



WHY 'NATURAL' DISASTERS?

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DISASTERS?**

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published by the Philadelphia Church of God.

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Printed in the United States of America

Scriptures in this publication are quoted from
the King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Cover image: [istockphoto.com/inhauscreative](https://www.istockphoto.com/inhauscreative)

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An End to Natural Disasters!

ONE

Something Is Wrong With the Weather

ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN PAYING ATTENTION WILL note that large-scale nature-related disasters are increasing.

Every few weeks it seems, Earth unleashes devastating violence of some sort or other. An earthquake—a tornado—a tsunami—a massive storm—a flood—a drought—a rash of wildfires. It levels property, destroys homes, decimates crops, claims lives. And another constellation of survivors are left breathless in its wake, tasked with trying to piece their shattered lives back together.

It is a dreadful reminder of an awesome and important reality.

In our modern world, industrialization has done much to insulate a great many of us from the elements. We have paved over our land. We have abandoned our farms in favor of climate-controlled homes, offices and malls. Concrete, steel and glass shield us from routine rain, hail, sleet, snow, heat, chill. These former crop-killers are now mere inconveniences, for most of us.

It's only when nature gets really nasty—when rains turn into floods, when blizzards cancel flights, when droughts demand water restrictions, when a temblor topples infrastructure—that we even think to acknowledge the power it still holds over us. It dwarfs us. Impressive as our tower-of-Babel society is, it remains awkwardly vulnerable to the sheer elemental power of the planet in its fury.

History shows, in fact, that whole societies have risen or fallen because of favorable or foul forces of nature.

And in recent times, violent outbursts of these forces have been speeding up in tempo.

Yes, 'Nature' Is Getting Nastier

During the past century or so, global surface temperatures have increased slightly. At first mankind benefited. That subtle warming trend, coupled with a 50-year meteorological lull from 1910 to 1960, helped produce greater worldwide agricultural yields at the start of the 20th century. By the mid-1950s, output had reached record levels. The 1960s saw the birth of the so-called Green Revolution, spurred on by new hybrid seed, expanded irrigation, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides that promised to alleviate world hunger.

But then something unexpected happened. World climates became more volatile. Floods followed droughts. With growing frequency, indiscriminate tornadoes

ripped through cities and farmlands. Hailstorms thrashed crops, and hurricanes lashed coastlines.

This shift did more than merely becloud the promises of nonstop bumper crops underpinned by the agricultural miracles of the 1960s. It exacted steep costs in terms of economic losses, injuries and deaths. And statistics show that this troubling trend has continued to get worse, particularly since the end of the 1980s.

Within the United States, for example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reports that in the 37 years between 1953 and 1989, an average of 23 major disasters were declared per year. In the 1990s, that average nearly doubled—to 42.

Then, the decade that followed, from 2000 to 2009—besides seeing that annual figure leap up yet again, to 56—brought some of the most destructive natural disasters in recorded history across the globe! Earthquakes alone killed more than 780,000 people and affected more than 2 billion others. Globally, the number of catastrophic events *more than doubled* since the 1980s, the Center for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters said in January 2010.

Insurance companies and meteorologists generally accept that the weather is becoming progressively more unstable. Human efforts to improve farming methods, forecast and even manipulate the weather have redoubled. But in the end, these efforts are of no avail.

What is going on here? Is it all just an accident of nature?

Whatever the cause, the trend has only **GOTTEN WORSE!**

More Recently ...

The year 2010 began in horrifying fashion with a catastrophic earthquake in Haiti on January 12 that killed hundreds of thousands of people and left over

a million homeless. Deadly quakes also hit China, Indonesia, Chile and Turkey. A typical year sees 16 earthquakes of at least magnitude 7.0. But 2010—one of the most seismically violent in decades—saw 22.

FEMA declared more disasters in the U.S. in 2010 than ever—nearly 2½ times the annual average. The “peaceful” years of 23 major disaster declarations in the U.S. seem to be over: 2010 saw *81 of them*—a major disaster every 4½ days! “The term ‘100-year event’ really lost its meaning this year,” said Craig Fugate, then head of FEMA.

A weather system that summer swept through Asia, claiming nearly 17,000 lives with a killer heat wave in Russia and epic flooding in Pakistan. The year ended with eastern Australia drowning under its worst flooding ever (the local leading newspaper called it a “biblical disaster”), millions fleeing floods and landslides in Colombia and Venezuela, record-breaking winter storms in Europe and North America that left many dead and homeless, and raging wildfires in Israel that were considered the worst natural disaster in that nation’s history. The world’s biggest reinsurer, Swiss Re, estimated that worldwide, disasters in 2010 cost three times more than the year before, totaling nearly a quarter trillion dollars!

“This was the year the Earth struck back,” wrote the Associated Press. More than a quarter million people perished in nature-related disasters—more lives than terrorism claimed in the previous 40 years combined.

Astoundingly, this grisly trend of record-breaking disasters only got worse in 2011! January saw four huge earthquakes, in Argentina, Japan, Pakistan and Chile. Floods in Brazil caused mudslides that left tens of thousands homeless and killed more than 700 people.

In February, Queensland—still shell-shocked from flooding—got walloped by a massive cyclone.

Then on February 22, an exceptionally violent temblor leveled much of Christchurch, New Zealand. Scientists say this severe of a quake strikes an average of *once every thousand years*. NOT EVEN THREE WEEKS LATER, a 9.0 quake hit near Japan, creating a killer tsunami that killed tens of thousands of people and caused a nuclear disaster.

In April, more than 600 tornadoes shredded the U.S., shattering the previous April record of 267. Three hundred twelve of them came in a single 24-hour period, the worst of which was *20 times normal size*: It tore a scar one mile wide and *a record 300 miles long* across Alabama and Georgia. Meanwhile, severe flooding deluged other parts of the country—even as Texas was suffering its worst drought since 1895, creating perfect conditions for thousands of wildfires. Thus, wheat crops withered in Texas while farms drowned in Missouri.

In August, Hurricane Irene left 4 million businesses and homes without power as it swept up the East Coast of the U.S.

All totaled, 12 billion-dollar disasters pounded the United States in 2011—*three more than the previous record* set in 2008. These catastrophic events killed 1,000 Americans and caused \$52 billion in damages. As the Associated Press reported on December 7, 2011, “With an almost *biblical* onslaught of twisters, floods, snow, drought, heat and wildfire, the U.S. in 2011 has seen more weather catastrophes that caused at least \$1 billion in damage than it did in *all of the 1980s*, even after the dollar figures from back then are adjusted for inflation” (emphasis added throughout). Breaking it down further, AP revealed this alarming trend: During the 1980s, the

U.S. averaged just one billion-dollar disaster per year. In the 1990s, it jumped to 3.8 per year—then 4.6 during the first decade of the new millennium. For just the first two years of the following decade, the U.S. has averaged *7.5 billion-dollar disasters per year*.

2012 continued the same trend, with England beginning the year in drought, and floods hitting New South Wales and Victoria in Australia, and North Island in New Zealand. Severe drought—the worst since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s—continued in the U.S., affecting almost two thirds of the country and causing devastating wildfires and severe agricultural losses. Colorado was ravaged by its worst wildfire in state history, with hundreds of homes destroyed.

A series of tornadoes plowed through the American Midwest in February, killing 13 people and injuring hundreds. The following month saw another huge outbreak of tornadoes devastate Midwest states, claiming 39 lives. In early April, tornadoes and violent storms raged through north Texas, destroying an estimated 650 homes. Later in the month, more than 75 tornadoes ripped through the central U.S., killing six people and injuring 29.

In the Philippines, more than 90 people were killed in floods resulting from monsoon rains. Hurricane Isaac left a trail of death and destruction in Haiti and other islands in August. In October, Hurricane Sandy killed some 69 people in the Caribbean and went on to do massive damage in New York State and New Jersey. The superstorm cost between \$30 and 50 billion in total economic damages on the East Coast.

According to Oxford University's Our World in Data, the years 2013 through 2016 saw an eye-popping total of

1,441 “natural catastrophes.” That’s one severe disaster almost every day! Those disasters killed more than 77,000 people and caused nearly half a trillion dollars’ worth of damage.

Some of the major disasters of 2013 include 10 tornadoes touching down in Texas on the night of May 15. One week later, a 1.3-mile-wide tornado obliterated parts of Oklahoma City and killed 24 people. In October, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake killed 222 people in the Philippines; one month later, Typhoon Haiyan killed about 6,000 more Filipinos.

In August 2014, a 6.5-magnitude earthquake in China killed more than 600 people and displaced about 230,000 others. In September, the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir suffered its worst flooding in 50 years when torrents of rain triggered massive landslides, killing 277 people. Flooding and mudslides in neighboring Pakistan killed 280 people.

A 7.8-magnitude temblor in Nepal in April 2015 killed more than 8,800 people and destroyed nearly 1 million buildings. At \$10 billion, the estimated damage cost about half the nation’s nominal gross domestic product. In May, heat waves killed 2,000 people in India.

Yet another 7.8-magnitude quake shook the coast of Ecuador in April 2016, killing almost 700 people. In October, Hurricane Matthew killed more than 603 people and caused \$15 billion worth of damage in the Caribbean, eastern U.S. and eastern Canada.

In August 2017, Hurricane Harvey dropped a year’s worth of rain on the Houston area in just a few days. Texas Governor Greg Abbott called it “one of the largest disasters America has ever faced.” The National Weather Service said, “THIS EVENT IS UNPRECEDENTED,

and all impacts are UNKNOWN AND BEYOND ANYTHING EXPERIENCED.”

Days later, Hurricane Irma crushed the Caribbean islands and the East Coast of the United States. IT WAS THE LARGEST-EVER HURRICANE TO STRIKE FROM THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

Soon after that, Hurricane Maria obliterated Puerto Rico.

More than 100 people died in these hurricanes, and the U.S. sustained hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.

On and on the list goes. “Unprecedented” and “record-breaking” disasters are happening at a quickening pace. “History making” events are becoming *commonplace!*

We need to be concerned!

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE WEATHER? You have to have blinders on not to at least be asking the question. Why are these once-in-a-lifetime, where-did-this-come-from, never-before-witnessed calamities piling up on top of one another?

Such catastrophes should in fact challenge our thinking. They force us to contemplate the fragility of man. They demand that we consider some of the deeper questions we can all-too-easily ignore in more prosperous and peaceful times.

Sadly, most people do not glean any wisdom from such events. Sometimes, moving stories of heroism amid tragedy emerge, which some people use to exalt the goodness, the supposed righteousness, of human beings. Others simply dig themselves out, curse the random cruelty of nature, and move on. Scientists, for their part, are searching for explanations within the natural world itself, particularly as disasters increase in frequency and lethality.

Looking for Lessons

One thing that is clear is that never before has there been such potential for human suffering due to climatic disasters. In times past, when severe weather continually affected a particular area of the world, people simply migrated somewhere else. Now, because of fixed borders and population growth, little new land is available. The increasing population density has placed more people at risk when an extreme weather event occurs. Rapid growth in coastal populations puts more people in harm's way when hurricanes or tropical storms strike. Swelling numbers of homes and businesses in flood plains increase the risk and frequency of high-cost flooding events.

Take the 2010 Haiti quake. Striking within a few miles of crowded, poverty-stricken Port-au-Prince, it claimed a staggering 220,000 lives. Just 25 years before, the same area housed only a third as many people, in far fewer unstable shanties. Richard Olson, director of disaster risk reduction at Florida International University, told the Associated Press that the same quake in 1985 would have had a death toll closer to 80,000.

Quakes of greater magnitude have hit elsewhere; in fact, the earthquake that rocked Chile the same year was an incredible 500 times stronger than Haiti's. But because it struck a less populated, more prosperous and better-constructed area, it killed fewer than a thousand people.

Thus, some conclude, the problem isn't the planet, but the people. "It's a form of suicide, isn't it?" said Roger Bilham, a geological science professor at the University of Colorado. "We build houses that kill ourselves [in earthquakes]. We build houses in flood zones that drown

ourselves. It's our fault for not anticipating these things. You know, this is the Earth doing its thing.”

It's an interesting point—though a hard lesson to apply. It's difficult to suggest viable solutions to the poor-quality construction in impoverished regions. And the regions that could be labeled danger zones seem to be proliferating. On top of that, this theory might explain higher death tolls, but it doesn't explain the increasing *number* and *frequency* of catastrophes.

For that, many scientists point to climate change. To account for everything climate-related—cold fronts, freakish blizzards, flooding rains, hurricanes and a host of other dangers—many of them blame greenhouse gases, injected into the atmosphere via human activity like deforestation and burning of fossil fuels. Thus, the lesson they draw from calamities is that man needs to stop producing carbon dioxide.

