

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES
NAHUM 1:1-7

INTRODUCTION

Today there are many who are suffering up and down the east coast because of the effects of Hurricane Matthew. There are many people, even many of God's people, who were affected by this disaster! Thank the LORD, we are blessed to have only suffered mostly some damage to a few of our trees!

Now we know that ANY of our lives, can be affected by disasters—even as believers! We know that just being a believer does not exempt us from being caught up in a disastrous situation or other trials of life!

We can hurt, we can suffer, we can even lose the life of loved ones and even possibly our own physical life as a result of a disaster—whether it be from the force of a natural disaster (such as a hurricane, tornado, flood or earthquake) or whether it be an act of evil men (such as a terrorist attack)!

We know that any of these things and more might be a part of our lot as we live in this sin cursed world! But I thank the LORD that we have Him to help us through even the most difficult of times!

As believers, how should we approach the subject of disasters and where God fits in the scheme of things such as these?

Where is God when disaster strikes? What is it that God would have us to do in light of disasters that happen in this world?

I. WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT GOD IS STILL SOVEREIGN! (Vs 3b-5)

God is in absolute control of ALL His creation-HE IS LORD!

A. Our God Is Lord Over The Unbeliever!

Remember in Exodus 5:2, when Pharaoh said, *"Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."*

After 10 disasters in his nation that affected both him and the people of Egypt in a personal way, he didn't know the LORD, but he knew more about the LORD than he really cared to!

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Think about the Plagues of Blood, Frogs, Lice, Flies, Murrain, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, and Death that the LORD brought down on Pharaoh and Egypt!

Each of those plagues were directed at the so-called gods that the Egyptians worshiped!

God knows how to get to and affect men's idols! Amen!

Our God Is Lord Over The Unbeliever...

B. Our God Is Lord Over The Believer! (Job 1)

We know from the book of Job that Job was a wealthy man of upright character who loved God and eschewed or avoided evil!

Yet, God allowed Satan to destroy Job's flocks, possessions, his children, and his health! **Why would God do that?**

Well Job couldn't understand either in the midst of his suffering **why** God was allowing Him to go through such a terrible time of suffering! In fact, Job allowed his desire to understand **why** he was suffering to overwhelm him and he began to question God! **We all want to know why!**

However, as we read the story of Job, some things become very clear to us:

- 1. Knowing God is better than knowing answers!**
- 2. God is not arbitrary or uncaring!**
- 3. Pain is not always punishment!**
- 4. God didn't answer Job's question of why, but rather showed him WHO He was!**

Understand that although God has the power to do whatever He wants, He uses His power according to His own moral perfection! Thus, whatever He does is fair, even if we don't understand it! Our response should be to directly appeal to Him, not complain to those around us!

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Satan's view of Job—Was that people believe in God only when they are prospering and not suffering! Satan was wrong, at least with regard to true believers! Though Job questioned what God was doing, we find that he never cursed God or abandoned His faith in God!

The View of Job's Friends—Was that suffering is always God's judgment for sin! **This is sometimes true, but not always true!** So we need to be careful how we judge others in this matter if we don't want the same judgment to be made about us when we go through a disaster in our life.

Elihu's View—Was that suffering is God's way to teach, discipline, and refine us. This is also true, but it is an incomplete explanation!

God's View—Suffering should cause us ALL to trust God for Who He is, and not what He does!

Now understand that a disaster MAY be judgment for sin for some involved in a disaster. (The Genesis Flood; Genesis 19—Sodom and Gomorrah; Numbers 16—Korah and 250)

But that's not ALWAYS the case! (Luke 13:1-5)

Also, understand that a disaster MAY be for chastening for a wayward believer! (Jonah 1)

But a disaster may also be for other of God's purposes! (The shipwreck of the Apostle Paul and others recorded in Acts 27 on the island of Melita)

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II. WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, WE SHOULD REMEMBER GOD IS AT WORK IN THE WORLD!

A. God Is Active In The Work Of Reconciliation! (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

If God is in the work of reconciliation, (and He is) and God is at work in our lives as Christians, then God wants us involved in His work of reconciliation.

B. God Is Active In The Work Of Conforming Us To His Image! (Romans 8:28ff)

Therefore, When We Suffer We Need To Ask:

1. Are We Being Chastened By God For Sin?

When this is the case, we need to confess and forsake known sin in our lives.

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

2. Is Satan Attacking Us As We Try To Survive As A Christian?

Have We Been Specifically Selected For Testing, Like Job?

a. We need to realize that everything that comes our way comes God filtered, therefore, we should acknowledge God's purposes and call on Him for grace and strength and direction!

b. We need to be willing to accept help from the body of believers! (i.e. We need to learn humility.)

c. We need to trust God to work His purpose through us!

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3. **Are We Being Prepared For A Special Service, Learning To Be Compassionate To Those Who Suffer? (2 Corinthians 1:3-6)**
We need to resist self-pity and ask God to open up doors of opportunity for us and help us to discover others who suffer as we do so that we might show them God's love and concern through action.
4. **Is Our Suffering A Result Of Natural Consequences, For Which We Are Not Directly Responsible?**
We should recognize that in a sinful world, both just and unjust people will suffer! However, the just person has a promise from God that his suffering will one day come to an end! (e.g. Daniel and the Hebrew children)
5. **Is Our Suffering Due To Some Unknown Reason?**
If so, we should NOT draw inward from the pain, but rather we should proclaim our faith in God, knowing that He cares for us, and we should wait patiently for His aid.

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III. **WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, WE SHOULD REMEMBER GOD IS JEALOUS! (Vs 2)**

Exodus 20:3-5—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me. {4} Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: {5} Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"

Sometimes God uses a disaster to get our attention away from the idols in our lives and back to Him! What is it that you can't do without? (Electricity, cable TV, or God?)

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We are warned in *James 4:13-17* about being presumptuous with plans of our life:

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: {14} Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. {15} For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. {16} But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. {17} Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Sometimes God messes with our plans! When He does that we need to make sure that it's not because we have left Him out of our plans?

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IV. **WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT GOD IS GOOD. (Vs 7)**

God is good all the time! All the time God is good!

Psalm 34:8—"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

Psalm 100:5—"For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations."

Psalm 135:3—"Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto His name; for it is pleasant."

Psalm 145:9—"The LORD is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works."

Lamentations 3:25—"The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him."

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*Nahum 1:7-"The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble;
and He knoweth them that trust in Him."*

Conclusion

When we preach these things, there are some who, after hearing some of these things, might say, "*Well, I don't want to serve a God like that!*"

Well, He is the ONLY ONE WHO IS GOD AND WE ALL WILL STAND
BEFORE HIM ONE DAY!

It behooves us all to be ready to stand before Him!