

Japan: Is it God's Fault?

Introduction:

- A. Questions, Questions, Questions
 - 1. Why Does God allow natural disasters?
 - 2. How could God let this happen?
 - 3. Is God punishing Japan for their greed?
 - 4. Why does a good god let innocent people die?
 - 5. Where is God in times like these?
 - 6. Why?

- B. God and Disaster

One thinks with sorrow of the hundreds of thousands whose lives have been horrendously lost or affected by the great Japanese earthquake and tsunami, which will put a black mark against this year 2011 in the annals, coming so soon after the earthquake that hit Christchurch in New Zealand. The events are almost certainly linked tectonically, reminding us of the vast forces of nature that are normal for the planet itself but inimical to human life, especially when lived dangerously close to the jigsaw cracks of the earth's surface. Someone told me that there were to be special prayers in their local church for the people of Japan. This well-intentioned and fundamentally kindly proceeding nevertheless shows how absurd, in the literal sense of this term, are religious belief and practice ... Indeed, were they praising and supplicating a deity who designed a world that causes such arbitrary and sudden mass killings? An omniscient being would know all the implications of what it does, so it would know it was arranging matters with these awful outcomes. Were they praising the planner of their sufferings for their sufferings, and also begging his help to escape what he had planned? **Richard Dawkins**

- C. It is natural – when disaster strikes at any level – for questions or statements to arise:

- 1. We want to know if God exists, if He is good, and if He is all powerful ...
- 2. ... how could He allow such horrific events to take place against His own creation?
- 3. So many question their view on life, God, existence for living, etc., etc., etc.

- D. In this lesson we'll look at:

- 1. His involvement (or seemingly lack of) in this world.
- 2. Where we fit in the grand scheme of God and this world we live in.

Discussion:

- I. GOD'S INVOLVEMENT: Is He?

- A. Preface to The Facts

- 1. We don't understand all the ways of God. Cp. **Isa. 55:8-9; 1 Cor. 2:11**
- 2. Just because God reveals – both through His word (**Col. 1:15-18**) and nature (**Rom. 1:18**) – doesn't mean we'll have a perfect understanding of Him or His Ways.
- 3. Our fundamental premise: God is good. **Jas. 1:17-18**

- B. The Facts

- 1. God – at times – gets supernaturally involved in nature:
 - a. **As judgment. Gen. 6-8; Num. 16:28-34; Jonah**
 - b. **As intervention. Ex. 14; Josh. 3; Matt. 8:24-26; Jonah**
- 2. Most often, He providentially let's nature take its course. **Ecclesiastes 3**
- 3. Why?

- C. Philosophical Questions About God

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? *Then he is impotent.* Is he able, but not willing? *Then he is malevolent.* Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil? **Philosopher David Bain**

II. UNTIL THE LORD COMES: A Christian's Walk

A. From Suffering to Glory

1. The earth manifests the effects of sin since the beginning. **Gen. 3:17, 10:25; Rom. 8:18-22**
2. Its people also manifest a shadow of God's ultimate grace. **Rom. 8:23-25**
 - a. Kindness shown to strangers. **Matt. 22:39**
 - b. Helps us to prioritize our life's endeavors. **Ecc. 12:13**
 - c. Helps us to be prepared for Jesus' return. **2 Pet. 3:10-12a**

Conclusion:

- A. This lesson may not be satisfactory for some.
- B. The fact is that if God intervened at every moment of human crises or tragedy we would not need a Savior because there would be no evil or destruction to overcome.
- C. The fact that He gave us His Son manifests His love for us.