There is evidence that smog from industrial activity, smoke from slash-and-burn deforestation in developing countries, widespread replacement of green and open surfaces by pavement, asphalt and buildings, and the exhaust of jets, cars, trucks, trains and ships have contributed to climatic variation. Other suspected weather-modifying agents include crop irrigation and the creation of man-made lakes. The influence of diverted rivers, dams, drained swamps and underground aquifers may be significant too because of the effect the water-versus-land ratio has on the heat balance. There is abundant evidence that mankind has abused, polluted, tarnished and ruined nearly everything our hands have touched.

However, it is scientifically impossible to attribute the scale of the increase in dramatic nature-related

phenomena to such human endeavors. This is a hot-button issue clouded by politics—and quite a bit of conflicting data. Meteorologists do not know the extent to which climatic changes or variability may be accurately predicted in the long term, nor do they know why major global-impacting weather forces, such as high-altitude jet streams or powerful ocean currents, shift as they do.

Weather experts are only able to rely on scientific observation, experimentation and reason—physical evidence—to forecast weather in the short term. But this tells only part of the story.

God’s ‘Unlimited Broadcasting Station’

There was a time when people, “intellectuals” even, would look at nature and see God.

“I love to think of nature as an *unlimited broadcasting station*, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in,” wrote George Washington Carver, the distinguished 20th-century scientist. Ralph Waldo Emerson believed that “the glory of the omnipresent God bursts through everywhere” in nature.

More and more people today, however, are quite removed from nature. Living in cities and in suburbs, we see nature as *Animal Planet*, or the dog barking across the street, or the lone tree along the sidewalk that gets in the way. Nature is recreation—a grassy field to play on, a lake to stroll by, beautiful scenery to admire, a place to go for serenity.

We have thus lost sight of the fact that our very *existence* depends on nature. Take rain. To the average city-dweller, rain has little bearing on day-to-day life; in fact, it’s often an inconvenience. But to the farmer,

rain is life. It nourishes his crops and the pastures on which his herds graze. The farmer sees nature, and all its component parts, for what it ultimately is: the complex, interconnected, vitally important machine that sustains life!

This connection with nature tends to point us back to our world's masterful *Maker*.

The first chapter of the Bible depicts God *creating* the oceans and landmasses, the atmosphere and weather patterns, the various species of plants and animals, the ecosystems—and the vast host of laws that govern nature's successful operation. This chapter describes God's construction of the complex machine by which He would sustain mankind.

The Bible teaches that not only is nature the creation of God's mind, it is, in fact, a *vital instrument* through which He communicates with us.

This book—which most people have on their bookshelf, but few understand—gives us the *other side of the picture*, which all of the best scientific instruments cannot!

These days, any person bold enough to consider nature God's "*unlimited broadcasting station*" is mocked as a religious crackpot. This is too bad. Because the Bible *actually claims to pinpoint the causes of weather cataclysms and to forecast long-term weather trends!*

Could it be that God is indeed employing nature as His "*unlimited broadcasting station*"? That He is cursing our weather patterns and increasing the destructiveness of natural events in an attempt to communicate with us? The Bible shows that this is *exactly* what He is doing. It shows that He is currently delivering a message via nature that we all desperately need to hear and respond to!

The disasters we see increasing are in fact *a tool* that the Creator of the natural world has reserved for Himself, to use for His purpose and at His pleasure—in order to speak with us! After all, we don't tend to listen very well. But severe natural phenomena are IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE.

Yet for most people, even as our planet is coming apart, the message is still not resonating.

The question is, are *you* prepared to listen?

TWO

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

NATURAL DISASTERS CAN CREATE UNFATHOMABLE suffering. Staring into the faceless brutality of such catastrophes can be deeply shocking and sobering to all of us.

But often, the tragedy of death and destruction is matched by another tragedy—and that is, *how ministers respond*.

Many times, prominent priests and theologians will say it is not God's will that such things happen. Some of them even question the existence of God! That is a tragedy.

After the Asian tsunami in December 2004 that snuffed out more than 225,000 lives, a *Sunday Telegraph*

headline read: “Archbishop of Canterbury Admits: This Makes Me Doubt the Existence of God” (Jan. 2, 2005). At the time, this man led 70 million Anglicans! And the tsunami diminished his faith.

The article paraphrased the archbishop, Dr. Rowan Williams, as saying, “The Asian tsunami disaster *should make all Christians question the existence of God*” (emphasis added throughout).

That is a terribly false statement! If you understand the truth, such disasters should *increase your faith*—not decrease it! In this booklet we want to show why such disasters should STRENGTHEN everyone’s belief in God, according to your Bible.

The article said, “Prayer, [the archbishop] admits, provides no ‘magical solutions’ and most of the stock Christian answers to human suffering do not ‘go very far in helping us ... with the intolerable grief and devastation in front of us.’” If that’s the way our prayers are, something is wrong. And if these “stock answers,” as he called them, don’t really satisfy anybody, something is wrong. Something is terribly wrong with that religion!

We cannot be careless about something so critical. We are talking about the state of our eternal lives!

In his own article, the archbishop wrote, “Every single random, accidental death is something that should upset a faith bound up with comfort and ready answers. ... The question: ‘How can you believe in a God who permits suffering on this scale?’ is therefore very much around at the moment, and it would be surprising if it weren’t—indeed, it would be wrong if it weren’t” (*Sunday Telegraph*, Jan. 2, 2005). That is not the kind of statement that builds people’s faith.

“The traditional answers will get us only so far,” the

archbishop continued. “If some religious genius did come up with an explanation of exactly why all these deaths made sense, would we feel happier or safer or more confident in God? Wouldn’t we feel something of a chill at the prospect of a God who deliberately plans a program that involves a certain level of casualties?”

That is a rather dangerous statement. HE IS SCOFFING AT THE IDEA THAT ANYONE COULD HAVE AN EXPLANATION. BUT JESUS CHRIST HAS AN EXPLANATION! IT’S THERE IN THE BIBLE. Christ is a “religious genius,” and He has the answers. Is the archbishop familiar with Matthew 24?

This man is destroying people’s faith—exactly the opposite of what a spiritual shepherd is supposed to do for his flock.

This is how theologian David Hart responded to the same disaster in the *Wall Street Journal*: “When confronted by the sheer savage immensity of worldly suffering—when we see the entire littoral rim of the Indian Ocean strewn with tens of thousands of corpses, a third of them children’s—no Christian is licensed to utter odious banalities about God’s inscrutable counsels or blasphemous suggestions that all this mysteriously serves God’s good ends. We are permitted only to hate death and waste and the imbecile forces of chance that shatter living souls, to believe that creation is in agony in its bonds, to see this world as divided between two kingdoms—knowing all the while that it is only charity that can sustain us against ‘fate,’ and that must do so until the end of days” (Dec. 31, 2004). His view is eloquently stated. But it is laced with desperation and hopelessness—and it disagrees with the Bible!

Paul Stenhouse, a Catholic priest, responded to the same event this way: “Christianity does not teach that God

causes natural disasters; nor does it teach that God causes them in order to punish the wickedness of the victims” (Jan. 3, 2005). This view is unsatisfying because it leaves unanswered an obvious question: Why would God *allow* disasters? Certainly an all-powerful God could stop them before they happened. Why doesn’t He? Could He possibly be that *callous* to such an incalculable level of human suffering? The natural mind struggles to understand.

Yet the religious elite of the world offer no real explanation—and no hope! Are these religious leaders willing to look in the Bible and simply BELIEVE GOD?

The regrettable reality is, most people *do not know, much less accept* the God who reveals Himself in the Holy Bible! They are worshiping a god of their own creation.

God’s Word does explain—in *explicit detail*—why such events happen. Their causes are spelled out from the first book of the Bible to the last.

How is it that so many people claim to believe in God, yet vehemently dismiss any notion that God has any connection to nature-related disasters?

If you believe in God, what sort of God is He? Are natural disasters beyond His control? Is He unable to prevent them? Or, on the other hand, does He delight in watching people suffer?

Philosophizing and concocting our own ideas to answer these questions will never satisfy. Instead, we must let God speak for Himself—and look to the plain revelation that God provides in His inspired Word!

There is meaning. There is a lesson, a profound lesson, wrapped within the loss of life and breadth of desolation of such events—one that *each of us* must consider deeply. The truth—contained within the occasional deadly events unleashed by the natural world—is *filled* with living hope!

Whose World Is This?

Contrast the reality of disasters and personal suffering you see all around the globe with this prophecy coinciding with the return of Jesus Christ: “And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and *sorrow and sighing shall flee away*” (Isaiah 35:10). Has that prophecy been fulfilled? The world around us is filled with sorrow and sighing! Clearly, Jesus Christ has not returned, causing such things to flee away. This is only one of many such biblical prophecies describing utopian conditions to prevail on this Earth once Christ comes to establish His rule as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” This world is a far cry from experiencing widespread “joy and gladness” under God’s benevolent government.

Rather, we see what the Apostle Paul described in Galatians 1:4, when he referred to the age in which we live as “this present evil world.”

This “present evil world” *is not God’s world!* So then—whose world is it?

Ezekiel 28 describes a magnificent archangel, “full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty” (verse 12). Isaiah 14:13 tells us this being called Lucifer tried to exalt his own throne—a position of authority over the Earth—above God’s throne. God cast Lucifer, now called Satan (meaning “adversary”), back down to Earth. Elsewhere, Paul referred to Satan the devil as “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). In Revelation 12:9, the Apostle John says that Satan “deceiveth the WHOLE WORLD.”

Think about that! The Bible reveals that, at present, this world is ruled *not by God*, but by a malevolent spirit being who is the source of all EVIL!

It also reveals *how* the devil gained control of mankind—and why God allows that to this day. *This truth has everything to do with God's purpose for you—your incredible human potential.*

This takes us right back to the first book in the Bible.

The Two Trees

Most people are familiar with the story of Adam and Eve but have never understood its true significance. It is not about two fruit trees—it is about two ways of life. And what happened in the Garden of Eden has shaped every aspect of man's civilization!

Consider the opportunity the first two human beings had. At the beginning of human existence, God created Adam and Eve at the very pinnacle of the material world. He cast them in His very likeness: Unlike the animals, human beings *look like their Maker*. God intended that they care for and rule benevolently over the rest of creation (Genesis 1:26-31). He endowed them with intellectual and creative powers, enabling them to grow into God's own image, or character. Earth was the training ground so that these two, and the family of man that would spring from them, could eventually fulfill their fullest potential as *eternal* children of God.

True character must be *developed* through right decisions, so God made Adam and Eve free moral agents. He then gave them a choice. They could have followed God's instructions by choosing the *tree of life*, which represents God's Holy Spirit and the path to eternal life. Romans 8:10 even refers to God's Spirit as life. This spirit-life comes only as a gift from God (Romans 6:23). Had Adam and Eve made that choice, they would have continued to live under God's protection; they would

have developed a relationship with God, learning to think like Him and to live His way of give.

God would have removed Satan from his position of power on the Earth and given that authority to Adam. *God wanted to fulfill His purpose in Adam and Eve.*

Instead, the first two people trusted in themselves, succumbed to the temptations of Satan the devil, and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which represented Satan's way of life. *That rebellion, that sin against God, is the origin of all human suffering.*

To comprehend the disasters we see ravaging our world today, we must grasp the implications of this fateful moment in human history.

A World Cut Off

Genesis 3:16-19 show that because of Adam and Eve's decision, God *removed* His protection and guidance, and pronounced upon them certain *curses*; then He banished them from the garden and cut off their access to the tree of life (verses 22-24).

This was not a quick-tempered outburst: God, to *preserve* the exalted potential of man, *had* to seal off the tree of life. To bring the first two humans into His eternal Family while they were making choices *contrary* to His commandments—*opposing* His love—would have produced eternal division and misery. So instead, God took the occasion to teach Adam and Eve, and all those who would follow them, an enormous lesson.

In his final book, *Mystery of the Ages*, Herbert W. Armstrong explained what God, in essence, told Adam: "You have made the decision for yourself and the world that shall spring from you. You have rejected me as the basic source of knowledge—you have rejected power from

me through my Spirit to live the righteous way—you have rebelled against my command and my government—you have chosen the ‘getting,’ ‘taking’ way of Satan. Therefore I sentence you and the world you shall beget to 6,000 years of being cut off from access to me and my Spirit—except for the exceedingly few I shall specially call. And that few shall be called for special service preparatory for the Kingdom of God. They shall be required to do what you have failed to do—reject, resist and overcome Satan and his ways, and follow the ways of my spiritual law.

