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By Mark Ward

The recent tragedies in both New York City and in Washington, DC have affected almost all Americans. The events happening that day are known throughout the world. Many of us have seen the video footage of the horrible things that happened...over and over again on our televisions. This raises many thoughts, questions and emotions in our minds and hearts. Our prayers and thoughts are with the families of the victims and those who are contributing to the efforts in the aftermath.

History repeats itself in the sense that tragedy becomes an influential "wake up call" to millions of people in a rich nation, the United States of America. A country that is filled with much diversity of people, thought, philosophy, religious beliefs, and politics is humbled by the attacks upon our safety and security...our *physical* safety and our *physical* security. There is much effort being applied, even now, toward planning and spending of literally millions of dollars to try to ensure that this does not happen in the future (or, that such is minimized greatly). Let us take, in this article, a moment to reflect on passages of Scripture that teach us a higher safety and a higher security...a **much needed safety and security** that involves our spiritual destiny..

Laying up Treasures: On Earth, or in Heaven???
Safety and Security: On Earth, or in Heaven?

Jesus taught, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" (Matthew 6:19-21). Jesus also taught, "*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" (Matthew 10:28). These passages teach the priority of our spiritual safety and security as opposed to our physical. I am not indicating that we are not to make provisions for our physical safety. We should take precautions and not put ourselves at risk. Also, we are blessed that God set up the civil governments to be a sword bearer to execute wrath upon the evil doers, as Romans 13 teaches. Bad things can still happen to good people, for while in this life we have no promises against such. Life on earth is just that...but, **eternal life in heaven** is the reward of every faithful child of God and includes safety and security *forever!* Jesus invites us all to believe and obey the gospel, showing our love to God in order to receive the remission of our sins and the benefits of God's grace and wonderful mercy. Let us ultimately be concerned with planning and working on our eternal safety and security.

What about us? Are we more concerned about our *physical* safety and in so doing neglect our *spiritual* safety? Which really should have our greater attention? I heard a pro football coach encouraging people to "go to church" today (since there was a break in that no NFL games were going to be played). This was good advice IF (a) folks follow up and seek a sound church of Christ in order to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24; Rom. 16:16), and (b) folks continue in faithfulness in the future in servitude to God per Hebrews 10:23-25 and I Cor. 15:57,58 (not just going to church services once and then getting back to a lifestyle that excludes service unto God)! Think about it. Where are we placing our emphasis? Is this a wake up call for us to get our priorities in line? Brethren and friends, think on these things. - *mjw*

Times of Services

Sundays - 2:00 pm Bible class, 3:00 pm Assembly Wednesdays - 6:30 pm Bible class

God's Scriptural Solution to Religious Division

By Nick Law

One of the things we observe concerning the life and teachings of Jesus is the dissension among the people that heard him. On the last day of the feast, He said, *"If any man thirst Let him come unto me, and drink; He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* (John 7:37-38) John states that some of the people said, *"Of a truth this is the Prophet"* meaning this is the prophet the Lord said to Moses that God would raise up from among their brethren and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him (Deut 18:15-18). Others raised the question that since Jesus was from Galilee, that the scripture had said he would come of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem. John 7:43 states, *"So there was a division among the people because of him."*

God's solution to their division is in the willingness to come to a knowledge of the TRUTH. Was Jesus a prophet? Was Jesus of their brethren the Jews? Was Jesus of the seed of David and born in Bethlehem? The scriptures prophesied of these and the fact that the people were aware of those scriptures did not mean that all of them came to the same conclusions. Due to their shallow thinking some did not seek beyond their assumptions! They assumed Jesus was of Galilee since he walked in Galilee. They did not consider the facts of his birth at Bethlehem. They evidently were unwilling to reason with Christ and check out the facts of his genealogy. Of course it would have taken some effort and required honest investigation!

How many of us are willing to check out the facts as to who Jesus is? Are we willing to read what is written by John, *"that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name"*? (John 20:30-31) When Jesus asked the question, *"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"*, there were differing answers: Some thought he was John the Baptist, some Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Peter by listening to revelation of the Father said, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."* (Matt. 16:13-17). Today, if we are to know who Jesus is it will be by faith in the revealed word of God.

God's solution to all religious division is to follow the simple, clear teachings of the New Testament. Paul through inspiration clearly teaches the unity we are to have is of the Spirit. There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:1-7). If there is one faith = the doctrine of Christ, law of liberty, the gospel, why do men have many faiths? The simple answer is that the many faiths are not of God. Why are there many differing kinds of churches? Because men are not willing to follow the clear but simple TRUTH there is one body, one church. Ephesians 1:22, 23 teaches that Christ is the head over all things to the church, which is his body. In these verses the church is the body. Jesus said he would build His church (Matt 16:18). Ephesians 5:23 teaches clearly and simply that Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Are the church and the body two different things? NO!! They are one and the same. Ephesians 5:25 shows they are the same because Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it. If Jesus gave himself for the church, is that not the equivalent of saying that He is *"the saviour of the body"*? If not why not?

On all matters of the faith, God expects his people to be in unity. Jesus prayed that we might be one, even as he and the Father are one (John 17:20-22). One in mind, one in purpose. The Corinthians were reminded, *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."* Paul then commands, *"That there should be no schism (division) in the body..."*! The Philippians were commanded, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

So God's solution to division is follow the TRUTH. Those that abide not in the doctrine of Christ receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. (2 John 9-11).

- by Nick Law taken from *The Religious Instructor*, July 1999 issue

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