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Echoes of Grace

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# The Great Boston Molasses Flood



It was a warm, sunny day on January 15, 1919, and the residents of North End, Boston, were going about their daily business. They were enjoying the 41-degree weather after a cold snap. At about 12:30 in the afternoon, they were startled to hear a long, low rumble as the ground

shook, then a *rat-tat-tat-tat* sound, like a machine gun going off, then—**KABOOM!**

A giant steel tank, 50 feet high and 90 feet in diameter, suddenly collapsed, unleashing a wave of molasses 25 feet high at its highest point and 160 feet wide upon the surrounding area. Within seconds, wooden buildings were crushed, many homes were swept off their foundations, and many people were hurled into the air or swept under a wave of molasses. Horses and people slipped and fell as the wave of molasses, traveling at a surprising 35 miles an hour, dragged every-



A brick firehouse  
was swept off its  
foundation...

thing  
and everyone along  
with it. A brick firehouse was swept  
off its foundation, trapping the three  
firefighters inside, causing them to fight to keep their  
heads above a sea of molasses. Rescuers had to wade  
through waist-high molasses in an effort to haul  
people and animals from the sticky goo. In the end,  
21 people lost their lives and 150 more were injured.

## Being Prepared

The people of Boston were not prepared for such a disaster, but the Bible, God's Word, warns us to **"flee from the wrath to come"** (Luke 3:7). Because God loves us, He gives us fair and certain warning. **"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"** (2 Peter 3:9). He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die on Calvary's cross for our sins. He wants us to confess that we are sinners and to believe on Jesus' finished work on the cross. Then we can be certain that we will not perish, but have eternal life with Him. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16).



## What Went Wrong?

But what was the cause of the tank's collapse? The company that built the tank blamed it on sabotage, probably the work of anarchists, who were known to be active at the time. The residents disagreed, saying that it was the fault of the company that built the tank. The tank leaked so badly that local residents collected molasses for home use. The company had hired workers to paint the tank brown to hide the leaks. Workmen and residents reported that when the tank was filled with molasses, rumbling and groaning noises could be heard.

After six years of looking at the evidence from both sides, an appointed "auditor" determined that the company that built the tank was to blame. It had been built in such a rush that it had not been properly tested—that is, filled with water to check for leaks. The man in charge of construction could not read the plans and did not even ask for engineering advice. The steel used was too thin, and there were not enough rivets to hold the steel plates in

place. With the temperature going from 2 degrees to 41 degrees and the tank filled with 2.3 million gallons of molasses, weighing an estimated 26 million pounds, the tank could not withstand the pressure. This caused the rivets to pop from the tank, shooting through the air like missiles. Next to go were the steel plates, which allowed the wave of molasses to come crashing down on the neighborhood.

The company had to pay damages to the city of Boston, to the families of those killed and to the Boston Elevated Railway Company. The tank was never rebuilt. After 97 years, the only reminder of that tragic day is a small plaque at the entrance of what is now a park.

## Held Accountable

Just as the company was held accountable for their actions, so we must all give an account to God in a coming day. Those who know the Lord as Saviour will be rewarded for what was done for Him. **“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”** (Romans 14:12). Those who do *not* know the Lord as their Saviour will be judged according to their sins. **“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ... and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works”** (Revelation 20:12). Are you prepared to meet Him as your Lord and Saviour?

The Boston Molasses Flood isn't the only disaster with lessons worth learning. You'll get another important point to ponder in *Tornado Touchdown!* ▶



# Tornado Touchdown!

Everyone knew there were storms in the area, but there was no warning of a tornado. Though there had been some recent tornadoes in other states, only thunderstorms and rain were predicted. The people in Graves County, western Kentucky, went about their business as usual that Tuesday afternoon, May 10, 2016. Suddenly, in the middle of the thunderstorms and torrential rain a tornado about 400 yards wide touched down! With about 2,400 people in its path and over 1,000 of them students and school personnel, the potential for



disaster was tremendous. It was later determined that the tornado was on the low end of the EF3 scale with peak winds of 140 mph. Damages to homes, buildings and properties were estimated to be \$3 million.

### Gratefulness

Many people had narrow escapes. Graves County Sheriff Dewayne Redmon stated in an interview afterwards, "There was a Person very high and mighty here yesterday that saved a bunch of lives." Who could he have been referring to? He went on to say, "God was with us yesterday, and He shifted that tornado right before it got to that school." This was the Central Elementary School with so many children and school personnel. Sheriff Redmon was absolutely right to give God the credit for sparing so many lives, for it is God who controls the weather. God's Word, the Bible tells us, "**Fire, and hail; snow, and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling His word**" (Psalm 148:8), and "**He causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the winds out of His treasuries**" (Psalm 135:7). Sheriff Redmon further encouraged a spirit of thankfulness to God by saying, "You go to church this Sunday, and if you got kids that went to those elementary schools, you better get on your knees and pray, because God saved your kids."



