

# COD LENTEN NEWSLETTER NO. 2



Dear Reader,

The mystery of suffering, disasters, pain is with us again. We are frantically looking for answers. Is this of God, does He caused it? Is God punishing us for our selfishness/deeds? Is God talking to us?

Like Job and his three (four) learned comforters we are clutching for straws with our feeble minds to make sense of suffering and to understand GOD. It will take God Himself (cf. **Job 38-41**) to comfort us and cause us to repent of our challenge of his Majesty, Authority and Providence.

Maybe the least I can say is: God never allows or appoint a fire unless he can bring beauty from the ashes (Beth Moore-Possibly based on **Ps 66:11, 12**).

Special greetings and mercy to you as we continue on our Lenten walk!

## 1. WHAT'S YO TAKE?

Have we arrived at the signs of the time/ end of the age? Are the predictions of Jesus, for example, Luke 21: 3ff. with us? Is this the time to reconsider our ways? I guess most of you would answer in the affirmative. My question is on what basis do you want to repent? What is your goal in changing your lifestyle? Are you afraid of the judgment and this is foremost in your mind? Do you repent in fear?

This fear is so unnecessary. A loving relationship with Jesus Christ, drives out all fear as we have the confidence to meet our Creator. Please read about the reconciliation made possible by Christ in the letter to the Romans. A new confidence based on faith and grace is revealed to us if we accept His sacrifice for us on Calvary. Instead of enemies, children of God emerge with a new chance and new opportunities. The culmination of this is the eternal life with the Victor of sin, the grave and death and the devil.

Please meditate on **1 Joh 2: 28-3:3** and make it your own.

## 2. CHRIST'S CHURCH DURING LENT

I imagine myself sitting amidst the Japanese survivors, huddled together in a crowded hall. Of what help can I be under the circumstances? Of what help can Christ be in this disaster? If I introduce myself as a witness for Christ would they curse me?

Would they chase me away due to my association of God? It is oh so possible, and human, to direct all the anger to God and His associates as a way to free the pent-up emotions in the soul. Maybe they would be more overwhelmed and they would then just say: "Hush! We must not mention the name of the Lord" (**Amos 6: 10**) as the devastation is too enormous to bear at the moment.

Do we have a word of comfort under these circumstances? Do people *want* to be comforted or is it easier to refuse to be comforted and wail about the complete loss and apparent futility of the future?

Let us make time to pray for the Japanese and others who are suffering. May we count our blessings and never take the love and protection of God for granted.

One thing I know, this is no time to ask about the whys and the whos, the did-you- dos? Why did this happen? Who is responsible? Did we bring this upon ourselves? Who is to blame?

Maybe more so as food for our winter days, may I say that disasters are not new. They are even recorded in the Bible-and to the last vivid detail. We are told of the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem (connected to the people of God), but also of other strongholds classified as belonging to the heathen nations.

In Lamentations Jeremiah tells us of the destruction of Jerusalem. Chapter after Chapter we get the gruesome details, but then suddenly a ray of hope penetrates the darkness when he steadied himself a little and refocuses upward instead of downwards and side wards and surprisingly hope enters in again:

*His compassion never fail. They are new every morning, great is your faithfulness (3: 21-24).*

Moments later he disappears again under the water, the anguish covers him again; the destruction is just too much! But he will survive as some drops of oxygen will keep the lungs filled and keep him afloat amidst the debris and damage.

*I pray that worry and anguish will take us to God in prayer and that prayer will drive away anguish and worry.*

### **3. A PRAYER**

Grant, O God, that in all time of our testing we may know your Presence and obey your will; that, following the examples of your servants, we may with integrity and courage accomplish what you give us to do, and endure what you give us to bear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever (Edward Pusey).

## 4. WHOSE WILL IS SUPREME?

For You are great and do marvelous deeds; You alone are God. Teach me to walk in Your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your Name. I will praise You, O Lord, my God with all my heart; I will glorify your Name forever.

For great is Your Love towards me; You have delivered me from the grave (**Psalm 86: 10-13**).

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