



September 29, 2022

God Hears Our Prayers

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

My wife and I had a very uplifting Feast of Trumpets with our spiritual family here in Spanish Fort. A spirit of peace was there and it was indeed refreshing. We also, in spite of some technical difficulties with the webcast appreciated all who stayed connected, patiently waiting. The good news is the first message we were unable to see will be used this coming Sabbath as well as a message I have prepared. So, all is not lost.

The meaning of this Holy Day, (the Feast of Trumpets that we just observed) also reminds us of calamities, warning and destruction that will take place at the end of the age. Before we come to the peaceful rule of the Kingdom of God, earth's inhabitants will have to go through the greatest time of trouble that has ever been experienced!

The sobering words of the great prophet predict this. *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."* (Matthew 24:21-22)

This certainly seems to be describing a time when weapons of mass destruction would be available and even used. But we're so thankful that the Creator will limit the events to save mankind from complete annihilation.

We have seen some significant challenges and trials that have affected the nation over the last few years. For several days now our attention has been focused on Hurricane Ian.

Since I live on the Gulf Coast and have been through Hurricanes, I'm reminded each year that the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season is September 10, with most activity occurring between mid-August and mid-October. On September 24, Tropical Depression Nine became more organized and strengthened into *Tropical Storm Ian*. The system moved across the Caribbean Sea generating scattered showers over northern Venezuela, northern Colombia, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and parts of Central America. The system rapidly intensified as it moved across Cuba, becoming the fourth hurricane and second major hurricane of the 2022 Atlantic hurricane season.

Hurricane Ian made landfall along the southwestern coast of Florida near Cayo Costa as a powerful Category 4 storm. It's one of the strongest hurricanes to make landfall on the west coast of the Florida peninsula.

The extremely dangerous conditions that this hurricane is unleashing — including catastrophic floods and life-threatening storm surge — will continue as the storm advances inland. Some areas could see the worst surge forecast on record. Ian is expected to hit Florida as a very powerful storm with storm surges and flooding. There were predictions of a wall of water up to 12 feet deep smashing inland much like a tsunami. The Florida Governor, FEMA director, and various mayors asked for the citizens of the nation “...to pray for God's intervention and for protection for the residents of Florida and other states that might be affected by Ian.” I'm sure, yes, all of us are praying.

I reflect back to 2017 where anxiety was further increased with the news that two more hurricanes, Hurricane Jose and Hurricane Katia were developing in the Atlantic. It is always a relief when hurricanes do not continue to escalate and they seem to diminish while out at sea and do not make landfall. Also, Irma hit landfall in southern Florida closer to a Category 4 rather than a Category 5 storm. It continued to diminish as it headed north. Of course it caused considerable damage and power outages affecting millions. And there were deaths. But it could have been much worse.

Did our great God intervene and hear the prayers of millions of citizens and reduce the winds and destruction? I believe He did. It is also encouraging to see

the many caring acts of people helping those in need in a selfless and sacrificing way. A great deal of relief funding has been accumulated and is being directed to those in need.

Solomon in his great prayer at the dedication of the Temple beseeched the Lord to hear the prayers of his people when they were troubled by various calamities. *"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance."* (1 Kings 8:35-36)

Solomon could have mentioned other "natural" disasters such as too much rain from hurricanes, etc. My hope and prayer is that a number of U.S. citizens and others are observing the troubling times we are in and are seeking to get their lives in order? No matter how we look at things, these are troubling times for all.

God hears the prayers of those who honor Him and trust in His mercy. *"The Lord is near all those who give honor to his name; even to all who give honor to him with true hearts."* (Psalm 145:18 BBE)

Imperfect people can humbly look to the Lord while honoring him with faith and confidence. Notice the following prayer. *"A Prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Lord. Hear my prayer, O Lord, And let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble; Incline Your ear to me; In the day that I call, answer me speedily.* (Psalm 102:1-2). Many of those in Florida would fit the mood of the Psalmist. Many are very sincere in their prayers to God.

Another Psalm deals with the condition of Joseph in a time of trouble. *" . . . Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth! Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, Stir up Your strength, And come and save us! Restore us, O God; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!"* (Ps 80:1-3) I believe there are still many in the

nation who honor, obey and worship the Creator God of the Bible.

You and I are instructed to pray when we are troubled and afflicted. "*Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.*"

(James 5:13)

We must also remember to praise God and thank him when He does deliver us.

During times of trouble it is appropriate to examine ourselves and acknowledge our shortcoming, especially if we have hurt someone by our words or actions.

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (James 5:16).

I know I've hurt people, and seek God for forgiveness. How about you? These tenuous times sincerely put things in perspective if we let God's Spirit pierce our hearts and souls.

We will be observing the Day of Atonement within a few days. It is a time to seek the Lord, repent, and trust in the blood of the Lamb of God who is now our eternal High Priest.

I pray you all have an inspiring Atonement, and look forward to sharing an encouraging and refreshing Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day with you!

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.



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