

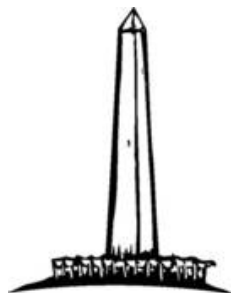
ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE - SEPT 4, 2011

Reflections

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

"PORTENTS IN THE EARTHQUAKE!"

BY DAVID K. POPHAM



Through the earthquake that shook the eastern seaboard God sent us a message. Yes, the cracks in the top of the Washington Monument are speaking to us: warnings for those paying attention, silent witness for those who are not.

I'm not saying this is sign about American power. If God needed to send portents on this subject I suspect God would choose a more prominent venue. Say a paralysis in Congress which might bring the nation to financial default, or the inability of moneyed oil corporations to cap a broken well. If we are looking for omens on America's powers they are already before us.

Still, I insist that the cracks are speaking to us. Meaning must be made of this sign, and meaning we will have. I admit that I am not adept of divining God's mysterious reckoning through the reading of goat livers and chicken entrails, or cracks in granite as others. Yet, I offer the following list of biblically based possibilities for the meaning of our cracks. Certainly one of them must be correct.

1. The Washington Memorial was built by wicked persons: "Every house built by the wicked is as fragile as a spider web, as full of cracks as a leafy booth," (Job 27:18).
2. America needs new wine containers: "These wineskins were new, but now they are old and cracked," (Joshua 9:13).
3. Be careful who you siege: "A woman threw down a millstone on Abimelech's head and cracked his skull," (Judges 9:53).
4. Be as good a horticulturalist as King Solomon: "Solomon was a great naturalist, with interests in animals, birds, snakes, fish, and trees – from the great cedars of Lebanon down to the tiny hyssop which grows in cracks in the walls," (1 Kings 4:33).
5. Or, given the towering structure of the monument, we might understand this event as God's calling Americans to observe the rite of circumcision: "Circumcise yourself for the LORD..." (Jeremiah 4:4).

In the end I discern a lesson of my youth: crack is whack! And so are insulting, slanderous, and defamatory declarations of God's intent. We need not look to possible portents in fractured marble. Long ago God rescued us from the dark ages.

If you think you don't know what God is asking you need only to look to Jesus our Christ: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another," (John 13:35).



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