“Go, therefore, Adam, and all your progeny that shall form the world, produce your own fund of knowledge. Decide for yourself what is good and what is evil. Produce your own educational systems and means of disseminating knowledge, as your god Satan shall mislead you. Form your own concepts of what is god, your own religions, your own governments, your own lifestyles and forms of society and civilization. In all this Satan will deceive your world with his attitude of SELF-centeredness—with vanity, lust and greed, jealousy and envy, competition and strife and violence and wars, rebellion against me and my law of LOVE.

“After the world of your descendants has *written the lesson in 6,000 years of human suffering*, anguish, frustration, defeat and death—*after the world that shall spring from you shall have been brought to confess the utter hopelessness of the way of life you have chosen*—I will supernaturally intervene. ... During this 6,000 years, when I myself shall cut them off from me, they shall not be eternally judged. Only, as they sow during their lifetimes, they shall reap.” (We will send you a copy of *Mystery of the Ages* so you can study God’s plan of salvation in much greater detail; the book is free upon your request.)

Realize this: *Every aspect* of our society has been affected because Adam and Eve defied their Creator! This fatal choice at the beginning of human history made necessary the writing of that lesson in human suffering: the 6,000-year period of which mankind is now nearing the end. This great epoch during which man has been essentially cut off from direct contact with God is almost over. Soon God will remove Satan from the scene and open the human mind to receive the wonderful truth about mankind's incredible potential. But not before man learns some powerful lessons.

Aversion Therapy

Mr. Armstrong referred to this difficult 6,000-year "lesson" man is recording by his own experience as *aversion therapy*. Some clinics still employ this method to help people overcome addictions. If a person is an alcoholic, for instance, he would be forced to drink alcohol until it made him so sick that he would never want another drink!

In a sense, that is what God is doing with this world. Though He is not forcing us to go the way of Satan, He is certainly permitting us to fill our minds with Satan's way of life. God is allowing this to bring us to the point where we will absolutely loathe and abhor this "present evil world." He is allowing man to go his own way so we might see the fruits of living contrary to God's law of love.

In 1982, Mr. Armstrong gave a sermon titled "Aversion Therapy," referring to this period where God has largely kept His hands off the affairs of this world. He said, "I am getting so sick of sin that I want to be at the place where I can't sin anymore. I hope you do, too." This is the state God wants the *entire world* to reach—a state where WE ARE READY TO LIVE *HIS* WAY OF LIFE!

Right now, all of mankind remains under the malicious influence of the devil. People continue to choose the wrong tree and reap the same results with every new generation. Swayed by Satan, without God in our life, each of us is hostile toward God, even if only passively and unwittingly (Romans 8:7-8). We are carnal. Naturally, we hate God's law.

In order to restore to us the exalted human potential that our first parents turned their backs on, God seeks to convert the heart of every carnal person in the world—to help us recognize our *error* in going the wrong way, and to instill in us a deep *love* for God's way of life. As the Apostle Peter explained, "The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE" (2 Peter 3:9). That is a tremendous ambition, given the mountainous obstacle that each heart presents. God is not doing this on a mass scale today, but His overarching plan, once fulfilled, does include *everyone* willing to come to repentance.

True repentance bridges the gap between an individual and God. Thus, the *very first step* toward real and everlasting happiness is a genuine, deep, complete *repentance*.

To recognize our own helplessness, unhappiness and inadequacy apart from God is the most fundamental lesson any of us can learn.

Whenever God begins working with someone, He begins by *humbling* that individual. As it says in Proverbs 15:33, "The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and *before honour is humility.*" God wants to give each of us phenomenal honor—but the humility, rooted in a deep respect for the Creator, must come first.

The curses God imposed upon Adam and his seed were intended to teach this lesson. The suffering

that saturates this present world, cut off from God, is intended to teach this lesson.

This returns us to the matter of nature-related disasters.

The Weather Is No Accident!

The Bible reveals that God has set spiritual and physical laws in motion, and that He is presently allowing humans to develop their own ways of living—contrary to His laws—and to reap the natural consequences that result from those ways, *including weather upsets*. To be sure, some of the suffering we experience today is our simply reaping the results of our own mistakes, mismanagement and sin.

God has given to us *liberally* manifold physical blessings. Yet we have *raped our environment* through godless monoculture on a massive scale, *poisoned our food and water* with body- and mind-destroying chemicals, *polluted our air*, and created a huge high-cost medical-pharmaceutical-hospital industry to busily try to treat the massive life-destroying sicknesses and diseases of mind and body that our corrupt culture has generated!

The Bible *also* shows that God, in His great purpose, *permits* Satan the devil—the current (and temporary) unseen ruler of this world—to interfere with weather patterns and to have a role in producing catastrophic weather, for man's ultimate learning (see, for example, Job 1).

But there is an even more important dimension revealed in Scripture that we must recognize: Even during this 6,000 years of mankind, in general, being cut off from its Creator, God is *still* actively involved in events in order to ensure that they unfold according to His ultimate purposes!

The God of the Bible claims that *He* controls the weather and natural phenomena! He says He causes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on

the just and on the unjust. He sends the snow and ice as well as drought and heat.

The author of Psalm 148 understood God's power over the elements. He wrote in verse 8 about "[f]ire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word."

Considering how dependent we are on favorable natural conditions, this is certainly a way that the Power who can create such conditions can demonstrate His benevolence and favor to us. In fact, Scripture is full of promises from God to BLESS people with good climatic conditions. Open the book and read them for yourself! In Leviticus 26:4-5, for example, He promises a mild climate, seasonal rain and bumper crops. In Deuteronomy 28:11-12 He makes similar promises.

Incidentally, Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are the two pivotal chapters on which *all* Old Testament prophecies turn. Anciently, God made these conditional promises to the people of Israel. When the Israelites turned from God in rebellion, God sent prophets to warn them of the consequences for disobedience: curses and captivity. This is the context we need to understand in order to grasp what is recorded in the writings of the major and minor prophets.

Many of these ancient prophetic warnings were written and recorded *after* the Israelites had already been taken captive as slaves. Daniel, for instance, wrote his book after the people of both Israel and Judah had been uprooted from their homeland and carted off as slaves. There is no way he could have delivered his message to captive slaves. Besides that, he wrote at the end of his book that he himself did not understand the prophecies he received, and that the message was "closed up and sealed till the *time of the end*" (Daniel 12:9).

God told the Prophet Ezekiel to deliver his message to the house of Israel. Yet Ezekiel wrote his book a full *130 years after* Israel had been overrun by Gentiles! By Ezekiel's time, Israel had been lost from world view!

So who are these messages for primarily since they are not for ancient Israel?

We know they are for the end time. We also know they are addressed to a people called Israel. And so all that remains to be discovered, then, is the identity of ancient Israel's modern descendants. If you haven't yet proved who those descendants are, please request our free book—requested by more than 5 million people—*The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. These modern descendants of Israel reside primarily in America, Britain and the little Jewish nation called Israel today.

This means the message in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 is directed primarily to OUR PEOPLES.

Look at those promises again! Rain in due season, favorable weather for abundant crops and so on. Looking at our simultaneously parched and flooded lands, seeing our battered farms and wasted crops, shouldn't we be asking, *Where is this God?*

God has as much control over natural phenomena today as He did then. In His omnipotence He can stop the elemental forces that so often wreak havoc in our modern world; after all, Jesus Christ stilled a storm with just a few words (Mark 4:39).

But notice again the context of those promises. *They come with a condition: "IF ye WALK IN MY STATUTES, and KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, and DO them"* (Leviticus 26:3).

This begins to reveal the crucial dimension in this issue that so many people want to ignore.

THREE

The Deadly Climate Change Deception

WHEN CLIMATIC DISASTERS OCCUR, THE USUAL political and media response is to blame the trend on “climate change.” The worse the disaster, the louder the calls for taking action against climate change by addressing the supposed man-made causes, such as carbon emissions and the use of fossil fuels.

This view about “climate change” has taken hold of millions of minds around the world. It is often presented as if it is irrefutable scientific fact. The truth, though, is

that it is an *ideology*, and it will negatively affect every single person who falls for it!

This is not a political view. We aim to give you GOD'S VIEW. Our great Creator knows that climate change is *not* the cause of weather disasters!

Why God Gives Rain

Do you believe the Bible? It gives an undeniably clear explanation for what causes climatic disasters. We will study this in greater depth throughout the remainder of this booklet, but first let's look at a few scriptural passages.

The book of Nahum is a book of prophecy for this end time. The prophet begins by drawing attention to the command God has over disastrous weather. "The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD HATH HIS WAY IN THE WHIRLWIND AND IN THE STORM, and the clouds are the dust of his feet" (Nahum 1:3). In today's language, this is speaking of hurricanes and tornadoes. This says GOD SENDS STORMS—and these storms result in flooding and destruction. He controls where and how hard the storms strike.

"He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and *drieth up all the rivers*: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth" (verse 4). Anciently, Bashan, Carmel and Lebanon possessed some of the most fertile farmland in the world. But God dried the rivers with droughts, and the abundance of those regions just withered away.

The idea that *carbon emissions* cause storms is the *antithesis* of what God says!

Read the rest of the Prophet Nahum's account. It is consistent with the message you find throughout the Bible. It says that, in a sense, humans *are* responsible

for weather disasters. Not because of fossil fuels, but because of SIN—*breaking God's commandments!*

Job 38:28 reveals God as the father of rain. He is able to command storm clouds to serve His purposes. All these natural elements obey God's commands!

Here is another clear statement of God's power over the weather—and it explains WHY God uses it as He does: “He loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning. They turn round and round *by his guidance*, to accomplish *all that he commands them* on the face of the habitable world. WHETHER FOR CORRECTION, OR FOR HIS LAND, OR FOR LOVE, HE CAUSES IT TO HAPPEN” (Job 37:11-13; Revised Standard Version).

One reason God sends storms is *for correction*. Yes, sometimes God bathes the earth with gentle rain to show His loving concern and mercy—and other times God uses the weather to CORRECT people! Do you believe in *that* God?

There are many scriptures that corroborate this truth. Could this be the reason for some of the disasters we are seeing?

To say that *climate change* is causing all these violent storms is to reject everything God says about this subject. Those who believe in that wouldn't all say they are anti-God or irreligious. But what they are saying is in direct conflict with what God says. And whose view on this issue do you think will prevail?

King Solomon knew this truth: “When the heaven is shut up, and *there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee*; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when *thou dost afflict them*; Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants ...” (2 Chronicles 6:26-27).

Blessings and Curses

The book of Daniel is for our day ONLY—“the time of the end” (Daniel 12:4, 9). In it, the Prophet Daniel shows us where to look for the solution to weather disasters and other curses.

“Yea, *all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him*” (Daniel 9:11). “Israel” here refers primarily to America and Britain, not just the Jewish state in the Middle East. (Read *The United States and Britain in Prophecy* to understand the identity of biblical Israel.)

Israel is cursed for not obeying “the law of Moses”! That is talking about the first five books of the Old Testament, known as the Pentateuch, which Moses wrote. Daniel refers us to the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These spell out God’s law—but they also have a lot of PROPHECY. Genesis 48 and 49, for example, prophesy what will happen to America and Britain in our day. And Daniel specifically speaks of “the CURSE” that God says will come upon us if we disobey His law.

Daniel continues, “As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice” (Daniel 9:13-14).

God loves us, and does all that He can to bless us. But what is He supposed to do when we are caught up in sin

and are disobeying Him? It is clear that God punishes, just like any father who loves his children. That is the only way He can turn us around so we can be in His Family! It is all done in love.

A former U.S. president said that rejecting the popular view of man-made climate change is the same as rejecting the future. You have *no future* if you don't believe it, he said.

That is the exact OPPOSITE of God's view! God says that you had better accept His view of climate change, or you DON'T HAVE A FUTURE—FOREVER!

Whom do you believe? God or men?

Look again at Leviticus 26, the blessings and curses chapter. Read the entire chapter, and apply each point to America today. It is extremely accurate—more relevant today than ever! Daniel states that it is mainly for this end time.

“If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (Leviticus 26:3-4). This is how to avoid violent storms and climatic extremes. When we obey Him, God provides temperate weather. He doesn't want to send storms, but there is a reason He does at times, and it is connected to how we live.

Read verses 5-8, and you see how the nation that obeys God enjoys abundance and peace, security from enemies. “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (verse 12). What is better than being in the good graces of the Almighty God? What blessings come when we follow God's law as revealed in the first five books of the Bible! This is an absolute PROMISE from God!

Bad Weather Is a Curse

God's blessings hinge on our obedience. But notice what God says if we *don't* obey. From here on, this chapter gives the bad news: "But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant" (Leviticus 26:14-15). In verse 16, He says we will experience "terror," or terrorism, as He tries to get our attention and direct our minds back to Him. We are seeing all these curses today.

