

Do Natural Disasters Prove There is No God? (Part 2 of 3)

(Please refer to **Part 1** in the May 4th issue of the Tanner Bulletin)

There is no denying it—evil exists in the world. But does the existence of evil disprove the existence of God? In the previous segment, we considered that there is “moral evil” that is based entirely on the choices man makes. But there is also “natural evil” that causes the suffering and death of many innocent people. It primarily comes in the form of natural disasters and catastrophes that appear to have no connection to the decisions made by humans. Examples include: weather related famine and drought, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and tornados, to name a few. Why would God allow such evil in the world?

If God has a good reason for allowing this type of evil to exist, then the skeptics and unbelievers will have to back down in their claim that there is no God. So why would God permit natural evil to exist in the world if He is a good, loving God?

Some natural evil is the result of human free will. God wants man to choose to love Him. With that ability to choose “to” love there must by necessity be the ability to choose “not to” love. Man’s free will often results in bad choices that lead to, not only morally evil acts, but to natural evil as well. When one builds their home on a known earthquake fault line, or in a regular path taken by hurricanes, the ultimate result is going to be tragedy. The problem is further worsened by cutting corners on building guidelines in order to save money. Then when a natural disaster occurs, man will often question why God let this happen?

Improper use of farmland can lead to drought and famine. Destruction of a water table can bring on a disaster. Birth defects are sometimes a result of what grandparents or parents were exposed to prior to the birth defect appearing. The point is that there are times when natural evil is either caused or worsened by human free will.

Some natural evil may be the result of natural process. Based on the laws of physics, cause & effect and other such natural laws, there is a certain order in how the world works. And it needs to work that way so life here can exist in the first place. This means that the stresses and forces within the physical universe act and react within the limits of the laws established by God. These laws regulate and govern the natural processes that sometimes help us and sometimes harm us.

For instance, the same weather patterns that create tornados that kill and destroy also create thunderstorms that provide our environment with necessary water and the air filtration needed for human existence. The same plate tectonics that kill and destroy in earthquakes are necessary to regulate soil and surface temperatures needed for mankind to live on this planet. And the same kinds of bacteria that make us sick are also the source of cellular materials that help us heal.

So, some natural evil is not a direct result of human interaction or activity, but is a result of physics, chemistry and biology. And yet there is another more compelling reason for natural evil to exist. God is working on His creation. We will examine that aspect next week as we conclude this topic.

