

Fort Payne church of Christ



The Weekly Moment

A Weekly Motivational Message

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Where Was God During Hurricane Florence?

by [Dave Miller, Ph.D.](#)

On September 14, 2018 Hurricane Florence made landfall just south of Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. Like most hurricanes throughout history, this one left death and destruction in its wake. As shocking and heart-rending as such natural phenomena may seem, many other natural disasters have occurred in human history that exceed Florence, Harvey, Katrina, and even the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in their toll of death and destruction. For example, throughout China's history, extensive flooding has occurred countless times as a result of the mighty 3,000-mile-long Hwang Ho River. Several of the most terrible floods, with their ensuing famines, have been responsible for the deaths of more than a million people at a time. The southern levee of the river failed in Hunan Province in 1887, affecting a 50,000 square mile area.¹ More than two million people died from drowning, starvation, or the epidemics that followed.²



By NASA, NNVL [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

In reality, such events have occurred repetitiously throughout the history of the world, and continue to do so—constantly: hurricanes, cyclones, earthquakes, tornados, floods, tsunamis, droughts, and volcano eruptions. In fact, natural disasters kill one million people around the world each decade, and leave millions more homeless, according to the United Nation's International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.³

This circumstance inevitably elicits the pressing question: "WHY?" "Why would God allow such suffering and loss of life, inflicted on countless numbers of seemingly innocent people?" Regarding Florence, a five-year-old

boy asked: “Daddy, where is God during the hurricane?”⁴ Indeed, the number one argument marshaled by atheists to advocate their disbelief in God is the presence of widespread, seemingly purposeless suffering. They insist that if an infinite Being existed, He would exercise His perfect compassion and His omnipotence to prevent human suffering.⁵ Even for many people who do not embrace formal atheism, the fact that God apparently seems willing to allow misery and suffering to run rampant in the world, elicits a gamut of reactions—from perplexity and puzzlement to anger and resentment.

THE BIBLE HAS THE ANSWERS

But the Bible provides the perfect explanations for such occurrences. Its handling of the subject is logical, sufficient, and definitive. It sets forth the fact that God created the world to be the most appropriate, suitable environment in which humans are enabled to make their own decisions concerning their ultimate destiny (Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). We humans have been provided with the ideal environment in which we may freely accept or reject God’s will for our lives. Natural disasters and nature’s destructive forces are the result of specific conditions that are necessary to God’s providing humanity with this ideal environment.

God is not blameworthy for having created such a world, since He had a morally justifiable reason for having done so. Human existence on Earth was not intended to be permanent. Rather, the Creator intended life on Earth to serve as a temporary interval of time for the development of one’s spirit. Life on Earth is a probationary period in which people are given the opportunity to attend to their spiritual condition as it relates to God’s will for living. Among other purposes, natural disasters provide people with conclusive evidence that life on Earth is **brief** and **uncertain**. God has even harnessed natural calamities for the purpose of punishing wickedness.⁶

Christians understand that no matter how catastrophic, tragic, or disastrous an event may be, it fits into the overall framework of soul-making—preparation for one’s departure from life into eternity. Likewise, the Christian knows that although the great pain and suffering caused by natural disasters may be unpleasant, and may test one’s mettle; nevertheless, such suffering is not intrinsically evil. Nor is it a reflection on the existence of an omnibenevolent God. The only intrinsic evil is violation of God’s will. What is required of all accountable persons is obedience to God’s revealed Word (given in the Bible)—even amid pain, suffering, sickness, disease, death, and, yes, hurricanes.

Think about it.

Here’s hoping you’ll make the “*most of your minutes*” this week.

Hope to see you at Bible Study tonight.

In Christian Love,

Bob Strickland