

## **God's Answer to Terrorism**

Rod Reynolds

### **Terror attacks have become commonplace in today's world, especially in Western nations and parts of the Middle East and Africa. What is God's answer to Terrorism?**

On September 11, 2001 a group of international terrorists perpetrated an unspeakably heinous and evil attack on the United States. As you probably know, they hijacked commercial jets and deliberately crashed them into the World Trade Center towers in New York City and into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing thousands of people who were simply living their lives, going about their own business. Another hijacked plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, as heroic passengers sought to wrest control from the terrorist hijackers.

The nation was shocked and grieved as at few other times in its history. Previous terrorist attacks had been experienced, such as the bombing of the United States embassy in Beirut and the bombing of a Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, both of which occurred in 1983, and numerous other terrorist incidents could be cited. But the September 11, 2001 incident seemed to many to herald a new era, at least for those of us in the United States, of uncertainty and fear that terror on a massive scale may strike unexpectedly at any moment.

Many Americans awakened to a realization that the nation has determined enemies who hate us passionately, and who have the capability of inflicting enormous suffering upon us. The nation embarked on what was called a "war on terror." But in the ensuing years terrorists and terrorism seem to have only become more entrenched. And perpetrators have shown a determination to kill and maim people more or less indiscriminately in places in much of the world, including the United States as well as many other countries. Recent spectacular terrorist attacks have occurred in Belgium, France, Pakistan, and various Middle Eastern and African countries, among others.

Recently (September 2016), London's Islamic Mayor, Sadiq Khan, was quoted as saying that terror attacks are "part and parcel" of life in a big city ("London's Muslim Mayor Tells New York And London to Get Used to Terrorism," 9-19-2016, [www.breitbart.com](http://www.breitbart.com); "After NYC bomb, London's Muslim mayor says terror attacks 'part and parcel' of life in a big city," 9-21-2016, [www.jihadwatch.org](http://www.jihadwatch.org)).

### **What lessons can we learn from being witness to such behavior? Is there a solution?**

### **What is God's answer to Terrorism?**

#### **The Root of Terrorism**

First of all, what is at the root of terrorist actions? Various theories have been

proposed. Some in our own government have publicly stated that poverty is at the root of terrorism. The answer is to give the terrorists jobs, and then they wouldn't have any reason to commit terrorist actions.

The foolishness of such reasoning ought to be apparent to anyone who is capable of honest and objective thought. Millions of people have and do live in poverty, millions are unemployed, yet who do not wantonly kill and maim other people. Moreover, many of the terrorist acts perpetrated in this and other countries have been committed by people who had jobs or were quite well-off financially.

The recent terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, was perpetrated by an employee of the county and his wife. He was being paid more than \$50,000 a year. The terrorist shooting at Fort Hood in 2009 which killed 13 people and injured more than 30 was perpetrated by a Major in the U.S. Army. Osama bin Laden, who was the head of the organization that carried out the September 11 attacks, was the son of a multi-billionaire Saudi national.

The common denominator in terrorism and murder is hatred. We must learn the evil of hate toward other human beings. In God's sight, hate toward others is tantamount to murder. The murders of untold millions who have been slain by their fellow human beings through the ages, began with hate in human hearts.

The Apostle John wrote: "He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:9-11).

And further: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15).

Harboring hatred towards others defiles the human mind and spirit, as Jesus said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:20-23).

### **Love Toward God and Neighbor**

Many millions have been slaughtered as a result of political factions

struggling for control. Usually coupled with political motives, many terrorist attacks, and outright wars, have been perpetrated in the name of religion. Although historically millions have been persecuted and murdered in the name of a multitude of religions, including falsely so-called "Christianity," today, a form of militant Islamism is behind most of the terrorist attacks being perpetrated over much of the world.

Although the London Mayor stated terror attacks are "part and parcel" of living in a big city today, this is mostly true at the present time of big cities (and not so big cities) in countries that are scenes of open warfare, political strife or ethnic conflicts, unrestrained criminal activity, or who have invited swarms of immigrants who are sworn enemies bent on their destruction. Very big cities currently experiencing relatively little in the form of terrorist bombings and similar activities include Beijing, Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo. It wasn't so long ago that terror attacks of the sort being experienced in recent years were relatively rare in nearly all American and European cities.