"... I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: ... for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits" (verses 19-20). God curses the weather when we rebel! We will receive no rain. Our crops won't grow. The damage and the death toll will mount.

"And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins" (verses 21). God will continue to ratchet up the weather disasters until we finally begin to listen to Him!

The God of the Bible is omnipotent. He wields the punitive sword of flood and mildew—and also that of drought (Deuteronomy 28:22; 11:17). Sometimes He uses *both at the same time* in order to heighten their corrective power: "And also *I have withholden* the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and *I caused it to rain upon one city*, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered" (Amos 4:7). Notice—this is God speaking through His Prophet Amos. He controls rainfall, causing floods and droughts! God

causes these weather disasters! In one region God sends a drought—in another region, floods—and it all happens right before harvest time.

In August 2017, hurricanes Harvey and Irma flooded Houston with over 50 inches of rain, and torrents of water filled cities across America’s Southeast. *At the same time*, the West Coast was parched, and fires were scorching millions of acres! It was *exactly* as God prophesied through Amos!

This prophecy does more than tell us that such disasters will occur. It tells us *WHY* they are occurring—and how to prevent them from continuing!

When such calamities strike, God expects us to *seek Him*. This means prayer, but also much more. Read verses 8-11. THESE VERSES FORETELL OF INTENSIFYING CURSES, AND STATE FOUR TIMES: “... YET HAVE YE NOT RETURNED UNTO ME, SAITH THE LORD.” God keeps repeating this crucial point!

God causes these conditions as punishment for pushing Him out of our lives. *He is trying to get people to return to Him!* This prophecy should help us see the connection between extreme weather upsets and human sin. Certainly we must pray—but we must also RETURN TO GOD! Returning to God requires real, tangible ACTION.

In verse 9, God says, “I have smitten you with *blasting* and *mildew* ...” The *International Critical Commentary* (ICC) says this “blasting” refers to a scorching “east wind.” Most commentaries say this is a hot blast of drought that wipes out crops, but the fact that the word is paired with “mildew” (also in Deuteronomy 28:22) might give this verse a broader application. The ICC says this mildew is “caused by dampness and heat, having a yellow appearance.” This certainly could describe the aftermath of the summer hurricanes that lash America’s coastlines.

Realize: The book of Amos is another message directed at Israel in this end time (Amos 8:2).

God wants this world to know that HE CONTROLS NATURE. Many “natural” disasters are anything but *natural*! Soon, arrogant men will learn this lesson very deeply.

God controls the weather. And in these many biblical passages, He reveals that there is a direct connection between the weather we experience and HOW WE ARE LIVING.

Most people simply *do not believe these scriptures*. Many believe in a “God of love” who would never do anything as horrible as these prophecies suggest.

Those who believe such a thing, however, fail to recognize an EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ASPECT of this issue.

Yes, God is all-powerful. Yes, He *could* prevent disasters if He chose to. Yes, at times God actually CAUSES disasters! And yes, the occurrence of natural disasters *does* reflect a side of God’s character that many people don’t want to face.

But *NO, NO, NO* A THOUSAND TIMES to the notion that God is a cruel, merciless Being who *enjoys* watching the suffering of human beings!

We must humble ourselves enough to appreciate the full, awesome biblical revelation on this crucial point!

An Expression of Love

Almighty God tells us that the REAL CAUSE of our upset natural conditions is *SIN*—which is the breaking of His laws (see 1 John 3:4). GOD USES WEATHER TO CORRECT AND DISCIPLINE HIS CREATION—to help us realize the error of our ways!

Almighty God created mankind, and thus knows human nature. He also well knows the powerful,

malevolent forces at work that seek to deny man the fulfillment of his incredible human potential!

As our heavenly Father, *God knows how to deal with His children!*

He inspired one of the basic laws of effective child rearing to be embedded in Scripture: “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15). That same principle applies to the way our Creator deals with His offspring (Genesis 1:27) when we go astray. Surely we can comprehend that God, the one who formed man of the dust of the ground, knows *best* how to get man’s attention! That is God’s desire for mankind in this end time.

God declares that we are like sheep that have gone astray (Isaiah 53:6). Out of His overwhelming love for us, the Eternal God reproves those who break His law. Much of that punishment comes in the form of so-called natural catastrophes. God will continue to bring such penalties on His people to draw their attention to the reality that they are out of step with His will. And He will do this until repentance occurs and they turn to Him for help.

According to the Bible, nature provides a means of measuring whether or not God is pleased with us!

Why calamities? To gain people’s attention—that they might question whether their own selfish way of life may be the reason for such catastrophes befalling them, and that they might be motivated to take the action that will actually *save* their *life* and the life of their loved ones from further calamity!

Are natural disasters God’s will? Well, that depends on how you look at it. It isn’t His will that people have to suffer like that—but if they reject His message or turn away from Him, then that’s another matter. Then He wants to correct

them so He can bring them into His Family for all eternity.

God HATES to see suffering! What parent actually *enjoys* administering punishment to a child, necessary though it is at times? In all this, the great mercy of an all-wise and all-loving God is summed up in His plea to His people: “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, *I have NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked TURN from his way and LIVE: TURN YE, TURN YE FROM YOUR EVIL WAYS; for WHY WILL YE DIE, O house of Israel?*” (Ezekiel 33:11; see also Ezekiel 18:32).

God takes no pleasure in seeing people die! He wants us to turn to Him in obedience with our whole heart so we *don't have* to suffer and die.

These intensifying disasters are not God's fault. *They are our fault.* National tragedies are upon us, and will increase a hundredfold because of our disobedience to God's law and our rebellion against His authority.

The plain truth of the Bible is that God is DEEPLY concerned about *helping human beings overcome sin*, and the ways that lead to unhappiness, misery, strife and suffering. This world has chosen to reject His authority. And now God—like any parent who loves a child that is rebelling—is *correcting* us in order to *bring us back* to Him!

The Bible is clear that God's *judgment* and God's *correction* are EXPRESSIONS OF GOD'S LOVE!

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul wrote, “For whom the Lord LOVETH he *chasteneth*, and *scourgeth* every son whom he receiveth” (Hebrews 12:6). Jesus Christ Himself says, “As many as I LOVE, I *rebuke* and *chasten*: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19).

How well do you know this God?

While in the flesh, Jesus flipped over tables to drive out mercenaries who were polluting His Father's house.

He gave stern tongue-lashings to unrepentant people. He rebuked and chastened. He *demande*d repentance—NOT because He *hated* people, but BECAUSE HE LOVED THEM.

To the Pharisees—whom He unceremoniously called *hypocrites, serpents* and *vipers*—He said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not!* Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38). Their severe punishment was necessitated by their rebellion against God’s messengers, their rejection of God’s love.

If we understand the beautiful purpose of God’s law, then the application of rebuke and chastening for disobedience makes perfect sense. God always aims to *redirect our errant steps* in order to guide us back onto the path of lawkeeping that results in blessings. Yes, God gets angry—but He remains controlled and never punishes beyond what is deserved. God’s anger is not *contrary* to His love, but a *product* of it.

Notice how Christ concluded His correction in that passage with hope: “For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, *TILL* ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (verse 39). Yes, once those murderers—brought back to life in a resurrection—*humble* themselves and *accept God’s messengers*, then EVEN THEY will see Christ again!

The God of Judgment

It seems that whenever a major disaster hits, there are those eager to roundly condemn anyone who would deign to suggest that the disaster was part of God’s warning that judgment is coming. Bringing a “God of

judgment” into the picture is widely viewed as self-righteous, sanctimonious, even blasphemous.

But do those who would so quickly dismiss such a suggestion know the God of the Bible? The God who blesses for obedience and *punishes for disobedience*?

Obviously, to families mourning the loss of loved ones, to communities that have been demolished, it does little good to offer platitudes and bromides. Understandably in such bleak circumstances, the cliché that “God loves you” is difficult to swallow.

But can we recognize the *love* in God’s correction?

It is true that God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). But just WHAT IS GOD’S LOVE? It is God’s *giving way of life*, manifested, for example, in God *giving* His only begotten Son to the world (John 3:16). That love is defined by and expressed in God’s commandments: “For *this is the love of God*, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS ...” (1 John 5:3).

Doesn’t God love us? is perhaps a common question after a disaster. But shouldn’t we ask the more piercing question: Is it possible that WE DON’T LOVE GOD? Might *that* be the problem?

Something is deeply flawed with the notion that no matter how much evil is perpetrated, *no matter what we do*, God is obligated to shower only blessings upon us. Ponder these profound words of the Prophet Malachi: “Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, *Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?*” (Malachi 2:17).

Do we know *this* God? Do we really have the proper fear of God? Are we willing to accept this plain truth from the Bible?

Remember, Scripture plainly speaks of a natural

disaster of unparalleled proportions—exponentially more destructive than any we have seen recently—that demolished entire villages and cities filled with people—**ALL OVER THE EARTH!** Read it yourself in Genesis 7. The Flood came by the hand of God and wiped out *every inhabitant of the Earth*, save only eight people—Noah and his family.

What a killer storm! And it wasn't caused by climate change. It was **GOD PUNISHING PEOPLE FOR THEIR SINS!**

There was no physical evidence to predict that storm, but Noah had received word from God that it was coming, and he warned the world. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet [nobody saw that storm coming], moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Hebrews 11:7). For 100 years, Noah warned of the Flood that would come as punishment for the rampant sins of the entire world. Nobody believed him, and they paid a terrible price.

IS THE BIBLE YOUR AUTHORITY?

When He has to, **GOD DOES BRING EVIL UPON PEOPLE.** In the book of Daniel, the prophet said, “[A]ll this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the **LORD** our God, *that we might turn from our iniquities*, and understand thy truth. **THEREFORE HATH THE LORD WATCHED UPON THE EVIL, AND BROUGHT IT UPON US:** for the **LORD** our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice” (Daniel 9:13-14). God allows evil, and sometimes He brings it upon us. But why? “That we might turn” from our **LAWLESSNESS!**

Repeatedly Scripture describes God's judgment on the nations and on His own people. Read about the

fate of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. Read God's judgment against Egypt in Exodus 12:29-30 and against Israel in Amos 4:10.

Should we be so shocked when we see such calamities today? To say that God would never cause such suffering—that it *could not be His will*—is to admit frankly that we don't know God.

Why Do Some Die and Not Others?

However, this raises an important question.

Considering that natural disasters are correction from God, why then do they seem so random, so arbitrary, in their violence and savagery? An entire family is wiped out in a tsunami—except for a now-orphaned little girl. A tornado completely levels a town—except for a lone home left standing on its outskirts.

Do those who suffer from or die in such disasters deserve their fate more than those who survive? At times, such events seem practically to *beg* the question.

Did you realize that this crucial question was actually posed to Jesus Christ Himself?

His answer dispels a misconception that can easily surface when we contemplate these vital issues.

Some people from Galilee had been killed by Pilate in an especially gruesome manner. A few of Jesus's followers told Him about the incident, clearly troubled by the issue of whether or not, by reason of their sin, they had deserved their fate. *Were they evil? Was God exacting vengeance on them?*

Here is what Christ told them: "Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2-3).

What God Reveals About Death

TO UNDERSTAND HOW CORRECTION THROUGH calamity can actually be an expression of love, one must have God's perspective on human life. Human death means nothing to God except a *temporary sleep* (1 Corinthians 15:51-55), because He is able to *resurrect* humans from the grave!

One of the greatest, most hope-filled truths in Scripture is that of the *resurrection of the dead*. Hebrews 6:1-2 list the resurrection as one of the foundational doctrines of your Bible. Scripture actually reveals three separate resurrections, each serving a unique purpose. (This truth is explained in our free reprint article "The Three Resurrections.") In God's immense wisdom and mercy, every individual who has ever lived will be given one genuine chance to choose eternal life or eternal death. The vast majority in this Satan-gripped world have not yet been given that choice and are not yet judged (Hebrews 9:27).

Those who die in disasters on this Earth will be raised again! God has promised it! That is a message of hope. Those who grieve for their loved ones need to understand this. Those now dead will be resurrected in a future utopian world, ruled by God—one far kinder than the world fraught with nightmares that we now inhabit. At that time they will receive, for the first time, the opportunity to *understand* God's precious truth and apply it in their lives.

God's perspective is very different from ours. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:9). It is not cruelty that leads Him to correct—even to allow some to die. It is rather His lightning-bolt message to those *still living*—the Creator's call to repentance.

Christ followed up with an example that expanded the discussion. Eighteen people had been crushed by the collapse of a tower—an accidental and tragic death. They too bore no particular guilt above anyone else around them who was spared. But again Jesus followed up with the statement: “[T]hink ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (verses 4-5).

