

Read 'How natural are disasters?'

Christian studies

After any natural disaster people's thoughts often turn to God. Some call to God for help, others ask for an explanation and others are led to question God's love or existence. What are some of the statements or questions that disasters raise about God?



Tsunami survivors on Banda Aceh Indonesia

Read the following passages from the Bible and see how they might address some of these questions.

Psalm 103:8-14

The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,

nor will he harbor his anger forever;

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our sins from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.

Luke 13:1-4

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?”

Romans 8:18 -22

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

How do these passages address people with the following questions?

If God exists, how could he allow this disaster to happen?

Is this disaster God’s punishment or judgment on the people?

If God is loving and powerful, why did this disaster happen?

Underline your response to this statement. “Humans cannot stop disasters but can reduce their impact.” Why do you believe this?

Strongly agree

agree

not sure

disagree

strongly disagree