Although Islamic jihadism is at the root of many of today's terror attacks, Bible prophecy indicates that in the future, a form of false, militant "Christianity," influenced by Satan, will once again emerge to persecute and destroy those who do not yield to its demands (Revelation 12:9; 13:2-4, 11-15).

Christ commands, however, that we must purge hatred toward other human beings from our hearts.

"Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Love toward God and neighbor should not be treated as a mere platitude, but **practiced as a way of life**, as Jesus Christ **commanded!** If everyone were actually doing this, there would be no such thing as terrorism threatening us.

Those who preach hate, and believe they have an excuse to engage in murder and mayhem are the ones who are committing terrorist acts. But Scripture tells us that **those who claim to love God and yet do not love even their enemies, not to mention those they consider brothers, do not really know God at all.**

"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you"

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"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:27-28, 35-36).

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also" (1 John 4:20-21; cf. Luke 10:25-37).

### Why Does God Allow Terrorism?

One might ask, why an all-powerful God allows the killing of innocent people? God created human beings as free moral agents with the power and responsibility to choose (Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

God from the beginning has given mankind a choice (Genesis 2:16-17). God is now allowing human beings to go the way they have chosen. And some human beings choose to kill others. Although God from the beginning has instructed human beings in the way of life, the way of love towards others, mankind as a whole has consistently rejected God and chosen the way of death.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in [or to] them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse**, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, **who exchanged the truth of God for the lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in

themselves the penalty of their error which was due. **And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind**, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, **murder**, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, **haters of God**, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." (Romans 1:18-32).

If mankind were willing, God would have gathered them to himself.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! **How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!** See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, `Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' " (Luke 13:34-35).

God would have gathered, but they would not. Our nations have rejected God and his way of life. God has been kicked out of our public life. In the United States Bible reading and prayer are mostly forbidden in our public schools. The ten commandments have been ripped down from places where they used to be displayed, such as court houses and schools. If our own nation would fully and truly accept Christ's rule, if we would willingly submit to his commandments, we would not be victim to many of the things God otherwise allows us to suffer. And the same goes for other nations. In that respect, mankind, including our own people, have brought these things upon our own heads.

It is not God, but human beings acting on their own volition, who commit the acts of terrorism we are discussing. God allows it because we in effect have told God we don't want him butting into our business, or telling us how to live our lives.

When the nation of Judah in ancient times genuinely sought God, and showed a willingness to live by his commandments, generally they were able to live in peace, and had rest from their enemies.

The reign of Asa is an example:

"Asa **did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God**, for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places, and broke

down the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images. He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to **observe the law and the commandment**. He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and **the kingdom was quiet under him**. And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; **he had no war in those years, because the Lord had given him rest**. Therefore he said to Judah, 'Let us build these cities and make walls around them, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us, because we have sought the Lord our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.' So they built and prospered" (2 Chronicles 14:2-7).

God told Israel:

**"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments**, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and  **dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land"** (Leviticus 26:3-6).

### **For God's Protection We Must Repent**

God is the creator of life. He is the arbiter of life. He alone, as the giver of life, has the right to take life, or to specify under what conditions one must forfeit his life.

God has the power to save us or destroy us, bless us or curse us. God tells us in his word that repentance and obedience to his commandments are required if we expect to continue to live indefinitely under his blessings. People don't want to face the fact that AIDS, terrorist attacks, and other curses befalling our nations are an indication that we need to change, we need to repent.

The Bible is full of warnings and appeals for us to repent. The warning Jesus issued to the Jews of his day apply likewise to us:

"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse

sinner than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish' " (Luke 13:1-5).

Similarly, a message God sent to the people of ancient Judah hundreds of years earlier is pertinent for our time today:

"Thus says the Lord: 'Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word, and say, "Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates! Thus says the Lord: **Execute judgment and righteousness**, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. For if you indeed do this thing, then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David. **But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself, says the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation.** For thus says the Lord to the house of the king of Judah: You are Gilead to Me, The head of Lebanon; Yet I surely will make you a wilderness, Cities which are not inhabited. I will prepare destroyers against you, Everyone with his weapons; They shall cut down your choice cedars And cast them into the fire. And many nations will pass by this city; and everyone will say to his neighbor, Why has the Lord done so to this great city? Then they will answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.

