm 9:17). To be sure, you have kept your threat (1st Kings 8:24). Your recent affliction has caused appalling destruction, in which the anger of God, indeed, was revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Romans 1:18). You will not be mocked (Galatians 6:7). You are righteous in all your holy ways (Psalm 145:17). Awaken sinners to the realization that as long as they would refuse to humble themselves, you will continue to send even more devastation! Convict the world of sin, of a lack of righteousness, and of their overhanging judgment (John 16:8), for "the entire world is guilty before God. No man is righteous before him" (Romans 3:19).

To those who have escaped with their lives, which would include the rest of the country, your warning goes out: "Unless you would repent, all of you likewise will perish" (Luke 13:3). To those sufferers who would count themselves as members of some church, but who would lack a true, biblical repentance and gospel faith; who would have fattened themselves on worldliness and will not diet; who would have become addicted to the flesh-pleasing faith-killing creeds of their church and will not reject them, the same warning goes out: "Repent!" (Matthew 3:2.)

Just the same, to those sufferers whom you know to be true repenters and gospel believers, this devastation was not meant to be a punishment, but a demonstration of your deep love. If a believer would have died by this Heaven-sent destruction, it would have been a death by which "he would glorify God" (John 21:19). If a believer would have lost everything but his life, he still could and should confess the biblical truth: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" (Job

1:21.) "I count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8). Although man's limited, unsound, and sin-weakened mind could never understand the infinite workings of you, the infinite Creator of the universe, as our guiding Good Shepherd you would point your people to your dependable promises, assuring them, "As many as I love, I scold and chasten" (Revelation 3:19). "All things work together for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28). Remind us of your words: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"! (Isaiah 55:9.) "What I am doing you do not now understand" (John 13:7). You have deliberately chosen to do your powerful works of faith-fortifying in the very opposite way which prideful and foolish men would demand it (1st Corinthians 1:27-29), so that your believers would depend only on your bare promises and not on the wisdom or might of this deluded world. Through your incomparable might, intentionally working through the weak things of this world for the purpose of putting to shame the petty pretensions of boastful men, you fulfill every one of your pledges to bring spiritual blessings miraculously out of doom and disaster (Numbers 11:23; Joshua 21:45). How certainly you could and should be trusted, if men only would give up on their doubts, and grasp your glorious assurances instead!

Just the same, in their antagonism in the face of the clear words of Scripture, people would still object: "How cruel to say that God will punish with death and destruction! How libelous to call the churches in the area of this recent destruction worldly and unrepentant, faithless and without the fear of God!" Yet the pages of the Old Testament reveal that many nations have said the same thing, in effect, but were subsequently punished by you with the same death and destruction. Indeed, just how much more punishment of this area and of the rest of this country will it take before the citizens would finally wake up to the importance of repentance? Sadly, their punishment is a matter of their own making.

In the meantime, I will humble myself, confess my sins, and look to your promise of forgiveness. May I obey your biblical command to confess the sins of my country, plead to you for their forgiveness, request of you to convert its citizens, and to pray for the peace of this land from your righteous punishment (1st Kings 8:30-50)!

Hear my prayer for Jesus' sake! Amen.