



Terror - why?

The latest terror attacks in Russia and Indonesia have again left many people feeling upset, angered, and asking "When will it ever end?"

Lately in my Bible reading I came across these words: "**You put off the evil day and bring near a reign of terror.**" Or, in another translation, "You refuse to admit that a day of disaster is coming, but what you do only brings that day closer."¹

These words were spoken by the prophet Amos to the people of Israel in around 750BC. It was a time of great prosperity and luxurious living, outward religious piety, and apparent security. But God saw that prosperity and luxury was limited to the wealthy, that it fed on injustice and on oppression of the poor, and that religious observance was insincere.

Therefore, because God is a God of justice who cares for the poor and needy, He time and again had sent His messengers to tell the people to change their ways or else come under His judgement. He wanted His people to give up their oppressive ways and make sure that the poor were no

longer ripped off to further line the pockets of the wealthy. But Israel back then refused to listen to God. They scoffed, and just "put off" these warnings and the threat of judgement, and continued in their indulgent luxurious living. This attitude brought a "reign of terror" upon them.

I think the above scenario sounds a lot like our Western world today. God has seen how much of our wealth has come at the expense of the poor, and we have refused to acknowledge His previous warnings to us to act justly. Westerners have re-interpreted the Bible to make it say that charging interest on loans to the poor is OK, when in fact God originally said that charging them interest is banned altogether.² As a result, so many third world nations are indebted over their heads to our first world nations, with

(1) Amos 6:3, NIV, TEV. (2) Compare Leviticus 25:35-37, Ezekiel 18:5-9, and Proverbs 28:8.

no hope of ever being able to repay their loans. As of 2001, they owed more than \$500 billion dollars!³

A movement called "Jubilee 2000" arose in the 1990's, trying to rally worldwide support to get first world countries to cancel the debts owed to them by third world nations by the year 2000. It was only moderately successful, and the campaign continues.³

I have a feeling that the "reign of terror" in which we now find ourselves in the Western world is because we have refused to listen to God's warnings to us to act justly. I think the prophet Amos' words could be levelled at us today: "You have oppressed the poor and robbed them of their grain. And so you will not live in the fine stone houses you build or drink wine from the beautiful vineyards you plant. I know how terrible your sins are and how many crimes you have committed. You persecute good men, take bribes, and prevent the poor from getting justice in the courts."⁴

I think that for too long many Western nations, which all have a Christian heritage and are founded on God's laws in the Bible, have ignored God's warnings to them to act justly. Furthermore, the foundations of our society have been eroded by evolutionary teaching which tries to say there is no God, and no wonder society as a whole has been ignoring God's standards and saying "don't give me this rubbish about God and His judgement - there's no such thing as God anyway, and if He does exist, He won't punish us because He is

supposed to be love". No wonder a reign of terror has come upon us.

History is full of similar examples when people have begun to mock God and His standards.

The people of Noah's day scoffed at the warning to change their ways of wickedness, corruption, and violence, and the flood came and destroyed them all except those on the ark.

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah refused to change their indulgent homosexual ways, and God destroyed them all with fire and brimstone.

Pharaoh, king of Egypt, refused to listen to God's warnings through Moses, and the whole country suffered terrible destruction and the death of every firstborn child.

All these people "put off the day of evil" and God's warnings, and brought upon themselves terrifying judgement.

But history does give us some positive examples of change. For example, the people of Nineveh in Persia were different. When God sent Jonah to preach to that great city because its wickedness was so great, the whole city believed God, from the king right down to the least citizen, and they all humbled themselves and began desperately calling out to God for mercy. "And when God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction He had threatened."⁵

I believe the situation we now find ourselves in is another sign from God to get ready for the second coming of Jesus Christ when He will judge the

(3) See www.jubileeaustralia.org (4) Amos 5:11,12. (5) Jonah 3:10.

world with justice and God's wrath will be poured out on all those who have refused to obey Him. The Bible describes that day as "the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men and women."⁶

Are you ready for the second coming of Jesus Christ? My hope and deep desire for you and all of us is that we are in a right relationship with God before Jesus comes back.

You may not have much money and you may not be oppressing anyone else with it, but there are other things which can destroy your relationship with God as well.

Jesus said: "Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."⁷

The broad way is the way of worldliness. Anything to do with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boasting of what one has and does.⁸ All these things are sin and separate us from God.

The Bible says: "For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person (for greed is a form of idolatry) will ever receive a share in the Kingdom of Christ and God."⁹

What do we have to do to get right with God?

First, we must confess our sins.
Second, we must stop doing them.
And third, we must believe in Jesus Christ, trust Him, and desire to follow Him with all our hearts. Then we should start to read the Bible and pray every day, as well as start participating

in a local church, and our lives will begin to grow in purity and holiness the way God wants them to.

Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no-one comes to the Father except through me". "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved."¹⁰

Please don't "put off" this warning. Start following Jesus today if you are not doing so already. Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, every man or woman, boy or girl, who hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; they have crossed over from death to life."¹¹

And if our country gives up its complacency and luxurious living on the backs of other poor in the world, I believe we will be free from a reign of terror as well.

Let us pray:

*Heavenly Father,
have mercy on us for our sins.
Forgive us for exploiting other poor people
in the world just so that we can live
lives of luxury here in Australia.*

*From now on I want to be more kind and
generous with the wealth I do have,
and I will try to be a voice where I work to
make sure we go about our business in
a way which respects all people it deals
with.*

*Help me now to live a life of justice,
and teach me what this looks like, too.
Thank you that you have given me Jesus to
save me from my sins, and also to be
my example in how I should now live.
In Jesus' name I pray,
Amen.*

(6) 2Peter 3:7. (7) Matthew 7:13,14. (8) 1John 2:15,16. (9) Ephesians 5:5. (10) John 14:6; 10:9a. (11) John 5:24.

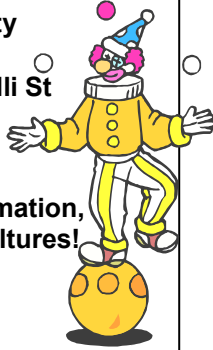
Neighbourhood Festival Day

Saturday, 18th September
10am – 2pm

Darebin Community
Health Centre,
Cnr Blake & Crevelli St

Lots of stalls,
entertainment,
kid's games, information,
sharing of local cultures!

*Come along and
grow with us!*



News & Events

You're invited to our next
CELEBRATION
SUNDAY

*a Community Church
Service for everyone!!*

Topic:

***Grace, Truth, &
Transformation!***

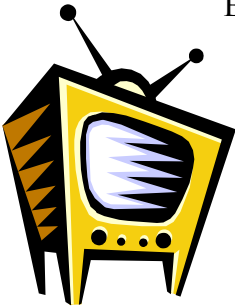


Be watching **Channel 31**

"Spirit of Life"

Monday 20th
September 7.30am
or

Thursday 23rd
September 12noon



to see your
Community
Chaplain
interviewed!



• **Sunday September 19th**
(the 3rd Sunday of the month)

• **5pm - 6.15pm**
(followed by supper!)



• **Preston Nth East
Primary School Hall**

Bring your whole family!

Peter Kutschker
Community Chaplain, East Preston /
Reservoir (03) 8430 8574
5/3 McLennan Place, Preston, 3072

A ministry supported by Regent Baptist Church
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