

Articles and Sermons :: Fierce Tornadoes and the Fingers of God by John Piper

Fierce Tornadoes and the Fingers of God by John Piper - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/3/6 1:09

Why would God reach down his hand and drag his fierce fingers across rural America killing at least 38 people with 90 tornadoes in 12 states, and leaving some small towns with scarcely a building standing, including churches?

If God has a quarrel with America, wouldn't Washington, D.C., or Las Vegas, or Minneapolis, or Hollywood be a more likely place to show his displeasure?

We do not ascribe such independent power to Mother Nature or to the devil. God alone has the last say in where and how the wind blows. If a tornado twists at 175 miles an hour and stays on the ground like a massive lawnmower for 50 miles, God gave the command.

"The wind of the Lord, shall come, rising from the wilderness, and it shall strip Ephraim's treasury of every precious thing" (Hosea 13:15).

"The Lord turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea" (Exodus 10:19).

"God appointed a scorching east wind" (Jonah 4:8).

"God commanded and raised the stormy wind" (Psalm 107:25).

"Even winds and sea obey Jesus" (Matthew 8:27).

But why Maryville and not Minneapolis? Why Henryville and not Hollywood?

God has spoken about these things. Consider three ways he addresses — all of us.

1. Job, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Job's ten children died because "a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people" (Job 1:19).

Job cries out to God, "Why have you made me your mark? . . . Why do you hide your face and count me as your enemy? . . . Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power?" (Job 7:20; 13:24; 21:7).

In other words, Why Henryville, and not Hollywood?

God's answer to Job is not that he was a worse sinner than the "wicked" — or that Maryville had some dark secret.

His answer was, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34; Job 15:8; 36:22f).

Job's loss was not a measure of his immorality. "Job was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil" (Job 1:1).

In fact, perhaps God chose Job for that deadly wind because only the likes of Job would respond: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

2. Luke 13:4-5, "Unless you repent."

A Tower fell and killed 18 people in Jesus' day. Jesus spoke into that situation: "Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:4-5).

This is a word to those of us who sit safely in Minneapolis or Hollywood and survey the desolation of Maryville and Henryville.

ville. “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Every deadly wind in any town is a divine warning to every town.

3. 1 Peter 4:17, “God’s own people are not excluded.”

We are not God’s counselors. Nor can we fathom all his judgments. That was the lesson of Job. Let us beware, therefore, of reading the hand of providence with too much certainty or specificity. God is always doing a thousand things when he does anything. And we see but a fraction.

But stir into your mental framework this truth: When a time for judgment comes, it usually includes, and begins with, God’s own people. That’s what the apostle Peter says.

“It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17; Jeremiah 25:29; Ezekiel 9:6; Amos 3:2).

Therefore, God’s will for America under his mighty hand, is that every Christian, every Jew, every Muslim, every person of every religion or non-religion, turn from sin and come to Jesus Christ for forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus rules the wind. The tornadoes were his.

But before Jesus took any life in rural America, he gave his own on the rugged cross. Come to me, he says, to America— to the devastated and to the smugly self-sufficient. Come to me, and I will give you hope and help now, and in the resurrection, more than you have ever lost.

from: <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/fierce-tornadoes-and-the-fingers-of-god>

Re: Fierce Tornadoes and the Fingers of God by John Piper - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/3/6 9:55

Calamities in the OT are viewed as judgments from God for sinful behaviors.

In the NT they are called chastisements. Paul (?) tells us in Hebrews 12:5-13:

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed

The reality is that unless you have experienced the chastisement of the LORD you are a bastard and not a legitimate son (child) of His. No one can rightly be proud of the fact they have never been a victim of any kind of disruption in life’s plans. It is when the things we have regarded as secure are proven to be frail, subject to breakdowns and inefficient in maintaining our sense of well-being do we look to something greater. The sooner we learn this the better off we will be.

Re: Fierce Tornadoes and the Fingers of God by John Piper - posted by HeartSong, on: 2012/3/6 12:04

This article is not necessarily correct. From what the LORD has been showing me, this line of tornado's was made by man and not God. While God created the dynamics by which they could be brought forth, and it was certainly He that allowed it to happen, it was man's doing and not God's - and it was our love for our idols that provided the means.

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2012/3/6 14:32

Bless you HeartSong!

Another sad thread that dishonors God by speaking for Him in accusing Him - even saying that God killed 38 people or did I read that wrong.