The Mayor of Mayfield, Teresa Cantrell, expressed the same sentiments. After the tornado narrowly missed two schools and the hospital, she said, “Anybody in the city of Mayfield needs to get on their knees and just thank God that we’re safe, because it was headed right towards Graves County Middle School, Central Elementary, and the Hospital. But by the grace of God it didn’t take a turn and hit those places,” Cantrell said.

### **Serious Damage**

One man, Marty Winfrey, had a very narrow escape. In the middle of the storm, he left his home to check on his neighbors. After beating on their door and getting them out, Winfrey said, “They leaned down by their truck and the tornado took their trailer and left them sitting in the yard, unhurt, and I ran down the road ... looking for somewhere to hide and ... it was catching me. So, I just found a tree and bear-hugged it. And a whole 20 to 30 seconds later and it’s all gone.” “All gone” referred to Winfrey’s home, which was turned into a pile of rubble and deposited into his neighbor’s front yard.

Other businesses suffered heavy damages, but no lives were lost. An employee of Bennett Motors acknowledged that they were lucky to be alive. When they saw the tornado coming, they went into the office building and took shelter in a broom closet. They could hear the tornado coming, and they heard stuff hitting the building. When the twister passed, three buildings on the lot were leveled, and all 40 vehicles on the lot sustained damage. Neither the office build-

ing nor anyone inside it were injured. Another business to suffer heavy damage was Youngblood's RV. The owner, Roger Youngblood, gives this account: "It went right beside the building. There was no damage to the building that we could find, but it destroyed several campers, flipped them upside down and tore them up. Luckily, no one was hurt. Just a scary experience, that's all I can say."

## Seeing God at Work

A local reporter interviewed a couple who gave this graphic description of their experience. They had come into town on an errand and were in the path of the tornado. She asked them, "When you look down at yourselves, and you see that you're OK, what goes through your minds?" Mary Powell said, "That God had an angel over us, and that's what I seen, God is good, because that van, it just tipped it a little bit, and that tornado just went up over our van, because it came straight to us, when I said, Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! That tornado went up over [this] van." The reporter responded with, "You guys are very lucky!"

These people experienced just how powerful and destructive a tornado can be. God was merciful to the citizens of Mayfield and Graves County. In the end, only ten people were treated for minor injuries. And yet, some people attributed their lives being spared to "luck." The Bible says, "**God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not**" (Job 33:14). The Sheriff and Mayor saw and acknowledged God's protecting hand over the people of Mayfield and Graves County, and yet others did not realize God's

merciful hand in saving their lives at all. God speaks to man in many ways, but a tornado should be especially hard to miss. God continues to speak to man because **“the Lord... is long-suf-**



**fering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9).

God cannot allow sin into His presence, so He has made a way of salvation for lost man. He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die on Calvary’s cross and shed His precious blood for our sins. He wants us each as individuals to come to Him, repenting of our sins, and putting our trust in the finished work on Calvary’s cross. **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out”** (Acts 3:19). Please put your trust in Him while there is yet time—do not delay!

No one in Mayfield was seriously injured, but that wasn’t the case for Jerry Mora. He had no pulse and wasn’t breathing. Find out why in *Attack by Bees!* ◀



# Attack by Bees!

It was springtime in Buckeye, Arizona, and Jerry Mora, a 72-year-old man, was busy working in his backyard. Suddenly, his wife Anna heard screams and yells for help—she quickly ran out to the backyard to find her husband lying face down in the grass, being attacked by a furious swarm of bees! Thinking quickly, she covered him with a white sheet and called 911, disregarding the bee stings that she herself received from the angry swarm. Fourteen minutes later, when firefighters and paramedics arrived, they had to spray foam to move the swarm of bees. By the time they got to him, Jerry had no pulse and had stopped breathing.

On the way to the hospital, he suffered a heart attack, but because of aggressive CPR, the paramedics were able to revive him. When he arrived at the hospital, doctors removed between 90 and 120 stingers from his head. He was expected to make a full recovery, which was remarkable, considering that he was allergic to bee stings. His faithful wife, Anna, was not allergic to bees and made a full recovery, as well. A tearful Anna said, “The pain of nearly losing my husband was far worse than being stung.” She

was grateful to firefighters and paramedics and believed that her husband still had a life to live. "That's what's really keeping me going," Anna said.