Jesus Christ knew that these men weren’t killed for their unrighteousness. Ecclesiastes 9:11 tells us that time and chance happen to all in this world.

This is a deeply important truth to recognize. No one can impute wickedness on the people who die in an accident or natural disaster. Their deaths offer no proof of their being any more sinful than those who survive—or anyone else in the world. Romans 3:23 explains that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

But still: Could those 18 in Siloam have been protected from the tower?

Jesus’s answer was *yes*. And He said the key to such protection is *repentance!*

Christ was saying that the disasters that befall others should *serve as a warning* to us—that we will be subject to the same fate *unless we repent of our sins!* God protects those who repent and turn to Him in obedience.

God Seeks Repentance

Think seriously about Christ’s strong warning to the Jews in the above passage. God was telling them that they must repent—or the whole Jewish nation would die in the same violent way! That is precisely what happened to the Jewish nation in A.D. 70! Only God’s loyal remnant escaped to Pella. They were the only ones who heeded Christ’s warning!

Here is what makes this so relevant to us today. What happened to the Jewish nation is a *type* of what is to happen to Israel in this end time—mainly the American and British peoples. This critical truth is explained in vivid detail in *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

Jewish historian Josephus recorded that *many* catastrophes were rapidly intensifying in the period before the Jewish nation was destroyed in A.D. 70. Today, we see the same scenario in end-time Israel. Horrifying events are becoming common for us today. It is all leading to the total destruction of our nations! These disasters are the strongest kind of warning from God.

Yet tragically, the nations of Israel and the rest of the world are proving themselves wholly UNWILLING to turn to God in repentance!

Biblical prophecy shows that this world is going to become A VICTIM OF THE VERY WORST OF THE DISASTERS IT DESCRIBES! (You can read about this in Gerald Flurry's free booklet *Lamentations: The Point of No Return*.)

However—just as in Noah's day, in a time of universal sin that would culminate in universal destruction—God *does offer* protection for those INDIVIDUALS, FEW THOUGH THEY MAY BE, who turn to Him in repentance and obedience!

This is an ironclad promise from your Bible!

Many scriptures show that God rewards and protects those who put Him first. If everyone in America would look to God, the plagues would stop! Here is just one example: "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:9-11). God does try

and test His people, but overall, He protects and blesses and rewards those who make God their habitation. He instructs His angels to watch over them.

This is the major lesson that God wants to teach us in these weather disasters. That is why it is such a dangerous deception to remove God from the equation and blame all these problems on carbon emissions causing climate change.

We need to be concerned about our MORAL conduct. We need to go back to the law of Moses. We must accept the correction of our loving Father, and return to Him in humble repentance and obedience. *That* is the way to reverse this deadly trend and end the disasters.

Hebrews 11 expounds on the FAITH we need in order to please God. Notice: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (verse 6).

That is a powerful statement. God expects you to test and prove Him on that to make sure His words are true.

Do you have *faith* in what God says in the Bible? We need faith in order to escape the storms. God says we can have the very same faith that Jesus Christ had on Earth (e.g. Galatians 2:20). As we have that faith, and diligently seek God and do as He commands, He will reward us—physically, spiritually, mentally, emotionally—in a multitude of ways! That is the truth of your Bible—Old Testament and New Testament.

Are the people who proclaim the dangers of climate change *diligently seeking God*? From everything I have seen, it is usually the reverse: They leave God entirely out of the picture. But GOD WILL NOT BE LEFT OUT.

What the authorities of this world are saying about

climate change *destroys faith!* It deprives people of those great rewards of God. It *destroys our hope!*

God rewards those who DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM. He will give us all the blessings we can imagine—including protection from all these storms—if we will just do that!

A Misquoted Bible Verse

There are some people who, in the face of natural disasters, don't necessarily blame climate change, but who still don't acknowledge the power of the spiritual dimension involved.

In recent years, there is one particular Bible verse that many leaders have quoted in an apparent effort to point to a spiritual solution to this problem. Recently, America's vice president quoted it in multiple interviews, campaign speeches and other occasions. Other leaders cited it after hurricanes devastated parts of America in 2017.

The verse is 2 Chronicles 7:14. It is the verse the vice president placed his hand on when he swore his oath of office: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, AND PRAY, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Here we see a focus on *prayer* as a solution to America's problems. But there is a serious problem with how the vice president and many other leaders, including religious leaders, often quote this scripture.

On *many occasions*, people intentionally leave out "TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS" AND "FORGIVE THEIR SIN"!

Without these words, the verse sounds nice to religious Americans, but it leaves out the most important part!

This verse shows that *prayer alone is not enough*. If we want God to "hear from heaven" when we pray, then

there is more to the equation! It also requires that we HUMBLE OURSELVES, *seek God's face*, and TURN FROM OUR WICKED WAYS.

Many leaders clearly do not want to tell Americans that they could be *guilty of sin and wickedness*—and that they must REPENT! Even many Americans who consider themselves Christian would reject such a message.

Jesus Christ commands us to live by *every word of God* (Matthew 4:4)—not by our own versions of God's words!

This deliberate misquotation of 2 Chronicles 7:14 is doubly destructive and tragic because *the words they are leaving out are the words America needs most!* Americans desperately need to hear these corrective words because repenting and turning to God is the *only* way people in this cursed, dying nation can be saved!

The God Who Blesses

Many people will pray to God. But how many will *obey* Him and allow Him to *rule them*? Very few.

When referring to God, the Prophet Amos used the word "Adonai" *25 times*—more than the other 11 minor prophets combined. This word means "Headship," "the Head," or "the God who blesses," according to the *Companion Bible*. Amos discussed a lot of negative prophecies, but he kept reminding himself of the great God behind the punishments—the God who sometimes sends trials and tests to humble us and to move us to get to know Him. When you understand their purpose, even God's difficult prophecies are inspiring and uplifting! God is a God of love. He only sends chastening to inspire us to return to Him.

"Hear ye this word which I take up against you, even a lamentation, O house of Israel. ... For thus saith the LORD

unto the house of Israel, SEEK YE ME, AND YE SHALL LIVE” (Amos 5:1, 4; see also verse 6). God delivers bad news, but if we respond the right way, we will live forever!

“Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that *calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth*: The LORD is his name” (verse 8). This is exactly what we saw in hurricanes Harvey and Irma: God brought trillions of gallons of water out of the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean and poured them on American cities! He would much rather use water to grow our crops and give us prosperity, but we must listen to Him. He has to get our attention if He is going to give us eternal life and rule over the entire universe.

“For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins ...” (verse 12). This is why God punishes us with hurricanes! We can pray and not even get close to God if we are not obeying Him. When we are involved in transgressions and sins, then God will not listen to or answer our prayers (Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 1:10-15; 59:1-2). We must REPENT and RETURN to God to reap tremendous blessings.

“Seek good, and not evil, THAT YE MAY LIVE: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken” (Amos 5:14). Clearly, God wants you to LIVE! He wants *every human* to live an abundant life (John 10:10).

An Unbreakable Promise

Study the *context* of the verse that America’s vice president and others have misquoted. God gave that promise as He accepted the temple that King Solomon had dedicated to Him. God said, “If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the

land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).

These leaders not only leave out parts of verse 14, they totally omit verse 13, which says that God will actually *cause destruction* to come on the land! They also leave out verses 19-22, where God says that if Israel turns away from God, He will bring “all this evil upon them” and even “pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them,” sending them into exile.

Many people apply this passage (at least the positive parts) to the United States. Many others—including many American Christians—disagree: They say this passage applied *only* to Israel, a long-gone ancient kingdom. But that is not true. God preserved this passage for 3,000 years because these verses—*every word* of these verses—continue to apply to the *modern descendants of ancient Israel!*

The book of Chronicles is not just a leftover record of what God told an ancient king. It is primarily for our time! And it is primarily for three end-time nations of Israel: America, Britain and the Jewish state. America and Britain received the birthright promises of unmatched national abundance. The Jewish state called Israel received the scepter promise of a royal dynasty that God promised would endure until the return of Jesus Christ. (This is all explained in *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.) The promise in Chronicles—and the warning—is for our day!

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, the wonderful, loving God tells us *exactly* how to avoid national suffering, division and

destruction. He makes an *unbreakable promise*: If we turn from our sins, He will heal us! This applied in the ancient past, it applies to the dangerous present, and it applies to the glorious future! God does promise to HEAL OUR LAND. But the people must heed His warning. The *minds of the people* must be healed!

God Has Responded to Past National Days of Prayer

IN THE FALL OF 2017, AFTER HURRICANE HARVEY decimated Houston and the Texas Gulf coast, United States President Donald Trump declared a day of national prayer. He called on Americans “of all faiths and religious traditions and backgrounds to offer prayers ... for all those harmed by Hurricane Harvey, including people who have lost family members or been injured, those who have lost homes or other property, and our first responders, law enforcement officers, military personnel, and medical professionals leading the response and recovery efforts.”

“God is our refuge and strength,” President Trump quoted from Psalm 46:1, “a very present help in trouble.”

When faced with hardship, Americans have a history of coming together and crying out to God. As early as the 1600s, American communities traditionally kept their own special fast day each spring, just as they kept a day of thanksgiving each fall (*Religion and the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*). National days of prayer in America go back to June 12, 1775, at the start of the American Revolutionary War, when the Continental Congress declared: “Congress ... considering the present critical, alarming and calamitous state ... do earnestly recommend, that Thursday, the 12th of July next, be observed by the inhabitants of all the English colonies on this continent, as a Day of Public Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, that we may with united hearts and voices,

unfeignedly confess and deplore our many sins and offer up our joint supplications to the all-wise, omnipotent and merciful disposer of all events, humbly beseeching Him to forgive our iniquities.”

The fledgling 13 colonies went on to win a miraculous victory in the war for independence against the greatest empire in the world. America was born as a republic of miracles.

President George Washington understood that. In his Inaugural Address on April 30, 1789, he stated, “[I]t would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge.”

America’s second president, John Adams, proclaimed a national day of humiliation, thanksgiving, fasting and prayer in 1798 and 1799. Almost every other president since has issued a proclamation of thanksgiving and/or prayer (*Religion and the Continental Congress*).

During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln declared April 30, 1863, as a day of national prayer. On this and other occasions, he openly recognized that God was cursing America for its many sins, including slavery. He called on Americans to repent: “We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth

and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.”

A few months later, the Union won the Battle of Gettysburg, turning the tide of the war.

During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed May 30, 1918, to be a day of prayer. The German empire had almost broken through the Allied lines. Russia had just quit the war, and German reinforcements were pouring into Western Europe. Paris was in danger of falling. The president wrote: “I, Woodrow Wilson, president of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Thursday, the 30th day of May, a day already freighted with sacred and stimulating memories, a day of public humiliation, prayer and fasting, and do exhort my fellow citizens of all faiths and creeds to assemble on that day in their several places of worship and there, as well as in their homes, to pray Almighty God that He may forgive our sins and shortcomings as a people and purify our hearts to see and love the truth, to accept and defend all things that are just and right, and to purpose only those righteous acts and judgments which are in conformity with His will.”

The very next day after the day of prayer, the United States Marine Corps began its first major engagement of the war at Belleau Wood. There something miraculous occurred: The Americans won a stunning victory over the Germans, keeping the Allies from losing the war.

Similar miracles happened for Britain during World War II. A day of prayer was called on May 26, 1940, for Britain as the trapped British Expeditionary Force faced annihilation by the Nazi war machine on the beaches of Dunkirk. King George VI broadcast on national radio, calling on the British people not only to plead for divine help, but also to turn back to God in a spirit of *repentance*. Between May 26 and June 4, a storm grounded the German Air Force, the German Army inexplicably halted, the English Channel calmed, and 340,000 Allied troops were saved.

A joint resolution of Congress in 1952 signed by President Harry Truman permanently established an annual National Day of Prayer. Since 1988, it has been held on the first Thursday in May.

But in the hurricane season of 2017, President Trump had reason to call a special day of prayer on September 3. When that day (a Sunday) came, there was a religious showing across America. The president and his wife attended a church service, as did Texas governor Greg Abbott. Churches all over America held services for the victims, and thousands of Americans came together to pray.

But instead of a miracle, America got another disaster.

On September 6, Hurricane Irma plowed through the Caribbean, desolating Barbuda and other Caribbean islands and striking Florida. Then Hurricane Maria smashed Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Harvey,

Irma and Maria cost more than 100 American lives and between \$100 and \$300 billion in damage, in addition to the lives lost and destruction wrought on other Caribbean islands.

GOD DID NOT ANSWER THOSE PRAYERS TO BLESS AMERICA. HE CAUSED OR ALLOWED MORE HURRICANES.

