

unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.” Satan is the accuser of the brethren but he must get permission from God to do anything (**Job 1:9-12 and Revelation 12:10**). Many people want to blame Satan for every evil, but ultimately, God is in control of all events. God actually brought these calamities into Job’s life by Satan in order to shut his mouth (**Job 1:8-11; 2:1-6**). God proved to the devil that he had a servant on this earth that loved him and would never deny him at any cost. Job was specially chosen by God, for He knew what response he would give. In **Job 38-39**, God speaks directly to Job as he tries to understand all these things and the final reality is that God is saying to him, “I am God and you are not.” According to **Job 42:1-6**, Job admits this truth and blesses his Lord. God has a purpose in all things (good or bad). The Psalmist (David) knew this truth and speaks of it in **Psalm 119:67, 71-72**.

CONCLUSION

For the Christian, God uses calamities to conform us to the image of His Son (**Romans 8:29**). It can bring revival, break us loose from our possessions, and remind us that we are pilgrims and strangers in this world (**I Peter 2:9-11**). Calamities also give Christians an opportunity to show benevolence to others (**Acts 10:38; 11:27**). In some cases, it brings together people who have been divided. Trust the Lord, He knows what He is doing.

For the lost, calamities ought to be a wake-up call to repentance. These events are only a foretaste of final judgment. There are some who will not repent even while God is judging (**Revelation 9:20-21; 16:10-11**). Many try to flee from God’s wrath to no avail (**Revelation 6:12-17**).

No one shall escape unless they turn to God in repentance and faith (**Acts 20:21**). Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Confess Him as Savior or spend eternity in hell.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

II Corinthians 1: 3-4



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*“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*
Acts 16:31

The RICHIES

OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert W. Reed

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Natural Disasters

“Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things.”

Jeremiah 14:22

+ Acts of God +

Natural disasters are common around the world and at one time or another affect most everyone. Throughout the history of mankind, millions of people have suffered from the destruction and devastation of these calamities. The question arises, “Does God allow or cause natural disasters?” Some people refer to the fact that Satan is responsible or that nature is just out of control. The answer is clear. God is sovereign and rules over all, even when there are disasters and sufferings. The Biblical answer is Father God and not mother nature. Mother nature is just a natural way of denying God. Even insurance companies refer to a major natural disaster as an act of God. All weather is acts of God whether productive or destructive. The same God who calms the storm also disturbs the storm (**Psalm 107:23-31**).

“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.”

I Chronicles 29:11

As we consider the subject of natural disasters, we must be very careful not to pass judgment on those who have experienced such calamities. This is the warning our Lord gave in **Luke 13:1-5**. There were two events that occupied public knowledge in that day. Some Galileans were killed by Pilate while worshipping and eighteen people were killed when a tower fell on them. Jesus was asked why they were punished and He responded to the fact that they were not extra ordinary sinners. According to verses **3 and 5**, the question to be asked is not why were they punished, but why are we not punished, for no one is innocent, all are sinners.

When tragedy happens, it is a time for self-examination. We are called upon to repent and seek the Lord. The Lord sends the sun and rain on both the just and the unjust (**Matthew 5:45**) but He also allows calamities to come upon both as well. Public tragedy is a time for soul searching and not finger pointing.

THE REALITY OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Many Scriptures bear out the fact that God rules over all things (**I Chronicles 29:11**). The Lord controls every aspect of weather. There are well over one-thousand references to weather terminology in the Bible. God controls the weather, whether productive or destructive. It is perfectly correct to pray about the weather, but it is a sin to complain about it. Even Jesus prayed about the cup He was to drink of, but He also prayed that God's will be done (**Matthew 26:36-39**). We have every right to pray about calamities in our life, but we must remember that they are of the hand of God.

The Lord Jesus speaks of weather in a good sense (**Mathew 5:45**). Good weather is the norm and bad weather is the exception. Most weather is favorable, that is, we experience far more good weather at the hand of God than evil. It is amazing that we remember the bad and forget the good, it should be the opposite. Please remember that we live in a well-ordered world. The earth is placed perfectly in the universe to create and sustain life. The tide (high and low) is regular, twice a day, and the sun and moon are always on time fulfilling their function.

A quote from another author: "Weather is used to express God's grace (**Matthew 5:45**), and other times to express God's judgment (**Amos 4:7-9**), mostly to express God's grace upon all, saved and lost."

God commands every detail in reference to weather, whether it be good or bad (**Psalms 135:5-7; 147:7-8; 16-18; 148:5-8; Job 37:3-13**). He controls the sea, land, heavens, etc. There are no random acts of chance in nature. According to **Isaiah 45:5-7**, God creates evil (calamities). God claims responsibility, for nothing happens apart from His eternal purpose and decree. All nature is at the disposal of its Creator. The Lord has His way in nature according to **Nehemiah 1:3-8** and nothing happens apart from the direct hand of God, whether productive or destructive (**Amos 3:6; 4:7-9**). Every plague in Egypt was a judgment from God and so is every seal, trumpet, and vial upon man, beast, sea and heavens in the book of the Revelation. This means that every tragedy or calamity is by purpose (hurricane, tsunamis, volcanoes, earth quakes, hail, lightning, disease, war, disaster, flood, famine, fire, etc.).

THE REBELLION OF GOD'S SUBJECTS

Our world is under the curse of God because of man's sin and rebellion. We live in a fallen world (sin, death, ruin, sickness, pain, suffering, etc.) According to **Romans 5:12**, sin and death have turned our paradise into a graveyard. Death grips all, some in the womb, some in their youth and others in old age. The wages of sin is death (**Romans 6:23**). The original creation was called very good in **Genesis 1:31**, but this present world is not what it once was (**Genesis 3:16-19**). One glorious day, all creation will be delivered from this curse, **Revelation 21:4**, "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*"

The Bible, in **Romans 8:18-24**, shows that men and earth stand together in ruin, but will be redeemed together at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. The end of all history will be judgment (**II Peter 3:3-14**). As that day approaches there will be intensity in calamities. These tragedies, such as wars, famines, pestilence, etc., are only the beginning of sorrows leading up to the final judgment (**Matthew 24:6-8**). God is going to shape this world in a future time (**Luke 21:24-28; Hebrews 12:25-29, I Thessalonians 5:1-3**). Final universal judgment as well as temporal judgments are of the hand of the almighty God because of sin and rebellion.

THE RESPONSE OF GOD'S SERVANTS

There are usually two responses in reference to natural disasters. We will either curse God or bless God. The problem today is that most Christians live like deists. They speak most of God's love and mercy, but deny His wrath and judgment. Our thoughts of God are too human (**Isaiah 55:8-11**). Our finite minds have trouble understanding an infinite God because we have allowed the world to form our minds instead of Holy Scripture. John Calvin said, "Every man's mind is a little idol factory." Darwinism took God out of creation and has also taken Him out of natural disasters. We must learn to think Biblically in order to respond to calamities in the proper way.

In **Job 1:20-22**, Job responded to tragedy as a genuine believer, "*Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*" Most have never experienced the devastation that Job went through and he responded as one of the elect. The first two chapters in the book of Job describe in detail his losses. As Job blessed God, his wife responded differently (**Job 2:7-10**). Even Job's friends accused Job of having sin in his life. These so-called friends are called "miserable comforters" in **Job 16:2**. Job loved the Lord and placed his trust totally in him, **Job 13:12**, "*Your remembrances are like*