**By the time they got to him, Jerry had no pulse and had stopped breathing.**

Jerry Mora was just going about his daily business when sudden, unexpected disaster struck, nearly causing him to lose his life. Were it not for the quick action of others, he most certainly would have been in eternity. Scripture says, "**There is but a step between me and death**" (1 Samuel 20:3). **Are you prepared to enter into eternity and face a holy God who cannot allow sin in His presence?** God graciously gave Jerry and Anna Mora over 70 years to prepare for eternity, but there is no guarantee that you will have that long. We are told in God's Word: "**Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth**" (Proverbs 27:1). Most of us will not have to face a tornado or a flood of molasses, or even an angry swarm of bees; however, there are any number of unexpected ways our life can be taken from us; that is why God faithfully warns us in His Word, "**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation**" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Right now, while you are able, come to the Lord Jesus in repentance, confessing your sins and trusting in the finished work on Calvary's cross. "**The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin**" (1 John 1:7). Do not delay, but accept God's gracious offer of salvation today while there is yet time! ◀

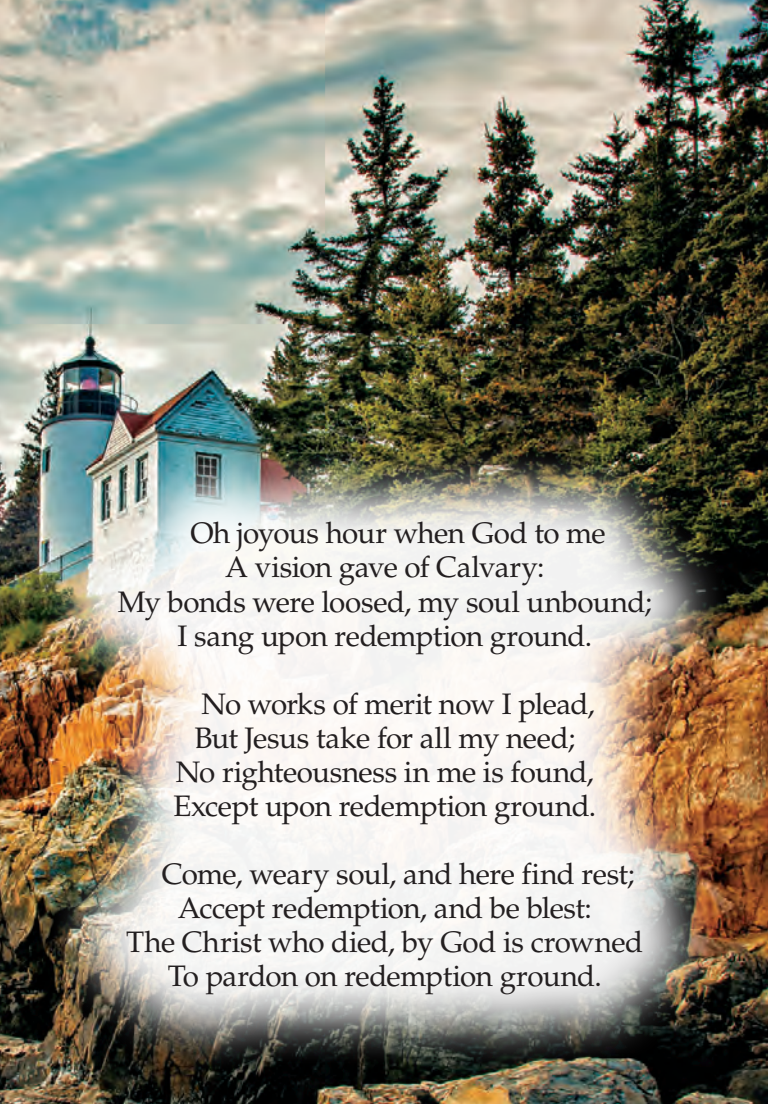
# REDEMPTION GROUND

Come, sing, my soul, and praise the Lord,  
Who hath redeemed thee by His blood;  
But now my songs to God abound;  
I'm standing on redemption ground.

## *Chorus:*

*Redemption ground, the ground of peace;  
Redemption ground, oh wondrous grace;  
Here let our praise to God abound,  
Who saves us on redemption ground.*

Once from my God I wandered far,  
And with His holy will made war;  
But now my songs to God abound;  
I'm standing on redemption ground.



Oh joyous hour when God to me  
A vision gave of Calvary:  
My bonds were loosed, my soul unbound;  
I sang upon redemption ground.

No works of merit now I plead,  
But Jesus take for all my need;  
No righteousness in me is found,  
Except upon redemption ground.

Come, weary soul, and here find rest;  
Accept redemption, and be blest:  
The Christ who died, by God is crowned  
To pardon on redemption ground.

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