If you compare President Trump's proclamation to previous national proclamations of prayer, there is one *stark* difference. It boils down to one word: *repentance*.

In each of the cases where God dramatically responded to days of prayer and miraculously intervened, American leaders had not only called on their citizens to pray and beseech God to intervene, but to *fast* and to *repent of sin*.

President Trump's predecessors would have said the record-setting destruction was the consequence of *national sin*; President Trump mentioned only "the consequences of this terrible storm."

FOUR

Are You Ready for the End of the World?

IN THE LAST 100 YEARS, LIFE IN THE FIRST WORLD HAS gotten a whole lot easier. We've built an impressive infrastructure to mass-produce and distribute food, water, electricity and anything else we can dream up.

In the process, we have become extraordinarily dependent on "the grid." Every aspect of modern life hinges on the smooth-flowing, uninterrupted operation of a number of intricate and interrelated systems.

This labyrinthine complexity makes our high-tech civilization extremely vulnerable to disruption.

A multitude of unfavorable factors is hurting global food production. In the global grain industry, land

devoted to wheat and barley cultivation has been declining for a generation. Demand is rapidly overtaking supply in the grain markets. Adverse weather conditions have destroyed farms; outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease and bluetongue virus have hit prime breeding stock in the meat and dairy industries.

To add to the emerging global agricultural crisis, food aid to less-developed nations is being curtailed. It's not only donor fatigue that has reduced the world food aid effort; it's the failure of donor nations that have given the most aid in the past to maintain their production levels.

Right now, most of our planet's arable land is already under cultivation, and 35 percent of this land is seriously degraded because of the intensive, chemically based farming practices in widespread use since World War II. Add to this the increasing dependence of the agriculture industry on hybrid varieties that do not have the capacity to replenish themselves (thanks to the rapacious designs of corporate entities like Monsanto Chemicals), plus the continuing escalation of energy prices, and we have a recipe for agricultural disaster.

And now, as a result of ignorance and greed practiced by the agriculture industry over the past two or three generations, crops are failing, reserve stocks are shrinking, and prices are rising worldwide. Add to this the increasing flight from the dollar, with China potentially cashing in U.S. bonds; oil contracts, traditionally priced in dollars, now increasingly written in euros, rubles, yuan and yen—and the inescapable reality becomes clear. The world's systems of agriculture and trade stand on the brink of disaster.

What would you eat if the grocery stores and restaurants were empty? Today, *less than 2 percent* of the First World population is feeding the other 98 percent. Most of us get

our food from hundreds or thousands of miles away, and have only about a week's worth of groceries in the pantry.

What would you do if your town lost power? In most places, drinking water would soon dry up; plumbing would stop. Sanitation would quickly deteriorate, particularly within cities. Communications would fail; phone systems would shut down within a week.

Considering the number and variety of possible events that could create such conditions, it would be irrational to ignore their likelihood. And the probability of several of them happening is high and growing. Weather disasters, earthquakes or other natural phenomena destroying infrastructure or wiping out food production. A deepening economic depression. A collapse in the value of money, through deflation, hyperinflation or monetary manipulation. A disease pandemic. An energy embargo. Terrorist strikes or an attack by another country. The unleashing of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

Most of us simply don't seriously consider such scenarios. We enjoy them for summer popcorn movie fare—then continue to depend on the grid as if it will keep clicking in well-oiled perfection forever. But is that realistic? Not even a little bit.

Brace Yourself for TEOTWAWKI

A growing number of people are concerned. A swelling minority are proactively bracing for the worst. They recognize the signs, and believe their best defense is physical preparedness.

Popular survivalist expert James Wesley Rawles, a former U.S. Army Intelligence officer, advocates creating a survival retreat at least 300 miles from the nearest city. In his books and on his website, he gives

detailed information on increasing your self-sufficiency in matters such as water retrieval and purification, food production and storage, security and self-defense and so on—in anticipation of what he calls TEOTWAWKI: *the end of the world as we know it*.

To give a colorful single example, in assembling “first-aid/minor surgery” supplies for your retreat, Rawles advises, “[C]onsider your neighborhood going for many months without power, extensive use of open flames, and sentries standing picket shifts exposed to the elements. Then consider axes, chain saws and tractors being wielded by newbies, and a greater likelihood of gunshot wounds. With all of this, add the possibility of no access to doctors or high-tech medical diagnostic equipment” (*How to Survive the End of the World As We Know It*).

Survivalist thinking is often associated with paramilitary activities, racism and religious extremism. But as global stability deteriorates and threats to civilization increase, it is becoming more mainstream. For his part, Rawles is avowedly anti-racist, and apparently moderate in his religion. He emphasizes preparing in a way that enables a person to fulfill the “moral imperative” of charity, giving to the needy in times of crisis.

There is something to be admired in the clear-eyed pragmatism of those taking steps to face calamity. Unlike the far more common head-in-the-sand approach, it acknowledges the seriousness of the times, and recognizes the need to do something—to work while it is day, since the night is coming.

‘Take Heed to Yourselves’

For the greater part of the 20th century, Herbert W. Armstrong warned of the very state that the world—in

particular the English-speaking nations—has now entered. Sixty years ago, he declared: “I repeat—it’s later than you think!

“Yes, time is running out on us, fast, and we’re too sound asleep in deception to realize it!

“Our peoples will continue only a few more years in comparative economic prosperity. This very prosperity is our fatal curse!—because our people are setting their hearts on it, seeking ease and leisure, becoming soft and decadent and weak!

“We’re going the way of ancient Rome—to a greater fall, because we’re bigger and more prosperous, and have *farther* to fall!

“Then, suddenly, before we realize it, we’ll find ourselves in the throes of famine, and uncontrollable epidemics of disease. Already we’re in the beginning of a terrible famine and we don’t know it—a famine of needed minerals and vitamins in our foods. Our peoples have ignored God’s agricultural laws. Not all the land has been permitted to rest every seventh year. The land has been overworked. Today, the soil is worn out. And food factories, in the interest of larger profits, are removing much of what minerals and vitamins remain—while a new profit-making vitamin industry deludes the people into believing they can obtain these precious elements from pills and capsules purchased in drug stores and ‘health food’ stores!”

Watching global conditions, the Bible’s detailed descriptions of “great tribulation” to befall the world just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are unmistakably increasing in relevance and urgency. In fact, the disasters for which some few are bracing themselves aren’t just likely scenarios based on current

trends—they were specifically prophesied in Scripture millennia ago to claim the lives of an *unimaginable* number of people in the developed world and beyond.

We need to prepare our minds for catastrophes, because they *are* coming.

Curses and Captivity

We can learn what is ahead for the modern descendants of Israel by looking at what happened to our ancestors. Solomon and many Israelites did turn away from God to a significant degree, but the Bible indicates Solomon repented. After Solomon died, the sin and wickedness continued, the kingdom split, and the two sides, Israel and Judah, nearly went to war. They both continued to sin against God, although Judah had a few righteous kings who did lead the people to righteousness—and healing and blessings. But the people continued to turn back to sin, and they were cursed. They suffered numerous wars and even went to war against each other at times. Finally, Israel was conquered by the Assyrian Empire, and its sinning people were plucked out of their land. Later, Judah was conquered by the Babylonian Empire, and its sinning people were also plucked out of their land.

“And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia” (2 Chronicles 36:20). National sin leads to national curses, which lead to national captivity—both historically and presently!

Verse 21 points out that this catastrophic national tragedy for Judah “[fulfilled] the word of the LORD *by the mouth of Jeremiah.*” God had sent a prophet to warn the people of Judah that their sins were leading to captivity.

Jeremiah told them how God would heal their land, but they would not listen. Their leaders convinced them that God would save them, but the people did not *turn from their wicked ways*—so God did not *heal their land*.

But notice this: The book of Jeremiah is specifically addressed to *Israel* (Jeremiah 2:4; 3:12; 4:1; 5:15, etc). This is significant, because Jeremiah lived *in Judah*, and actually witnessed Judah's destruction at the hand of Babylon. Yet his book was not primarily for Judah. It was *for Israel*, and ancient Israel had been destroyed and taken captive in 721 B.C.—several decades before Jeremiah was even born! Jeremiah never delivered his message to ancient Israel because it no longer existed as a nation.

This shows that Jeremiah's prophecy is for our nations *today*, the *descendants* of ancient Israel: America and Britain! These are warnings that God wants us to “consider”—which means *understand thoroughly*—“in the LATTER DAYS,” the END TIME! (Jeremiah 30:24).

We **MUST** take these warnings seriously! We *need* God to hear us and to answer our prayers! Continuing in our ways and twisting His Word to fit our preferences is not the way to ask Him to save us!

Often, meteorologists will issue early-warning calls for action in anticipation of major disasters like hurricanes. In severe cases, people are instructed to evacuate the area in order to protect themselves from the death and destruction hurtling toward them.

And in every case, some people will dismiss or defy the warnings and refuse to budge.

Perhaps there are many reasons for that seemingly illogical behavior. But the fact is, there is a strong tendency in human nature—common to all of us—that

makes us want to pretend that if we just keep doing what we are doing, everything will turn out just fine in the end.

All humans have the proclivity to ignore terror!

It is because of this human tendency that Jesus Christ warned, “[T]ake heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so *that day*”—that is, the period of destruction just ahead of us—“come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth” (Luke 21:34-35).

Heeding this warning will ensure that day *won't* come up on us unawares. Christ definitely advocated *preparedness*.

Does that mean we should stock a survivalist bunker in the wilds, in hopes of riding out an “end of the world” scenario?

Is that why Jesus gave us this prophecy? Is that why He warned in advance of the terrifying and tumultuous events that are beginning to unfold in this modern age? So we could invest our time, treasure, energy and hearts into stockpiling food and ammunition within physical fortresses?

The Right Kind of Preparation

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal,” Christ instructed. “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

In this and several other passages, the preparedness Christ urged was *spiritual*.

God's challenge with each one of us is to teach us to put our trust and confidence in *Him* rather than in ourselves or any other human being (e.g. Psalm 118:8; Jeremiah 17:5-7). He supernaturally fed the Israelites for 40 years in the wilderness to teach them *faith*—that man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Jesus supported this principle. He taught that we should pray each day for "our *daily bread*," and warned against faithless anxiety and fretting over tomorrow's problems (Matthew 6:11, 25, 31-34). He was not an advocate of hoarding food. "For whosoever will save his life [or seek to maintain his physical life at all costs] shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it," He said (Luke 9:24).

God actually wants us to recognize and *overcome* our tendency to trust ourselves. He is measuring the coming destruction of America and other nations because of our sin, our faithlessness, our self-reliance, our ignorance of Him and our belittling of His power. And if you understand the Bible's prophecies about the severity of that destruction, you realize that *no private bunker will be safe for long*. NO ONE is going to escape the coming Tribulation—descending on America and other nations because of God's wrath—through survivalist moxie.

Those who plan to weather the coming storms through their own foresight and ingenuity are underestimating the savageness of the time ahead. More importantly, they are *misplacing their faith*.

In a 1966 article titled "Don't Store Up Large Quantities of Food," Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, "Do not spend extra money on foodstuffs above your *normal* supplies and perhaps some few 'staples' which could

carry you through a temporary food shortage on a vastly curtailed and reduced diet, in a severe and temporary emergency, for only a few *WEEKS!* ... If you ever store more food than the normal laying up in summer for winter—you're hoarding, and God Almighty may well withdraw His protection from you!"

The fact is, until man gets himself right with his Maker, the troubles impacting humanity more and more week by week will only accelerate into untold disaster of global proportions. Biblical prophecy guarantees that! And God's Word is much *more* sure than the word of any human "expert" or commentator!

Very soon, we will **DESPERATELY NEED GOD'S PROTECTION!** Can you guarantee that you will have it?

How to Be Protected

There was a very sinful metropolis in the ancient world that did find a way to protect itself from God's wrath. Note this remarkable example.

When Jonah came with God's warning, Nineveh was just 40 days away from total destruction (Jonah 3:4). Just this one time in biblical history, an entire city's inhabitants, under the direction of their leader, humbled themselves in sackcloth and ashes, fasted before God, and truly repented. The city was spared the horrible fate it had been warned about. This was—and remains to this day—the only time in history that a Gentile city repented before God.

What an example of hope it has left for our time today. What beautiful results the warning God sent had on Nineveh. (This episode is described in more detail in our free booklet about Jonah.)

The nations of the world today are in the same

situation that the city of Nineveh was in nearly 2,800 years ago—filled with sin and on the brink of destruction. The warning is being delivered. But the world has, unhappily, become so immoral that it has gone BEYOND the possibility of turning away from its present course of destruction!

But what about you?

