



"Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are."

—Arthur Golden

15-Aug-03

## Power

*If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it? ([Amos 3:6](#))*

America blames Canada. Canada blames America. And in the midst of the finger-pointing, a spokesman for Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said the cause was a lightning strike—but the weather record for the region does not show any storms. There is a reason insurance companies call these events "acts of [God](#)." In this summer of [sin](#), when we have proudly defied the fundamental Power of the creation, it is ironic that a significant portion of this continent finds itself without any power of its own.

Weather aside, we have not been doing so hot in the last few months. Canada legalized homosexual "marriage." Incredibly, the U.S. Supreme Court somehow found a "right to sodomy" in the Constitution, and in proclaiming that an individual's "right to privacy" trumps natural law, it has strengthened the position of all manner of immorality. This nation marked the 30th anniversary of legalized infanticide with a weak political whimper. A partial-birth abortion ban was ratified in Congress, only to be stalled by the

Democrats in the final proceedings. News comes from Boston that 250 Catholic clergy and church workers sexually abused over 1,000 people during the course of 60 years. A high school for homosexuals and those "confused" is opening in, of course, New York City. *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* have become mouthpieces for the homosexual movement, and they now announce Canadian homosexual unions as "marriages." Episcopalian Canon Gene Robinson left his wife and daughters 13 years ago to shack up with his male "lover," all because "God wants gay priests in the Church of England"—and his god has made it so. This is just scratching the surface.

A few weeks back, this column posed the question, "What Will It Take?" Is the loss of power to 50+ million people significant? Can we relegate this record-breaking event to just time and chance, or is Somebody in the process of getting our attention? The [book of Amos](#), from which the above verse was taken, gives God's warning to His people about their impending destruction and captivity if they do not [repent](#). In His mercy, God always warns His people of coming calamity, either through His prophets ([Amos 3:7](#)) or through escalating disasters that lead to His ultimate judgment. Through Amos, God is warning our nations today that similar, devastating calamities lay just ahead, but escape from them is still possible.

During Amos' time, like today, God's people were very busy making money, being entertained, accumulating things, and practicing their religion. But God was also very busy—sending famines, droughts, blights, locusts, epidemics, warfare, and possibly earthquakes in judgment for their unrighteousness ([Amos 4:6-11](#)). He hoped that they would heed these "minor" warnings before He sent in a foreign nation to plunder and take captive ([Isaiah 10:5](#)). Rain fell on one part of the country and not on another. When it rained, it rained too much, causing floods. In other places just enough rain fell to deceive the people into a false hope—that it was not so bad after all.

It never seems to get quite bad enough to send the nation into a real tailspin, though. Even September 11, with major damage to life and infrastructure, did not really cripple us. We did not take that warning for what it was, but instead sat around "blamestorming" and calling for inquiries and investigations. Is there any chance at all that the Northeast blackout will

register in the minds of the masses that our stability is an illusion? If ancient Israel's history is a guide, we will not sit up and take notice until it is too late.

We have become so far removed from God that we lack the eyes to see and the ears to hear the warnings He sends. Educated in a system that fundamentally denies God, we lack understanding. We interpret God's warnings as natural events—just nature running her course, doing her thing. Rather than heed the warning and repent, we turn to other gods—science and technology—to rescue us.

At this point, the Northeast blackout has been little more than an inconvenience. Sure, money was lost, and there were reports of at least one heat-related death. An estimated 50+ million people have just had their lives simultaneously disrupted, but how many are wondering what sort of seed was sown in order to reap this strange fruit? And what will the next crop bring? As the leaders of America and Canada duke it out to assign blame for the loss of power, they—and we—should carefully consider the other Power:

"I form the light **and create darkness**, I make [peace](#) and create **calamity**; I, the LORD, do all these things." ([Isaiah 45:7](#))

- David C. Grabbe

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Don't Take God for Granted](#)

by John O. Reid

Human nature has the dangerous trait of allowing familiarity or complacency to lure people into carelessly taking something for granted. It is particularly dangerous to take God and His purpose for us for granted. If we see God clearly, we will not. Contributing factors in not clearly seeing His purpose include 1) sloppy prayer and Bible study (I Timothy 4:14-16), 2) becoming entangled in the world's cares (Matthew 13:22), and 3) refusal to change or overcome. With a contrite heart, we need to love God zealously (Deuteronomy 6:5), never taking our eyes off the great purpose He has for us.

## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[The Sovereignty of God: Introduction](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

God's sovereignty is one of the most important issues a Christian must consider. Is God supreme in all things? Have we acknowledged that He has total authority over us in particular?

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