Re: HeartSong, on: 2012/3/6 14:36

Quote:

DoD News Briefing: Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen

Presenter: Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen
April 28, 1997 8:45 AM EDT

"Others are engaging even in an eco-type of terrorism whereby they can alter the climate, set off earthquakes, volcanoes remotely through the use of electromagnetic waves.

So there are plenty of ingenious minds out there that are at work finding ways in which they can wreak terror upon other nations. It's real, and that's the reason why we have to intensify our efforts, and that's why this is so important."

defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=674

When HE Returns ...

Rev 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great;

****and to destroy those destroying the earth.****

The proof is out there - from those that are trained radar analyzers.

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2012/3/6 14:58

Jesus himself said that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy but I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

But I understand, I reckon, that a true "ism" has to blame God for everything because that's just what they believe because they have to be able to explain everything so they just blame God for it.

Flip Wilson use to say "the devil made me do it" that's almost like the "ism" saying "well God didn't stop me from doing it"

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/3/6 17:24

This reminds me of the Joplin, Missouri thread and how they were unfairly judged.

Pilgrim

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/3/6 18:03

On April 27, 2011 a tornado went through our community. joining another one east of here in AL that wrecked devastation at Tuscaloosa.

In the weeks following we talked with a lot of locals about this event. NOT ONE person displayed the attitude others here are saying: that this was a man-made storm, or that it was not allowed by God to wake people up. NOT ONE person and we lived through this!

Been there...BTW, we do live in tornado country...we have one about every year. We also have droughts and floods - we all see the hand of God in it. It always makes us think about God. How can you fault that?

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2012/3/6 18:21

Here is a question for those who can be so bold as to say God killed 38 people.

Do you also believe that God is responsible for the fall of man?

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/3/6 18:31

This thread is similar to the one I posted about the disturbing news stories.

In this thread I see 2 things going on that happens ALL the time.

1. We try to make sense of it all. I think anyone and everyone does Why did this happen. What is God's role in this if any? This is where I stand on most occasions.

2. Judging usually follows these. Funny that whenever there is calamity and we try to make sense of it Christians usually resort to the 'Who sinned' questions. Just as the Pharisees in the NT. I think that those who are more simple probably don't get overworked about who sinned as the more 'educated' seem to do. Instead they are thankful people are alive and usually seek out that which is outside themselves: friends, family and God for their comfort.

I know that for me on the one hand these events are going to happen. This area that got tornados are prone to it so I cannot fairly proclaim some end times theory of the world being in the last days as a resort. The area always as these things because of the cold north air and the warm Gulf air coming together. On the other hand I often wonder how God is working in the lives of those who survive these storms and even those who prayed in the midst and lost their lives or had something tragic happen to them or family. Wondering how and why God works in these ways never makes sense to me. Having to give answers to anyone who asks of God through this events leaves me speechless and as one who believes in Jesus this should not be for it causes me to wonder and ask of myself "What is God doing here?"

Re: , on: 2012/3/6 19:04

"Here is a question for those who can be so bold as to say God killed 38 people."

Though I won't take 'sides' on this issue - let it be remembered that the God of the Bible has killed A LOT MORE people than that at one time in the past.

The God of the Bible kills people - Rolfe Barnard

<http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=845&commentView=itemComments>

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/3/6 19:42

DEADn, I appreciate the thoughtfulness of your points – like this one:

Quote:

----- Having to give answers to anyone who asks of God through this events leaves me speechless – ...

And this may be best! Remember Job’s friends who were most supportive while they remained speechless. Why is it that we think we need to explain and be so rational? When people are in a crisis and shock, they ask “why” questions, but they are not seeking rational answers. They are expressing deep anguish. They need the assurance of our presence and empathy – not our fine sounding rational explanations. That kind of rhetoric may merely expose our inability or reluctance to truly empathize with suffering and pain. Besides, our clever answers may simply serve ourselves: We can feel more in control when things feel so out of control.

Quote:

----- as one who believes in Jesus this should not be for it causes me to wonder and ask of myself "What is God doing here?"

Surely it is not a bad thing to admit that the suffering of others causes us to experience our own inadequacies? Simply saying: “I don’t know” or “I wish I had more answers” is not at all an indication of our failure spiritually, but rather, an admission of finite humanness.

Quote:

----- I think that those who are more simple probably don't get overworked about who sinned as the more 'educated' seem to do.

Well put!! We are better able to minister to the suffering – at their level of need when we are not bogged down by our own need for explanations - or even our need to be more than we really are.

Diane