

Is God Responsible for Natural Disasters and Other Tragedies like 9/11?

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When disasters of any kind strike, questions such as “if there is a God why did He allow this to happen?” are sometimes asked. Unfortunately, some who claim to be religious have accused God of causing a disasters because they judge those who were impacted as deserving of such things because of their alleged sins..

So the question before us is, “does scripture tell us whether God is responsible for tragedies?”

First, we need to examine from scripture God’s perspective on the subject of disasters. In Luke 13:1-5, the son of God made it plain that when people suffer it is not because they have sinned, or are worse sinners than anyone else.

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. ⁴Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:1-5; cf. Mt. 5:45; 1Pe. 3:18; Ro. 2:11; Ac. 10:34; Jas. 2:9).

In Romans 3:23, Paul states that everyone has sinned. If we deny this truth we are deceived (1 Jn.1:10). As a result of the fact that everyone has committed sin, we are all going to die at some point in time (Rom. 6:23; 1Cor. 15:22). Therefore, Christ’s statement in Luke 13:1-5 has a much deeper meaning because he said that “unless we repent we will likewise perish.” As we have just seen from the previous scriptures, we are all going to perish at some point, so what Christ is speaking about must have to do with missing out on the opposite of perishing, which is everlasting life. This makes sense when we review other scriptures related to this subject. In John 8:51, Christ said, “Most assuredly, I say to you (his disciples), if anyone keeps my word he shall never see death.” As all Christ’s disciples died, he was again referring to the reward of everlasting life when he made this statement. This is confirmed by reading John 10:28, when Christ said, “And I give them everlasting life, and they shall never perish....” (cf. 2Pe.3:9).

Consequently, the opposite of perishing (and remaining dead forever) is everlasting life, even though our temporary physical existence will come to an end at some point. We will wait for a future resurrection at Christ’s return (1Cor.15:12-58; 1Thes. 4:13-18).

Christ wanted to get our focus away from how or when we are going to die, and on to a much greater priority, which is repentance from sin and in turn obeying God (Ac. 5:32). This way, regardless of how or when we die, our relatives and family can know that we

will wait in death for the first resurrection and everlasting life.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then [I saw] the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received [his] mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

Those who do not repent and live in newness of life (Rom. 6:4; 7:6), will wait in death for the second resurrection and judgment.

The Queen of the South will be raised in the judgment with this generation and will pass judgment on it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and behold, something greater than Solomon is here (Mt. 12:42, RNT).

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Rev. 20:5-6).

God the Father expressed how He feels about the death of even one person.

For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!" (Ez. 18:32).

The son of God, Jesus Christ, being of the same mind as his God and Father, expressed the same feelings about one's death.

Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Jesus wept (Jn. 11:32-35).

Because of mankind's condition, God the Father sent Christ (Jn. 5:37, 17:3), who was willing to give up his position at his Father's right hand, and pre-existence as a spirit being, to become flesh and blood for the purpose of paying the death penalty for us.

Think this in you, ⁶which is also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God something to be seized, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, coming to exist in the likeness of man, ⁸he humbled himself, becoming obedient until death, even death on a stake (Phi. 2:5-8, RNT).

And you, being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made alive together with him, having forgiven us all trespasses, ¹⁴having wiped out the record of debt against us in the ordinances, which was hostile to us, and he took it away from the midst, having nailed it to the stake (Col. 2:13-14, RNT).

However, Christ did not suffer and sacrifice his life so that we could continue breaking his Father's laws and commandments,

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? (Rom. 6:1)

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! (Rom. 6:15).

Now that Christ has offered himself as a sacrifice, the spirit being who is called the Adversary (1Ti. 5:14; 1Pe.5:8), and ruler of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2), is in the process of being judged (Jn.16:11) and will soon be removed from causing the problems that are too often blamed on the One True God (Rev.20:1-2).

So why doesn't God step in and prevent every disaster from occurring? The answer is that mankind as a whole rejects His leadership and direction in their lives; even those who claim to know him.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of my Father, the one in the heavens. ²²Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many powerful works?' ²³And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you, depart from me you workers of lawlessness' (Mt. 7:21-23, RNT; cf. Mt. 25:7-12).

Instead, from the time of Adam until now, most people have chosen to follow a way of living that is prescribed by the Adversary, even though God has warned time and again through His prophets, His son Jesus Christ, and His disciples that the Adversary's ways lead to death.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren (Jas. 1:14-16).

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Pr. 14:12).

In Genesis 2:17, Adam was instructed in the right way to live, but he and his wife rejected it (Gen. 3:1-19). Ancient Israel was meant to follow the One True God and reap the blessings for doing so (Deut. 7:12-26; 26:16-19; 28:1-14), but they too rejected Him (Ex. 32:1-8; 1Sam. 8:1-22). When God, the Father, sent his son Jesus Christ, Christ was rejected (Isa. 53:3; Mt. 21:42; Lk. 17:25; 1Pe. 2:7). Even when Christ returns the second time to bring true peace to this earth, he will be rejected by the majority of mankind (Rev. 19:11-21).

In essence, Christ will have to take over all rule and authority on earth in order to prevent any future disasters or tragedies from taking place. This scenario is described in many Bible prophecies including the following:

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of [His] government and peace [There will be] no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6-7).

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. ³His delight [is] in the fear of the LORD, and he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes, nor decide by the hearing of his ears; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, And with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt of his loins, and faithfulness the belt of his waist. ⁶"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. ⁹They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:1-9; cf. Isa. 65:25)

4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

Until this occurs, mankind will continue to suffer as a result of wrong decisions that have cut us off from the source of truth, peace, and happiness.

Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, ²⁵because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke, ²⁶I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, ²⁷When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. ²⁸"Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. ²⁹Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, ³⁰They would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. ³¹Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. ³²For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them; ³³but whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil." (Pr. 1:24-33; cf. Isa. 59:1-15)

In Revelation 12:9, we see that Satan deceives the whole earth, and this is why mankind is in darkness when it comes to understanding the truth of God and His plan of salvation (Jn. 3:19-21; 12:35; Eph. 5:8; 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1Pe. 2:9). Until that darkness is completely removed (1Jn. 2:8), disasters and tragedies will continue.

I returned and saw under the sun that-- the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all (Ecc. 9:11).

Those who are called to repentance (Rom. 2:4) are allowed protection in order to serve God until their time on earth is fulfilled.

Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, ¹⁰no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; ¹¹for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. ¹²In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. ¹³You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot (Ps. 91:9-13).

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints (Ps. 116:15).

In conclusion, tragedies and disasters will cease when mankind turns to the One True God, and seeks Him with all their being.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD! ²Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart! ³They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways. ⁴You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently. ⁵Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes! ⁶Then I would not be ashamed, when I look into all Your commandments. ⁷I will praise You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments. ⁸I will keep Your statutes; oh, do not forsake me utterly! (Ps. 119:1-8; cf. Deut. 4:29-31; 2Chr. 15:1-4; Ezz. 8:22-23)

Given mankind's nature (Rom. 7:14-25) and history, this return to God will probably not occur until Christ's second coming.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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