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LESSONS FROM THE TRAGEDY OF THE TOWER

A few observations by Rev Ivan Foster

"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:4-5.



It may be seen here that the Lord Jesus not only took note of dreadful events in His day, but He would have others consider them and draw lessons from them.

Many are talking about the lessons to be learned from the tragedy of the fire which destroyed Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, London. All of the lessons related to fire-prevention and the overhauling of the management of such towers.

I have yet to hear of any who have spoken as did the Saviour on the occasion here in Luke 13.

The reason for this is quite simple. There are few today who view such events as did the Lord Jesus. The spiritual and eternal were ever before His

eyes. As Christians we too should see and consider such events as did the Lord. Such events have a very vital significance for the nation generally, if it had but eyes to see and ears to hear.

It is clear from the Saviour's words that those who do see the hand of God at work very likely draw wrong conclusions. "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? . . . Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" Luke 13:2, 4.

It is clear from the Saviour's comments that the common opinion as to why the two sad events, Pilate's slaughter of some Jewish worshippers and the collapse of a tower in Siloam, took place was erroneous!

Likewise, I am confident that few will draw the correct conclusions from the terrible fire in north Kensington. There are considerations for us all in the UK to ponder in the aftermath of this tragedy and I would like to try and point them out today.

I. THE WHOLE OF OUR UNITED KINGDOM DESERVES JUDGMENT

That is the clear implication we may draw from the Saviour's words. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," verse 3. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," verse 5. This solemn observation was repeated by the Saviour. How important for us to note this repeated truth.

How wicked is the path that our nation has pursued for a long time now!

- 1. There is open departure from the God of the Bible.**
- 2. Equal regard is given to heathen deities.**
- 3. Daily, the slaughter of innocents takes place in abortion clinics.**
- 4. The vilest of practices are sanctioned and protected by the law.**



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5. For 30 years a 'fire' raged in Ulster with hundreds of victims.

Few church ministers ever speak of those events as did the Saviour. To do so would have angered the majority of people and few ministers are prepared, for the sake of faithfulness to God, to defy public opinion. They may not endorse it but they do not boldly defy and contradict it!

In Ulster, the churches followed the ecumenical, modernistic path to Rome and that, certainly in latter years, has not been condemned, even by those who were prone to do so in earlier times.

II. THE PEOPLE WHO PERISHED WERE NOT MORE WICKED THAN OTHERS

"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:4-5.

1. There is none who can boast of righteousness or feel less worthy of judgment than others.

"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," 1 Corinthians 15:10.

2. Doubtless there were many wrongs within the community of that tower but those wrongs are common throughout the land. We have seen the land visited by judgment recently but where has been the evidence of acknowledgement of sin or of repentance?

III. FEW WILL RECOGNISE THIS BUT MERCY WAS MANIFESTED

1. Mercy was enjoyed by many in the tower. We grieve for those who suffered but many escaped and there are wonderful stories of miraculous deliverances.

2. Mercy was shown to other such towers. Apparently, there are others towers which present the same dangers in London and in other parts of the land. Those dangers may now be addressed.

3. Mercy was manifested toward the nation. Is this not a warning? "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," verse 3. This truth is repeated in verse 5.

How many warnings have been given in recent days to the United Kingdom of Heaven's disapproval of the ways of the nation?

What was said by the Lord to Judah in the days of Jeremiah can be said of our nation. "And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear," Jeremiah 25:4. Defiance has been the response of the United Kingdom.

"Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers. Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods. Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day," Jeremiah 44:3-6.

4. The UK has rejoiced in its sin and wickedness, counting it as progress and betterment! Resentment and mockery have been the response of the majority in our land to the proclamation of God's Word in recent times. "But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts," Zechariah 7:11-12.



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5. There remains nothing but further displays of God's judgment and wrath as the nation slips downward to its final ruin. It is our duty to maintain a witness and a warning, to present Christ as the only hope, just like Noah and Jeremiah, right to the end! We must be different, rejecting the lifestyles of today.

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer," 1 Peter 4:1-7.

"Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them." Jeremiah 1:17.

"And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious." Ezekiel 2:6-7.

To the very end there will be those that the Lord will have mercy upon and save through the witness of His people.

It behoves us to remain faithful and bold in the face of the increasing sin and rebellion in our land.