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## **HOW TO PRAY FOR THE BUSHFIRES – 9.1.20**

**By Ps Barbara Miller**

Australia as a nation is used to extreme weather conditions of fire, drought, flood and cyclones. In fact, wildfires are a natural part of the ecosystem in Australia with plants and other life even depending on regular fires to germinate, cycle nutrients, and remove decay. However, the 2019-2020 season is being described by media as the gates of hell being unleashed. There have been 26 deaths, nearly a billion animals destroyed and houses, towns, businesses, farms etc devastated. The insurance costs are estimated to be about \$700 million. There is a twitter hashtag “Australia burning” and that’s what the map looks like. All states have been affected but particularly the southern states. The fire has been so intense it has generated lightning and thunder and where this has happened, it has been described as similar to a volcano erupting or an atomic bomb exploding. It has been described as a catastrophe of Biblical proportions. Blood red suns, red-orange skies, darkness in daytime have all occurred.

The worst bushfires in Australian history have been:

- Black Saturday Bushfires (Victoria 2009) Black Saturday was one of Australia's worst natural disaster ever recorded.
- Ash Wednesday Bushfires (South Australia & Victoria 1983)
- Black Tuesday Bushfires (Tasmania 1967)

There are human causes of the bushfires e.g. the media reported statistics that 87% of bushfires are started by arson or by accident and about 200 people have been arrested or cautioned re arson. Also, we have not met hazard reduction targets e.g. Victoria has only met one-third of its target. Our environmental protection policies, though well-intended, have had unforeseen consequences. Also, people have been moving more and more to fire-prone areas.

There are natural causes such as years of drought, extreme heat and strong winds driving the flames. Some are pointing to climate change and global warming as causes. Though Australia accounts for 1.3 percent of global emissions, the Prime Minister is under pressure to do more as a result of the fires. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has noted the effects of climate change however with 2019 statistics:

- Australia's warmest year on record, with the annual national mean temperature 1.52 °C above average
- Annual national mean maximum temperature warmest on record (2.09 °C above average)
- Australia's driest year on record
- Nationally-averaged rainfall 40% below average for the year at 277.6 mm

Yet behind this are spiritual dynamics. People have been asking whether it is God's judgement for the sin of our nation or is it darker spiritual forces unleashing destruction (Ep 6:12). Joel 2 speaks of a coming day of judgement. Christians have seen visions of lei lines and cut them as led by the Lord, of witches chanting and celebrating the fires and Abaddon, the angel of destruction, riding on a horse causing the fire. Some have talked about the New World Order or globalists torching Australia with geoengineered weather weapons using lasers or directed energy weapons (DEWs) to convince people of global warming.

Others say God would not indiscriminately cause such destruction. He may remove His blessing and protection on a nation and leave it to its own devices however. Luke 13 shows us that we should not automatically assume disasters are the result of God's judgement. God is a God of love and mercy and wills that none should perish but He is also a God of justice who will punish evildoers at the end of time. (Mt 5:45, Psalm 81:12, 2 Pe 3:9, Mt 13:24-30)

So how do we pray? Here are a few ways based on scripture that we can pray. There are 5 sins that defile the land we live on

- shedding innocent blood (Nu 35:33)
- broken covenants (Isaiah 24:4-6)
- sexual immorality (Lev 18:24-30)
- idolatry (Jer 3:9)
- injustice - to widows, orphans and strangers (Deut 10:18) and land theft (Deut 27:17)

So serious are they that the land can vomit out its inhabitants. (Lev 18:24-30). Recent legislation re abortion and euthanasia in Australia qualifies as the shedding of innocent blood. Massacres of Indigenous people on settlement and homicide are other examples. There are many examples of broken covenants but one is the high rate of divorce in our nation. Sexual immorality is pervasive and we worship many things and have many other priorities than God.

There are a number of examples of people in the Bible taking spiritual responsibility for the sins of their nation and standing in the gap (Ezek 22:30). A good example is Daniel in Daniel 9:1-23 who repented for his sin and the sin of Israel and we can model his whole prayer which is excerpted here:

“Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, ‘O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 5 we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules’.” (Dan 9:3-5)

Another example is Abraham praying to God in humility yet boldness to save the city of Sodom. (Genesis 18:16-33). Verse 20 tells us that there was an outcry from the city to God for justice. Yet Abraham, the friend of God, knew that God is not only a God of justice but is also a God of mercy so he pleaded initially for God to save the city if there were 50 righteous and God agreed. Then Abraham pleaded for God to save it if there were 45 righteous and so on down till 10. God agreed to his prayer so it shows us the prayer of one person for a city can be powerful.

So, Daniel and Abraham are two examples of prayer to God when we believe that we need to call for His mercy to triumph over His judgement. But what if we believe these fires are not the result of God’s judgement for our sin or His removal of His protection from us and leaving us to the consequences of our own devices?

We need to issue declarations and decrees to drive back the work of the dark side. A good example of this is when Jesus rebuked the storm. Mark 4:39-41 (NIV)

“And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still

have no faith?" They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

In 2011, we were faced with cyclone Yasi, a Category Five storm, the highest level, with winds of about 300 km/h. It was the biggest storm in Queensland's history, with more than 10,000 people moved from their homes. Norman and I felt led to rebuke the cyclone as it was coming towards Cairns and it miraculously turned and went out to sea. It passed between the two big cities of Cairns and Townsville which only suffered minor damage. We praise the Lord for this.

