

Natural Disasters and Their Possible Causes

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Natural disasters occur from time to time and include floods, famines, hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanoes, mudslides, plagues of insects, plagues of disease, and droughts. In some of these events many people lose their lives.

In Christchurch New Zealand, there was a 7.1 magnitude earthquake at 4.35am, on Saturday, the 4.9.2010, and this was followed by another 6.3 magnitude earthquake at 12.51pm, on Tuesday, the 22.2.2011. In the first quake no one was killed directly by the event, but in the second quake between 150 and 200 persons lost their lives. Some buildings were badly damaged by the first earthquake and many suffered moderate damage, but many buildings were severely damaged by the second quake and some buildings totally collapsed.

In northern Japan there was a magnitude 9.0 earthquake on the 11.3.2011, followed by a huge tsunami, which totally devastated whole cities. The death toll is many tens of thousands.

There are varying views as to the cause, or causes, of these disasters.
Here are some thoughts to consider.

*Some people see a disaster as **a natural phenomenon** caused by natural influences. They see earthquakes as being caused by movement on a fault line in the earth's crust, for example, and for no other reason.

*After the Christchurch earthquake, some people said that the event was **a judgment of God** upon Christchurch and New Zealand, because of people in the nation breaking His laws, as given in the ten commandments and the commands of Jesus. *Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 22:34-40.*

Unless we have a clear, confirmed revelation from God Himself that this is so, we just do not know.

In the New Testament there are references to God acting in judgment.

There is the situation of **Ananias and Sapphira** in *Acts 5:1-11*.

When **Herod** failed to give the glory to God, the angel of the Lord struck him down. *Acts 12:20-23*.

Rulers have a responsibility to give glory to God. It is written in *Romans 13:1 – 7*, that rulers are the ministers of God to do us good, punish evildoers, and use the tax money rightly, and as such they are to honour God.

Jesus pronounced acts of judgment against **certain persons in the Church of Thyatira**. *Revelation 2:20-23*.

And He did the same concerning **some in the Church of the Laodiceans**. *Revelation 3:16*.

These are judgments against individuals and as such are not "natural disasters".

*In *Romans 8:19-22*, it says that the **natural creation is in a fallen state** of groaning and travailing in pain. This state of creation came about as a result of the "Fall", recorded in *Genesis 3:1-24*.

God pronounced a curse on the ground because of the sinful rebellion of Adam. *Genesis 3:17*.

Because of the groaning and travailing of the earth it is easy to understand where earthquakes come from.

Some people regard "natural disasters" as the result of this groaning and travailing in the earth.

* *Galatians 6:7* says, "**Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows that will he also reap**". In NZ, the abortion rate of unborn children each year, is currently too high. As a nation we are destroying many innocent lives before they are born. This Biblical truth of *Galatians 6:7* may be a factor in what is happening in New Zealand. God has decreed *Galatians 6:7*. If the nation of New Zealand is reaping death and destruction through the earthquakes, because of our killing of unborn babies, then we have brought it on our selves.

* We need to consider the truth of **the chastening of God**.

As a good Father of His children, God **chastens** us when we go astray from Him. God loves us, *1John 3:1, Isaiah 43:4, Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16*, and so when he sees us wandering away from His path, he brings unpleasant circumstances into our situation, to catch our attention and reveal to us where we have gone astray. This leads us to repent and turn back to the Lord. Repentance is the objective of chastening. *Revelation 3:19*. This **chastening** is mentioned in *Proverbs 3:11,12, Hebrews 12:5-11, Revelation 3:19, Revelation 2:5, 1Corinthians 11:27-34*.

In the last reference, *1 Corinthians 11:27-34*, the chastening of the Lord is upon those who participate in the Communion service but fail to discern the Lord's Body. V29.

The chastening in this situation is mentioned in verse 30 as weakness, sickness, and death.

My understanding of what it means to discern the Lord's Body, is that we are to come to the Lord's Table as servants of one another and not as judges, judging one another. We are to come forgiving and blessing one another and serving one another in love. *Galatians 5:13,14*.

The **chastening** of the Lord in these passages is upon individual people who profess to be Christians, and individual Churches. For this reason the **chastening** of the Lord is probably not in the category of "natural disasters". I have mentioned it because it may be mentioned in a discussion about "natural disasters".

In *Luke 13:4,5*, Jesus mentions the **Tower of Siloam**, in Jerusalem, which fell down onto eighteen men and killed them all. This event appears to be in the category of a **natural disaster**. Jesus asks the question of those who were present, "Do you suppose that those eighteen were sinners more than all men who dwelt in Jerusalem?" Jesus answers His own question by saying, "No!" I think that Jesus was saying this disaster did not happen to these men because they were worse sinners than everyone else. Or, in other words, God was not punishing these men because they were the worse sinners in Jerusalem. I think that Jesus was saying that this event was not a judgment of God upon these men. Jesus also adds, "I tell you, except you all repent, you shall all likewise perish." Jesus was taking the opportunity to point out, that the fearful judgment of God is upon all people, who do not repent of their sins, and become reconciled to God through faith in the Blood of Jesus, for the full forgiveness of sins.

While we are mentioning the topic of the judgments of God, it is probably good to mention the following.

God does not judge the righteous with the wicked.

Genesis chapters 6 and 7. When God brought judgment upon the earth, and those on the earth, in the days of Noah, He kept Noah and his family safe in the Ark.

Genesis 18:16 – 33, Genesis 19:1 – 24. When God brought judgment upon Sodom for its wickedness, he brought Lot and family out of the city before it was destroyed.

Exodus 8:22-24, 9:6, 26, 10:23, 12:13. When God brought judgment upon Egypt, because of their wicked treatment of the Israelites, these judgments did not fall upon the children of Israel.

Luke 17:26-30. Jesus speaks about God's deliverance of Noah and Lot.

Luke 21: 36. Jesus says that those who watch and pray always, will be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. There is a secret place in God. *Psalms 91:1-16, Colossians 3:3*.

1 Thessalonians 5:9. God has not appointed us, (the righteous), to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:10. Jesus said to the believers in the Church of Philadelphia, *Revelation 3:10*, "Because you have kept the Word of My patience, (My command to persevere), I will also keep you from the hour of temptation, (trial), which shall come upon all the world, to try, (test), them that dwell upon the earth.