

Is God Punishing the World with Natural Disasters?

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | September 22, 2017



Over the past several weeks, the news has been dominated by natural disaster after natural disaster—the horrifying Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria; the devastating earthquake in Mexico; the unrelenting fires in the Northwest.

Naturally, people are asking questions—*What is happening?*

Is God using His power to punish people or a whole nation for sin—as some pundits have suggested happened in Houston? Or is something else happening entirely?

The answers you get all depend on a person’s moral development and how they understand God and how His law functions.

The immature Christian sees God functioning no differently than us sinful human beings—making up rules and then inflicting punishment upon us for breaking those rules. This view of God is what leads people to conclude that when natural disasters occur, God is simply acting out His

displeasure for sin.

The mature Christian, however, realizes that God is the Creator—the loving builder of space, time, energy, matter ... and life itself. His laws are the laws upon which reality is constructed to operate—the laws of physics, the laws of health, and, yes, the moral laws upon which healthy living is only possible. Breaking these laws *naturally* damages those who break them.

The greatest of all laws is love for God and others, which is more than compassion, but the principle of giving upon which all life is built to operate. Every breath you breathe, for example, you give away carbon dioxide to the plants ... and the plants give back oxygen to you. The law of love is built right into our existence. If you transgress the law—say, tie a plastic bag over your head in an effort to hoard all your CO₂—you reap the *natural* wages of doing that: death!

If God needed you to die for your sins, He need do nothing. Instead, He's doing everything to heal and to save you! In this view, we see that God is constantly working to restore His creatures back into harmony with His design, not beating them into submission with His displeasure.

After all, love cannot be coerced—it cannot be forced, it cannot be compelled. Love requires that intelligent beings be left free, and if we choose to refuse all His entreaties to allow Him to heal and restore us, God steps back, allowing us the freedom to experience what we have chosen.

The Scripture teaches that the abiding place for God through His Spirit—the “living temple” here on earth—are the hearts and minds of human beings. As billions of humans close their hearts to God's healing, He abides by their choice and slowly withdraws His presence from the earth.

Thus, the powers of evil that God has been *restraining* are slowly released and more and more disasters occur in the world. This is what the Bible describes in Revelation chapter 7—an angel coming from heaven telling the angels who have been given power to harm to hold back the winds of strife. *Notice!* These angels are given power to harm *by letting go* what they are currently restraining.

God's agencies hold back evil, yet when humans reject God and close their hearts to Him, He sadly withdraws His restraining presence and more disasters occur.

Why does God allow this? For several reasons...

First, because He is love—and love really does give freedom; God respects our choice. But second, because so many people are caught up in the business of life that they never consider their eternal destiny. These disasters, which will continue to increase in intensity and rapidity, will cause billions to stop and reexamine their lives, consider eternal realities, and—the most important reason of all—an untold number will accept God's healing Remedy, Jesus Christ, and be eternally saved.

God is not the source of pain, suffering, or disasters; rather, our loving Creator is constantly seeking to heal and restore all who will let Him. Won't you let Him heal you?

For more, please check out my new book, *The God-Shaped Heart: How Correctly Understanding God's Love Transforms Us*.