We have the example of the prayer of David Jeffery and 2 prayer warriors at Mallacoota recently that changed the wind so it drove the fire back from the people on the beach, potentially saving thousands of lives-<https://www.etsnews.com.au/australia/prayer-saved-thousands-in-mallacoota-claims-atheist/>. It was a 60m high firewall coming roaring at them with 90 mph wind and God answered their desperate faith-filled prayer. God had told David to pray so he knew God wanted to intervene.

God wants to act on our behalf. But sometimes we don't ask him to intervene. However, there has been concerted prayer across our nation for the bushfires and drought and we are grateful for that. You may want to use the following decree:

### **DECREE**

We acknowledge your sovereignty O God as You are the Creator of the Universe. You are the One who has created the earth, fire, rain, wind and all the elements. You have created us to rule over the "works of Your hands; You have put all things under our feet." (Psalm 8:3-8). We submit to Your authority as we rule under Your command.

We speak to the fires burning in Australia and command them to retreat and fizzle out in Jesus name. We speak to the wind to blow out the fires. We speak to the rain to be released from the heavens over Australia to break the drought and put out the fires.

We declare the gates of hell shall not prevail over the church of Yahweh in Australia or against our Christian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison. (Mt 16:17-19)

We decree “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. (Isaiah 43:2)

We declare the only fires to burn in Australia will be the fire of the Holy Spirit to bring revival to this nation. We declare your tongues of fire fall upon your people and give us courage to take Your word to a generation that needs good news. We decree a sound will come from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind to stir up our nation to worship God. We decree the refreshing rain of the Holy Spirit to fall all over Australia. (Acts 2:2-4)

We declare that God is a God of restoration and His plan includes the earth and all its creatures. We decree emotional and physical healing to all those affected by the fires and drought. We decree restoration and new growth to all fire-damaged and drought-ravaged areas and healing of the land. We declare “the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.” (Ro 8:20-21) We acknowledge God’s covenant is with man and all living creatures not to destroy them by flood and the rainbow is the sign of this covenant. (Gen 9:8-17)

#### Continued Prayer

Of course, we need to continue to pray protection and strength for the firefighters, comfort and restoration for the fire victims, wisdom for Prime Minister Scott Morrison and those at all levels of decision-making at federal, state and local level including the church and non-government agencies. We need to pray that blame shifting will not occur and for favour for Scott Morrison.

In conclusion, I will add the contribution Norman and I made to the prayer and fasting for rain in Oct 2019 led by Ps Warwick Marsh and others of the Canberra Declaration and National Day of Prayer and Fasting. I add this because I believe we are seeing with these bushfires and drought a shaking in our nation so that we put our attention to eternity and things of God. It is an opportunity to reorder our priorities. Haggai 2:6-9

6 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the Lord Almighty. 8 ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the Lord Almighty. 9 ‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place, I will grant peace,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”

## **Prayer & Fasting for RAIN, October 2019, Reflection REPENTENCE and RENEWAL for Australia by Ps Norman & Barbara Miller**

### Scripture

Haggai 1: 8-11 – “Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured,” says the Lord. “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home; I blew away. Why?” declares the Lord Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands.”

### Reflection

The Lord is saying here to the people of Judah that work on rebuilding the temple after they came back from captivity in Babylon to their home Jerusalem had halted because they were too busy building their own luxurious homes. This was a rebuke. Also, there had been opposition to the rebuilding from their enemies and they had let this deter them. We need to stand firm in the face of anti-Christian forces that have been gathering momentum in our nation. Because the people didn't put the Lord's house first, they were experiencing drought which affected their crops and livestock. The Lord had also caused them to have holes in their pockets so they had no money when they needed it. We need to get our priorities right. As the gospel says, put God's kingdom first and all these things will be added to us.

The Lord describes Himself in Haggai as the Lord of Heaven's Armies and says He will shake the heavens and earth, the sea and the dry land. He will shake all nations and fill this house with His glory. He is shaking Australia with this drought so we would turn to Him and this month of prayer and fasting shows that it's working. But we need to do more than pray. We need to build the Lord's house. As we complete the foundation of the Lord's house, He will start to bless us again. We will notice a shift in the heavenlies over our nation.

### Prayer

Lord we repent and humbly pray for forgiveness that we have not put You first. We repent and ask forgiveness that we have not put building your house first which includes building up your people who are the living temple You dwell in. We ask that You would help us not to be selfish and self-centred. We want to honour You Lord and we want You to take pleasure in our houses of worship and our hearts of worship. We acknowledge that You are the Lord of the universe; that You are the one that provides the rain to water our earth so crops, livestock and ourselves can flourish. We ask that in Your mercy You would send the rain. We pray for physical rain and the spiritual rain of revival to flow through our nation.

We thank You Lord for past revivals and we pray that the latter rain would be even greater than the former rain, that You would bless the work of our hands, especially the farmers on the land, and give us peace. We thank you for renewal of our land and renewal of our faith.