

98 48:6-11

Before long, however, all this was forgotten and the deliverance was attributed to the bravery of the Royal Air Force and the diligence of the rescuers.

Today's idol is humanity. Man is proud of his great exploits. In common use and in legal terminology, the phrase *an act of God* has come to be used, not to point to signs of God's wonderful goodness, but almost exclusively as meaning a catastrophe.

(6) You have heard: now see all this! Will you not declare it? Now I proclaim new things to you, hidden things that you have not known. (7) They are created now, not long ago. Before today you had not heard of them, lest you should say, See, I knew them.

The same criticism of human refusal to recognize God's goodness and power, just as applicable today as ever, is repeated. It leads to a short but emphatic rebuke.

(8) Indeed you have not heard, indeed you have not known. From long ago your ear has not been opened. For I knew that you would deal very treacherously; you have been called a rebel from birth.

Yet this rebuke is followed by promises of renewed mercy.

(9) For the sake of my name I will delay my wrath. For my praise I restrain it from you, so as not to cut you off. (10) See, I have refined you, but not as silver. I have tested you in the furnace of affliction (11) for my own sake. For my own sake I will act. For how should my name be profaned? I will not give my glory to another.

In these verses the LORD declares that in spite of Israel's faithlessness He is going to defer His anger in order to accomplish His own purposes. He is preparing and testing them in order to accomplish His plan. Despite the weakness and sinfulness of humanity, He will not allow His name to be permanently profaned.

(12) Listen to me, O Jacob and Israel whom I called. I am