

## **Do Natural Disasters Prove There Is No God? (Part 1 of 3)**

Evil exists in the world. This fact disturbs many people who deny the existence of God. They claim that an all-powerful, loving God would not permit the existence of evil. This has also troubled many Christian people through the years. How do we give an answer for this concern? First we have to understand that 2 types of evil actually exist—natural evil and moral evil.

Moral evil is not so difficult to understand. God, by His very nature, must permit His creation to choose for itself how it will behave. People can choose to do good, and they can choose to do evil. Man's inhumanity to man is seen on the news every day. And God will judge those who are cruel and evil toward their fellow man.

There is also the evil that comes to people as a result of choices that men make. This is seen in bad money management that leads to extreme poverty, or the neglect of one's responsibility toward his children. Their suffering cannot be blamed on God, when it was their parents' choices that brought about the suffering. National suffering can result when a government over-taxes its people and wastes its natural resources. This can result in famine and economic failure. Again, one cannot blame God for the decisions men make that result in such suffering.

There is something other than moral evil. There are many examples of what has been called "natural evil". We see innocent people suffer and die as a result of natural catastrophes, as well as the effect of disease and illness. And these evils appear to have no connection to the decisions made by humans. Floods, earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, etc. are examples of natural evil in the world. So why would God allow such natural evil to occur?

Through the years, skeptics have rejected the existence of God because of the existence of natural evil. They say that the two cannot both exist together. Their argument goes something like this.

### **The Atheistic Argument Against God from Natural Evil**

1. If God exists, He is (by definition) all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving
2. And if this kind of God exists, He would not allow natural evil to occur in the world
3. Since we see that natural evil DOES occur in our world
4. Therefore, an all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving God does not exist.

While it may seem reasonable and logical, "the devil is in the details". This argument fails because of the 2<sup>nd</sup> claim; the idea that an all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving God would never allow natural evil to exist. If God has a good reason to allow natural evil, the argument changes dramatically. We simply need to ask ourselves, "Is it possible that God might actually allow this kind of natural evil, and if so, WHY?" In light of the recent storms, I would ask that you consider this question this week, and we will continue this important topic in next weeks' bulletin.

*Robert*