

Evaluating Disasters

"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. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think 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." Luke 13:2-5

Reflecting on past events, you find that some tragedies happen because of the perverseness of man, such as the destruction of the twin towers in New York City, and some because of the seeming perverseness of nature, such as earthquakes and tsunamis. This passage calls attention to an incident in the gospels where some of Jesus' followers commented on an atrocity committed by Pilate, and Jesus' response.

Accidents, atrocities, tragedies, disasters – these are used by God to remind us of His Judgment. The people who perished in the disasters did not die because they were more sinful than others. Nor does our Lord call them accidents, or the people victims. They died in the perfect timing of God, and He means for their deaths to be a sober reminder that, "as it is appointed to men to die once, and after that comes the judgment."¹

Life appears to become more tragic the longer I live; there is so much hurt and so many horrific events unfolding that I can easily become discouraged. Biblically, God does not want His children to despair, but rather to remember that if such things did not happen, we would place our hope in this life and forget the terrible Judgment awaiting us the other side of the grave.

¹ Hebrews 9:27