While the Bible gives only one example like that of Nineveh, it is *filled* with examples of individual repentance and individual protection. If we repent, God can protect us just as surely as He protected Daniel from the jaws of the lions. Not one hair was singed when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace. The ancient prophets survived multiple disasters and intense persecution. God's true Church received divine protection throughout the centuries, when His people remained faithful to Him. God can bless us and be a shield in our individual lives just as He was for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and so many others.

The Apostle Peter wrote that “THE LORD KNOWS HOW TO RESCUE THE GODLY FROM TRIAL, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment” (2 Peter 2:9; RSV). This lesson permeates the Bible: God protects righteous, obedient people who seek His protection!

Finding a safe place to escape to today may seem impossible. But this is a matter of *faith* in God's Word—*faith* in the sure promises of God. Remember His promise in Psalm 91:9-11: “Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”

Consider again the previous worldwide cataclysm—the largest flood in history. Surely with floodwaters covering even the tallest mountains on the planet, *nobody* would be safe! But God gave Noah advance warning, as well as explicit instructions on how to be protected: by building an ark. Noah *believed* God—he HAD FAITH in God’s word. There was no *physical evidence* that what God warned of would come to pass; Noah simply had to *believe*. And then he had to *act* on that faith, obediently and precisely following God’s instructions.

“BY FAITH Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Hebrews 11:7).

The same holds true today. God has given us explicit warnings of the coming destruction. And He has also given us *promises* that we can be protected from it—and *instructions* on HOW to be protected!

WILL YOU BELIEVE GOD?

Seek God While He May Be Found

God is trumpeting His end-time warning message to this world through this Work, literally fulfilling His prophecy in Isaiah 58:1: “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”

God is going to bring us to repentance through words, or through mind-numbing disasters! This is a warning of HOPE! If you *heed* God’s words and *turn* to God *now*, you will receive *relief* from His curses. He will forgive upon repentance and show you how to fill your life with *blessings!* Why let pride keep you from responding?

When trouble comes, some will finally cry out to God for His intervention in their lives. But physically, they may be too late! We must seek God “while he may be found” (Isaiah 55:6). We must heed God’s warning before time runs out! At some point—a time when the world is saying “peace and safety”—sudden destruction will come (1 Thessalonians 5:3). We need to take action while the *warning* is still going out, not when calamity is already here! God promises to protect each person who repents. Why wait until the Great Tribulation to respond?

Our continuing prayer will be for Almighty God to have mercy on those who cry out for understanding of the reasons for the devastation that is increasingly afflicting our nations.

Amid every disaster, you hear stories of people who are spared, sometimes in very unusual ways. Undoubtedly many of these occur according to simple time and chance. But you can *know* you will be spared in the terrible times ahead! God has promised protection for those who hear His warning and turn to Him in repentance. Then, we can claim God’s absolute promise in Psalm 91:7 that “[a] thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.”

Are you ready for the end of the world? You need to start preparing by repenting before God. Above all, God seeks *repentance*. And to those who turn to Him with supple hearts, He offers individual protection—*escape*—from the worst of the coming storms (e.g. Luke 21:36). That is the only sure place to invest our faith. Request a free copy of our booklet *Repentance Toward God* to help you in this life-saving process. If ever there was a need for you to seek and find refuge in God, surely it is now.

FIVE

An End to Natural Disasters!

YOU KNOW IT'S BAD WHEN LEADING VOICES START using biblical language. MSNBC referred to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina hit as having an "Armageddon-like atmosphere." The governor of Arkansas said it was actually equivalent to Armageddon—that it was "*apocalyptic* in nature" (emphasis added throughout). Dozens of media outlets said it was a disaster of "*biblical proportions*."

Not that you can fault them for making such comparisons. Hurricane Katrina was, after all, America's worst weather-related disaster to that point. But such comparisons, while understandable in the midst of a

human tragedy of such magnitude, nevertheless revealed a certain degree of biblical ignorance.

Armageddon is a Hebrew word mentioned just once in the Bible (Revelation 16:16). It means “fortified hill of Megiddo.” It is just a place on Earth, located about 70 miles northwest of Jerusalem. It will be the staging ground for multiple-*million*-man ARMIES to gather together before triggering the war to end all wars—against Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. But the Bible refers to that as the “battle of that great day of God Almighty”—not *Armageddon* (see verse 14). If, by using the term *Armageddon*, commentators mean to equate some natural disaster to the final climactic battle of the ages—of mankind against Christ—then it is actually a huge exaggeration.

The flood following that end-of-the-world battle will overflow out from Jerusalem’s Kidron Valley, filling a ravine stretching across Israel for *180 miles* (Revelation 14:20). Picture a 6-foot flood flowing through all of New Orleans, then east along Interstate 10 where the eyewall of Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast, blanketing Gulfport, Biloxi and Mobile—even reaching the western edge of the Florida panhandle. And, like New Orleans after Katrina in 2005, this prophesied flood will also be a toxic dump of human waste, animal carcasses and man-made pollutants. There is, however, one key difference—this prophesied flood won’t be one of *water* breaking through crumbling levees—but of *blood* FLOWING OUT OF MILLIONS OF SLAIN SOLDIERS.

Calling nature-caused destruction an “apocalypse” is another odd comparison, technically speaking. *Apocalypse* is a Greek word that means revelation or disclosure. According to *Webster’s Dictionary*, *revelation*

means “something that is revealed by God to humans.” Surely *that* isn’t the idea news commentators mean to communicate when using the word. There is, however, a book in the Bible called the *Apocalypse* in Greek manuscripts—or, as it is translated in English, the *book of Revelation*. And because of certain dire prophecies recorded in that book, its Greek name has become a euphemism for tragic events.

It’s not that there is anything wrong with journalists and politicians using terms like “Armageddon” and “apocalypse” to describe such catastrophes. Surely the times warrant more such comparisons! But why not take it a step further and actually *open the Bible* to see what it has to say about our increasingly frequent and intensifying “natural” disasters?

We live in PERILOUS times! It is NOT ENOUGH to merely refer to God’s Word—or to compare tragic events with those described in the Bible. We MUST *look into* the Bible and heed what God says!

What Jesus Prophesied

In Matthew 24, Jesus Christ’s disciples asked Him what signs would precede His Second Coming and the end of this present world. He responded with THE PIVOTAL PROPHECY OF HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY: the Olivet prophecy. Every end-time Bible prophecy revolves around it. A red-letter Bible shows that these are all Christ’s own words.

Christ spoke about the end time—the time we live in right now. In verse 14, He gave us the *major sign* of His return: the gospel being preached around the world. If you know the history of God’s Church, you know this has been fulfilled. In verses 21-22, Christ said there is a time coming when *no flesh would be saved alive* if He didn’t return and

prevent it! We must realize that in today's age of weapons of mass destruction, this is a very realistic scenario. This is speaking of World War III—a 3½-year bloodbath that will culminate in the “battle of that great day of God Almighty.” These are obviously end-time prophecies.

But *before* all this—*before* the battle of mankind against Christ—*before* the European beast power and the Asiatic kings of the east square off—*before* Europe destroys the nations of Israel—*before* Europe surrounds Jerusalem with armies—*before* the European Union comes against the Islamic king of the south like a whirlwind—*before* Arabs capture East Jerusalem—*just before all of this happens*, Jesus prophesied of specific signs we should watch for!

Notice verses 4-5: “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I [Christ] am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

This is the *first* warning Christ gave—it is the major warning sign we need to watch for. He warned that people would come in Christ's name, but they *wouldn't believe Christ's message*. And He said that these false ministers would deceive many!

The *faithless* approach that most religious leaders take in responding to natural disasters is certainly a fulfillment of that prophecy!

Christ then gave another important sign of the end time: weather patterns and other natural phenomena taking a violent turn for the worse! “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars ... For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: *and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers [different] places*” (verses 6-7). Notice, in addition to the

“wars and rumours of wars”—surely an apt description of the current state of international relations—Jesus told His disciples that His return would be preceded by *an uptick in natural disasters*. Luke’s account of the same prophecy reads, “And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and *great signs shall there be from heaven*” (Luke 21:11).

In fact, Christ stated specifically that before His return there would be *earthquakes in different places*. It is true that there have always been earthquakes. But for Christ to give this as a *sign of the imminence of His return* tells you that we should watch for and expect a *change from the norm*—a notable, measurable increase in the frequency and ferocity of quakes, and perhaps their occurrence in unexpected places. What a mistake it would be, then, to dismiss the fact that this is *exactly what we are seeing today!*

Notice also, Jesus told His disciples that famine—a shortage of food and water—and then pestilences, or disease epidemics, would accompany these natural disasters.

The word *famines* needs to be examined in the context of not only the “wars” mentioned here—which do tend to produce famines—but also the *natural disasters* that are mentioned! Droughts and floods on the scale we see today have a *tremendous* impact on food production! The Greek word for *famines* can mean “a scarcity of harvest.” And we are seeing that in the news all the time!

Christ’s words recall these chilling words from the Prophet Isaiah: “For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, TAKES AWAY from Jerusalem and from Judah *The stock and the store*, THE WHOLE SUPPLY OF BREAD AND THE WHOLE SUPPLY OF WATER” (Isaiah 3:1; New King James

Version). Jerusalem anciently was the capital of Israel, and is often used in end-time prophecy as a type of all the end-time nations of Israel. God says that because of our sins, He is going to TAKE AWAY our food and water!

In Hosea, another end-time book, God indicts the nations of Israel with *this* charge: “For she did not know that *I gave her corn, and wine, and oil*, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal” (Hosea 2:8). We have forgotten that we owe GOD thanks for our abundance! He has given us the greatest blessings any nation in human history has ever received—and we have turned our backs on Him. He continues, “Therefore will I return, and TAKE AWAY MY CORN in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness” (verse 9).

We need to EXPECT weather disasters to cause FAMINES! God warned us through His prophets—and even CHRIST HIMSELF!

Christ’s reference to *pestilences* refers to the diseases that often follow in the wake of such disasters. But in Acts 24:5, that same word is translated “a pestilent fellow”; that adds another dimension to this prophecy! What happens when scarce harvests threaten food supplies and create famines? That causes a societal breakdown! Americans are the most heavily armed people in the world. They are also probably the most heavily doped, drugged and indebted. With the economy breaking down, an explosive cocktail could be brewing. We have already seen looting and riots on a small scale within the nations of Israel—and here is a prophecy from Jesus Christ Himself that indicates IT IS GOING TO GET A LOT WORSE before it gets better.

These are the days we are living in right now! We are experiencing the outer edges of a storm that is about

to inflict the worst suffering mankind has ever known. Jesus said so. Weather disasters, as they increase in frequency and intensity, are actually fulfilling biblical prophecy. They are among the signs Christ gave of the end of the present world—and the beginning of a beautiful new world we can hardly even imagine.

Can we ignore Christ's words? Why won't religious leaders BELIEVE these crucial *signs of the end*? Why won't so-called *Christians* simply BELIEVE CHRIST?

But the prophecy gets even more shocking.

The Beginning of Sorrows

In the very next verse of Matthew 24, Christ tells us, "All these are THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS" (verse 8).

The point at which we find ourselves today, Christ told us, is only THE *BEGINNING* OF SORROWS!

Where are we in Bible prophecy? We are at the BEGINNING of sorrows! The disasters occurring before our eyes are just the *beginning*. They are going to get much worse.

In times of extreme calamity, people sometimes talk about "the end of the world." In a way that is right. It is the BEGINNING of the *end of the world!*

Regarding the phrase "the beginning of sorrows," the *Anchor Bible* says, "Literally," it means "the beginnings of BIRTH-PAINS,' an almost technical term for the sufferings which would immediately precede a *new age* ... [t]he age of the Messiah's reign." Think about that! Christ was giving us a picture of a *woman about to give birth to a child*. This world is going to go through birth pains—some very difficult lessons—but in the end, a NEW AGE will be born! Jesus Christ is about to usher in a NEW WORLD—a world without natural disasters or any such troubles unless

nations refuse to obey God (Zechariah 14:17-19). When Christ governs Earth, it will become an absolute paradise. The Bible is full of prophecies about that.

The problem now is, most men are not ruled by Christ. They may *say* He rules them, but for most of them, that statement simply will not stand the test of the Scriptures.

Scoffers

The evils of our present generation are not unlike those of Noah's day. Genesis 6:5 says that every imagination of the thoughts of man "was only evil continually."

The Bible prophesies that those same immoral conditions would be widespread in this end time: "But as the days of Noe [Noah] were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). In Noah's day, the masses mocked God's warnings "until the flood came, and took them all away" (verse 39).

In this end time, the majority of mankind will again ridicule God's warning message—just as they did in the days before Noah's Flood, and as they did before God rained fire from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus said there would be those who scoff.

