

Position Paper

Natural Disasters ***Are Natural Disasters of God?***

The position of *The Philadelphia Church* concerning the natural disasters that will occur before the endtime seven years of tribulation begin does not have these disasters occurring because God is punishing sinners, and sinful nations. He, God, consigned all to disobedience so that He could have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). The revealing of the Son of Man (Luke 17:26-30) that begins the endtime Tribulation will not be a phenomenon that effects a few nations in one region of the world. It will be the breaking of the spiritual power reigning over the mental typography of humanity, and the liberation of the spiritually circumcised nation through the death of all firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. Just as the firstborns of Egypt were ransomed for the liberation of circumcised Israel from bondage to Pharaoh (Isa 43:3-4), the firstborns of the spiritual nation of Egypt or Babylon will be ransomed for the liberation of the greater Christian Church from bondage to lawlessness. And the payment of this ransom will be an event so great that the entirety of humanity is staggered. Rich and poor nations, strong and weak nations alike will be heavily impacted— and Christians will be instantly hated by all nations. The world will momentarily cease to function because of the enormity of the catastrophe. It will stagger like a man hit below the belt. And this punch will occur on a specific day that has been revealed in advance: the day of the second Passover.

Church leaders and theologians who identify natural tragedies such as earthquakes and volcano eruptions, hurricanes and tsunamis as the hand of God intervening in the affairs of humankind are charlatans and hucksters. If the hand of God intervenes it will be to prevent what would have otherwise happened, not to cause indiscriminate death to occur.

However, God will, in the near future, intervene in the affairs of human beings as the Church passes into spiritual adulthood, the age at which an Israelite male could serve in the military. The revealing of the Body of Christ (i.e., the Body of the Son of Man), like the Deluge of Noah's day, will take the world by surprise. But the coming of the rain was known in advance. The Ark wasn't hidden from view. Noah's neighbors just didn't believe that such an event would occur, and the coming of the water took them unaware. Because of their unbelief, they perished. Likewise, because of unbelief, the firstborn of spiritual Babylon will perish. Approximately a third of humanity will suddenly die. Two billion, three billion people. The liberation of Israel will not be an event with a natural explanation. It will be of God, and the world will know that it was of God. It will get everyone's attention. And like a woman going into labor, nothing else will matter until the baby is delivered, until many sons of God are brought to glory.

The enormity of the catastrophe is unimaginable. The death of ten people in an avalanche is horrible; the death of a hundred people in a tornado is a magnification of the grief. The death of a thousand, or ten thousand, or a hundred thousand almost exceeds a human being's comprehension and compassion. The focus has to return to individual deaths before the sting of death is fully felt. Thus, when the Body of Christ is revealed, every person, every household will be affected. Death will be personal. And the seven years of tribulation along with the death of another third of humanity will cause the remaining third of humankind to hate death with such an intense passion that this last third will gladly keep the laws of God, for the wages of lawlessness is death (Rom 5:23). For a thousand years, the rescue of human beings from death will be the remembered event.

Therefore, the peoples living along the coast of the Indian Ocean in December 2004 were not worse sinners than people living along the Alaskan Coast in 1964, when a similar sized earthquake and tsunami struck. The death toll in 2004 is a thousand times worse than the death toll in 1964. But the death tolls are relative to the respective populations, with perhaps more deaths having occurred in Alaska on a per capita basis. In both cases, tragedy struck some people suddenly. Others had a little warning. Some survived that should have died, and vice versa. Time and chance happened. And God protected those whom He chose to protect.

God will protect whomever He chooses to protect regardless of whether the individual is presently in covenant with the Father and the Son. And God will allow saints to die in natural disasters just as He allows them to die after having lived long and productive lives. Except for a spiritual Joshua and a spiritual Caleb, the entirety of the Christian Church that enters the Tribulation will die either physically or spiritually during the first three and a half years. This is the reality of prophecy, and for the Sabbatarian who believes that he or she will sit out these years in a place of physical safety, this is not good news. The last Eve (i.e., the Church) will deliver two sons during the first half of the seven years: a spiritual Cain and a spiritual Abel. Cain will kill righteous Abel, and will be marked for the second death. Then halfway through these seven years, the last Eve will bear a third son, a spiritual Seth who will be accepted by God by merely enduring to the end. This is the good news that must be proclaimed to the world as a witness to all nations (Matt 24:13-14). Thus, those individuals who are not in covenant today with God will be during the second half of the Tribulation if they remain alive until then. God knows whom He wants to live into those last three and a half years. These are individuals that He foreknows, predestines, justifies and will glorify along with the saints who have died before these last years begin.

Therefore, because of the lateness of the age, any person alive today who is not presently in covenant with God might well be a predestined member of the last Eve's third son, born-from-above when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28), when Satan is cast from heaven (Rev 12:9-10) and can no longer reign as the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:9-14). A time, times and half a time will still remain before Christ returns in power (Rev 12:14). Enduring to the end will not be easy for this spiritual Seth, but because this third son of the last Eve will have witnessed so much death, this son will want to obey God in a way that Christians today cannot even imagine.

The Church will not be bodily raptured to heaven to escape the Tribulation, nor will the Church sit out these seven years in a place of physical safety. Rather, the Church as the firstborn son of God will be sacrificed, for the servant is not greater than its Master. This is not what the Church, especially the slivers of the splintered churches of God want to hear. And in its disbelief, the greater Church will be rejected just as the nation that left Egypt was rejected. It will try to enter God's rest on the following day (Sunday, the 8th day) instead of on the Sabbath, thereby turning unbelief into disobedience (Heb 3:19 & 4:6; Ps 95:10-11; Num 14:11, 35, 40-41). But the splintered churches of God will rebel as Korah rebelled. These slivers will not now submit to even God. They are as glass figurines on a whatnot shelf, animated but not alive, neighing to one another, with miniature bits between tiny teeth, bolting for the shelf's edge. They will not survive their fall.

The Philadelphia Church should always assist disaster victims to the best of its abilities. All who are impacted will someday be born-from-above; all are present or future brothers in Christ. *The Philadelphia Church's* focus on eschatology should cause it, above all other fellowships in the Body of Christ, to better understand that natural disasters are not God selectively punishing a nation or a region here and there. When God intervenes in the affairs of humankind, His intervention will look like it is of God. Many will then hate God, so the deaths will continue until every person who hasn't

returned to slavery hates sin and death so much that he or she will keep the commandments of God regardless to what keeping them costs the person. The fields will then be harvested.

* * * * *

© 2005 by Homer Kizer, and Homer Kizer Ministries. All rights reserved.

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."