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"Shall you reign because you enclose yourself in cedar? Did not your father Josiah eat and drink, And do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy; Then it was well. Was not this knowing Me? says the Lord. Yet your [speaking of Jehoiakim, a son of Josiah] eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, For shedding innocent blood, And practicing oppression and violence"" (Jeremiah 22:1-9, 15-17).

In a prophecy concerning Israel, that applies directly to our day today, God says:

"But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger.

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Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, And have **forgotten the God who fathered you**. And when the Lord saw it, He spurned them, Because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. And He said: `I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith. They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled by my anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. They shall be wasted with hunger, Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction; I will also send against them the teeth of beasts, With the poison of serpents of the dust. The sword shall destroy outside; **There shall be terror within** For the young man and virgin, The nursing child with the man of gray hairs'" (Deuteronomy 32:15-16, 18-25).

If we were acting responsibly and justly we would not be subject to afflictions such as the kind of terror our nations are experiencing. But terror is among the judgments God pronounced for disobedience to his righteous laws:

"But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will **even appoint terror over you**, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it" (Leviticus 26:14-16).

If we do not repent God will continue to humble us, and we will become a prey for our enemies. Yet, **it does not please God to see us suffer**:

"For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion According to the multitude of His mercies. **For He does not afflict willingly**, Nor grieve the children of men. To crush under one's feet All the prisoners of the earth, To turn aside the justice due a man Before the face of the Most High, Or subvert a man in his cause -- The Lord does not approve. Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, When the Lord has not commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That woe and well-being proceed? Why should a living man complain, A man for the punishment of his sins? **Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the Lord**; Let us lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven. We have transgressed and rebelled; You have not pardoned. You have

covered Yourself with anger And pursued us; You have slain and not pitied. You have covered Yourself with a cloud, That prayer should not pass through. You have made us an offscouring and refuse In the midst of the peoples. All our enemies Have opened their mouths against us. Fear and a snare have come upon us, Desolation and destruction. My eyes overflow with rivers of water For the destruction of the daughter of my people. My eyes flow and do not cease, Without interruption, Till the Lord from heaven Looks down and sees. My eyes bring suffering to my soul Because of all the daughters of my city" (Lamentations 3:31-51).

### **God Himself Will Put An End to Terrorism**

God will eventually take up the cause of those who have suffered violence, and the perpetrators of terror and violence will be punished for their evil deeds.

"O Lord, You have seen how I am wronged; Judge my case. You have seen all their vengeance, All their schemes against me. You have heard their reproach, O Lord, All their schemes against me, The lips of my enemies And their whispering against me all the day. Look at their sitting down and their rising up; I am their taunting song. Repay them, O Lord, According to the work of their hands. Give them a veiled heart; Your curse be upon them! In Your anger, Pursue and destroy them From under the heavens of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:59-66).

After allowing mankind to suffer the consequences of his rebellion and wicked deeds, God will in due time intervene to solve these problems and put an end to such evils.

A trumpet shall blow, and the scattered people of Israel will be regathered to worship Jesus Christ their savior and deliverer.

"So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isaiah 27:13).

This is a prophecy for the end time, the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 11:15). Having been punished and coming to repentance the people of Israel will be given a new heart and a new spirit, and will begin keeping the righteous laws of God.

"For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you,

and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezekiel 36:24-27).

And it will not be just the descendants of Israel who will benefit. God's Spirit will be poured out "on all flesh."

"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

God will intervene and the government of his kingdom will be established on the earth over all nations of men. War among the nations will become a thing of the past.

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be **established on the top of the mountains** [symbolizing large nations], And shall be exalted above the hills [symbolizing small nations]; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; **Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore**" (Isaiah 2:1-4).

Mankind will have a rest from war and bloodshed as God himself takes over the reigns of government on the earth, and establishes peace on the earth.

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