There will *always* be deceivers who insist that we are in no special danger today. *We've always had storms and disasters. We've always bounced back. We've always rebuilt.* People say that everything is moving in accordance with *Mother Nature's* plan. It's a *natural, normal cycle*, they say.

Others—including prominent religious leaders—are saying, in effect, *God created us—He sends blessings—He continues blessing the United States of America—BUT HE CAN'T STOP A STORM. Poor God—He's just not strong enough to stop "Mother Nature."*

That is NOT the truth of the Bible!

Here is how God responds to the scoffers: “But evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13). As evil worsens, so does God’s punishment. Paul is addressing those of us living in the last days. “This know also, that in the *last days* PERILOUS [or *dangerous*] times shall come” (verse 1). People deceive themselves by thinking there is no special danger right now—that the world has *always* been like this. While it is true that human nature has always been hostile to God’s law (Romans 8:7), the Bible says that Satan-influenced nature would wax worse and worse as the day of Christ’s return approaches. Satan has been cast down to this Earth (Revelation 12:9). Add to that this stark reality: Not until these latter days has man’s rebellious nature gained possession of weaponry powerful enough to annihilate himself. And add to that this frightening fact: GOD IS AGAINST US! (Ezekiel 5:8).

These are not normal times. The Bible says earthquakes, droughts, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and tsunamis are anything BUT normal. They are *curses* man has brought upon himself as a result of disobedience to God’s laws. And the Bible says that, in the modern nations of Israel, these curses are about to explode—they are about to get so bad that they can *legitimately* be compared to the events described in the pages of the Holy Bible!

We must tell you this—not because we derive some kind of sick pleasure from seeing people suffer—but because God says we must warn!

God, in His mercy, is trying to shake our peoples out of their drunken stupor before the real Armageddon-like events hit home! “For then shall be GREAT TRIBULATION, *such as was not since the beginning of the world to this*

time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [the Moffatt translation says ‘*saved alive*’]: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22).

This will be the end result of man’s rebellion against God, which began in the Garden of Eden nearly 6,000 years ago. ALL FLESH would be destroyed if Jesus Christ didn’t come back to Earth and stop the annihilation!

Now, Christ didn’t bring nuclear bombs into this world. He didn’t invent the terrible weapons of mass destruction we possess today. *Man did that, in violation of God’s law.* Will we blame God for all of this—like we do so often for natural disasters?

God is going to put the people of this world through great tribulation until they know that, without Him, there is no hope at all—there’s nothing man can do. People will be brought to the point where they *have* to rely on God! So often, an alcoholic has to hit rock bottom before he’ll say, *I’m wrong and I want to change.* That is the way mankind tends to be.

THE TWO HARDEST THINGS IN THE WORLD FOR PEOPLE TO DO ARE, FIRST, TO ADMIT THEY’RE WRONG, AND SECOND, TO BELIEVE GOD.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (verse 24). False prophets are going to appear who will actually be able to show *signs and wonders.* Do you know the difference between a false prophet and a true one? You MUST, or you will be deceived.

But God’s very elect cannot be deceived. Do you know why? It’s because they simply believe Christ. They hold on to what He said and will not let go.

Jesus Christ was the greatest newscaster ever. If you doubt that, just watch what happens. Compare what He said with what so many ministers in this world are saying. Learn Christ's prophecies, and then watch. *Every single one of them will be fulfilled.* And then, right on the heels of all these catastrophes, HE WILL RETURN.

Heed the Warning!

We have already seen some almost unimaginably devastating catastrophes. But think about this: At times there have been indications that God has *held off* the worst of the destructive potential of some violent natural phenomena!

For example, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina steamrolled across the Gulf of Mexico as a monstrous Category 5, with New Orleans *directly in its path*. Yet the next morning, just before it hit landfall, a “puff” of Midwestern dry air weakened it to a Category 4 and nudged its eyewall ever so slightly to the east. Thus, the coast of Mississippi and Alabama withstood the storm's fiercest wrath, whereas the much larger, below-sea-level, critical U.S. port of New Orleans barely escaped a direct hit. Residents of the city and commentators alike collectively breathed a sigh of relief as New Orleans had been “spared.” Of course, the nightmare that followed was brought about by two breaches the storm surge had punched in the city's levees.

But think about how much worse it could have been if a Category 5 had hit New Orleans dead on—especially considering the number of city residents who did not evacuate. We saw what a *Category 4* did to the Mississippi coast. What if the homes, hotels, businesses and office buildings in *New Orleans* had been leveled like the structures in Biloxi?

Of course, it's normal for a "puff" of dry air to come billowing out of the Midwest right at the point of contact between Katrina and the coast.

Or maybe—just *maybe*—God mercifully spared America from something much more deadly and destructive. There are, after all, end-time prophecies in the Bible that speak of ENTIRE CITIES being left without inhabitant (Isaiah 6:11; Jeremiah 2:15). *Most* of New Orleans's residents were spared—either by fleeing before the storm or by being rescued out of it.

God is giving advance news of the storm that will soon strike all of America, Britain and the Jewish nation—just like those meteorologists warned about Katrina *before* it struck, enabling residents to take preparatory action.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees in His day because they had become quite good at making weather predictions. *You can discern the face of the sky*, He told them, *but you can't discern the signs of the times!* (Matthew 16:3). Besides weather predictions, these religious zealots were also quite good at reciting Scripture, pointing to significant biblical events, even comparing the events of their day with those of old, as referred to in God's Word. But they didn't obey Christ. And they disregarded His *repeated* warnings. They could not discern the many signs—advance warnings—of the times in which they lived.

What about *you*? Will you discern the signs of the times? Will you heed Jesus Christ's warning? Or ignore it?

How Bad Will It Get?

What is the Bible's weather forecast for the near future? The answer to that question is directly related to the moral and spiritual state of the world. Because that is

prophesied to decay—a reality we vividly see around us—so too is the state of our weather.

The disasters we have experienced in recent decades will soon seem tame by comparison. The Bible prophesies of a time—and it is sooner than you may think—when catastrophes will escalate dramatically. The weather will go completely haywire.

Notice what Jesus prophesied would happen after the nightmares of the Great Tribulation. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matthew 24:29). Now compare how the Prophet Joel describes these same heavenly signs: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come” (Joel 2:31).

After that, yet more powerfully destructive natural forces will be unleashed upon a disobedient world to bring it to its knees in repentance (see Revelation 6:5-8; 8:4-12).

We should consider the worsening disasters a warning from Almighty God—a warning to the nations today to turn from materialism, false religions and all the sins that are leading us away from the true path of peace and abundant living. We can expect our weather to get worse until we acknowledge our Creator, get down on our knees and pray that God would grant us repentance and give us the power necessary to keep His law. He is going to increase the pressure to such an overwhelming degree that all peoples *will* reach the point where they are willing to repent! (e.g. Isaiah 45:22-25).

The Almighty God is determined to capture man’s attention!

In order to attract the nations to His final end-time

warning message, God will raise up two prophets and charge them with the responsibility to deliver it. To them He will give the *power to control weather patterns!* (Revelation 11:3-6). They will literally be able to cause disasters in order to fix the nations' concentration onto God's *final message* to mankind before His *great punishment* descends upon them for their sins!

That FINAL punishment is spelled out in Revelation 16. Read the prophecies of the plagues God will rain down upon this world!

However, that is not the end of the story—not even close.

What It All Points To!

Remember the context of Christ's prophecy in Matthew 24. As a part of His warning, God also wants us to realize that *we are on a countdown*. When you see these savagely destructive disasters—when you recognize that we are in what Christ called *the beginning of the birth pains*—then remember that this is a SIGN that we are on a COUNTDOWN to *THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST!*

THAT IS THE BEST POSSIBLE NEWS THIS WORLD COULD EVER HEAR!

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:27). Wow! Christ is going to return, and this is what it will look like. Change is on the way like this world has never known!

“So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, *know that it is near, even at the doors*. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (verses 33-34). Christ's return is *right at the doors*—it is almost upon us! True, we don't know the day or the hour (verse 36)—but Christ said **WE SHOULD KNOW WHEN IT IS**

AT THE DOORS. And we can be certain that *everything He prophesied* will be fulfilled—both the bad news, and the *best possible news!*

Do you believe that? Can you begin to see the hope in the tragic events we see in our world today? The earthquakes and other catastrophes point to this prophecy from nearly 2,000 years ago, and they are a sign that Jesus Christ is about to return!

That is what Jesus Himself prophesied. When we understand and believe the Bible, natural disasters take on added significance. While our hearts ache for the victims, such tragedy stirs a renewed hope and confidence in the Second Coming.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (verse 35). You can always trust Christ’s words of life. They will NEVER FAIL.

This is why your faith should actually be STRENGTHENED by natural disasters! Earthquakes, tsunamis and other catastrophes were *prophesied* by Jesus Christ, and everything is coming to pass precisely as He said!

Remember the instruction from Christ’s own mouth: Natural disasters are a sign that this present evil world is about to *end*. In the rubble of these catastrophes lies invigorating hope. Emotionally, they are gut wrenching. Prophetically, however, they are a sign that the most exciting event ever to occur in the age of man is imminent!

We must build our faith—and prepare for a rocky future until Christ gets here. Yes, God brings evil upon us. But He also shows us how to turn away from our sinful way of life so we will receive nothing but blessings on top of blessings!

Very soon now, Jesus Christ is going to return and bring this Earth physical abundance, peace and joy. Thank God for this gloriously good news.

A Promise to Heal the Land

Remember the wonderful promise from God: “If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall *humble themselves*, and *pray*, and *seek my face*, and *turn* from their wicked ways; *then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will HEAL THEIR LAND*” (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).

When God makes a promise, WE CAN STAKE OUR LIVES ON IT!

We will certainly witness the fulfillment of this promise once Christ returns and begins to rule the nations.

But realize that God has repeatedly proved throughout human history that He will fulfill that promise *even today*, if men will only do their part!

God’s Purpose—Fulfilled!

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 is *more* than a promise from God. It is a heartfelt expression of God’s earnest DESIRE to see the suffering of this present evil world come to an end.

When that day finally comes, the 6,000-year-long aversion therapy will be *over*. Everyone on Earth will have seen the futility of partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Mankind will be completely fed up with this sin-sick world! People will never want to turn to that way of life again. More than simply being sick of doing the wrong, most will be ready to do what is right, and to live the way of peace, joy and happiness that God offered Adam and Eve 6,000 years ago.

That will mean the dawning of a new age. Satan the devil will be removed, and Jesus Christ—who qualified to replace Satan as ruler of all the Earth—will reign over the greatest period of prosperity that has ever been.

Upon the wonderful *release* from bondage that will occur at His return, Jesus Christ will set up God's government of love, peace and joy. Israel will return, a repentant remnant, to rebuild the waste places. With all mankind walking in God's statutes, keeping His commandments and doing them, the promises in Leviticus 26 of "rain in due season" and that "the land shall yield her increase" will be realized all over the planet! This world will be blessed with beautiful weather and stable climates. There will be no anxiety over crop failures and famine, no fear of being killed in a severe weather event.

Obedience to God will result in abundance from the land, and a way of living that produces the peace and happiness that mankind has ever desired, leading ultimately to abundant life, eternally! If you would like to know more about that soon-coming world, request a copy of our free booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like*.

Finally, with God's benevolent government in place, the hope of the resurrection will become reality, and everyone who has ever lived—including all those who have perished in the disasters and cataclysms that have afflicted our world—will be raised into a world where the right choice has been made, where, as the Prophet Isaiah said, the knowledge of the Eternal covers the Earth as the waters cover the sea.

God's plan offers tremendous hope to everyone! After all, who hasn't wondered about the ultimate fate of a loved one who has died? These people, resurrected to physical life, will have a choice to make: to follow God's way of life—or to continue to live a lifestyle that everyone on Earth has seen fail abysmally, a lifestyle that caused the suffering for which so many blame God. People of

every religion, every type of sinner, every type of person who has ever lived—including friends and relatives of yours who have died not yet having received a chance at the abundant life only God can offer—will be given the opportunity to learn God’s way of life. They will gain the knowledge of their own potential.

God the Father wants to fulfill His purpose in us. And when He finally does come down to Earth—when the *incredible potential* He has given to every human is fulfilled—everyone will understand why the Apostle Paul was inspired to write in Romans 8:18: “For I reckon that *the sufferings of this present time* are NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED with the *GLORY* which shall be revealed in us”!



You Can Understand the Bible!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN FOR OUR day—this generation! No book is as up to date as the Bible. It explains the causes of present world conditions; it reveals what is ahead in the next few years. Within its pages are the solutions to every problem we face in life—from personal and family relationships to national economics and foreign policy.

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