

AN “ACT OF GOD?”

Are disasters God’s fault or the Devil’s?

Last Monday night I could see a thunderstorm approaching, and being very wary of storms nowadays I watched to see what kind of storm we were in for.

It came in quickly and struck hard. The wind picked up and began to roar and then, suddenly, right at the storm’s worst there was a bright flash and a loud crack four houses up from us and the sky lit up with flashes of orange, turquoise and yellow. Lightning had struck a tree, the tree hit the hydro lines and a transformer exploded and caught fire, putting on a spectacular display.

I wondered afterwards if it would be considered an “Act of God.” These things usually are. Whenever nasty things like this happen, involving damage or loss of life due to the elements, it automatically becomes God’s fault. It’s interesting too, how people suddenly believe God exists when looking for someone to blame!

According to the Bible, however, it’s not God’s fault when bad things happen. When God created the world, he said it was good. It was only after the Devil entered the scene that things went bad. It was then that Adam and Eve jumped the rails, Cain killed Abel, and the Earth was torn apart by violence for the next 1600 years, so bad that even God wondered why he’d created humans (Genesis 6:6).

None of what happened had been his doing, either. The cause of the mess was a combination of the Devil and the humans who believed him. Adam and Eve didn’t have to listen to a talking snake accusing God of being a liar, but they did. And they liked the snake’s idea that humans could be gods in their own right, able to handle life for themselves without God’s help.

So that’s what they got, and that’s what we’ve had ever since. It was our choice as humans, influenced by the Devil, to have the world to ourselves, free of God’s influence. And we still like it that way.

Why, then, do we blame God when bad things happen? Why don’t we blame the Devil? It was the Devil who persuaded Adam and Eve they could go it alone without God, and the Devil who started us on the road we’re on now, not God. So why aren’t disasters called “Acts of the Devil?”

The Devil always gets off scot-free, though. Rather than blame the Devil, it’s always God who gets it in the ear for not stopping innocent children being killed and not preventing disasters happening, and God who gets blamed for suffering.

The list of blame nailed to God’s door is huge. But on the Devil’s door? Nothing. No one asks why the Devil allows these things to happen. According to the Bible, however, this is the Devil’s world (Ephesians 2:2), so it’s his influence behind the mess we’re experiencing, not God’s (2 Corinthians 4:4).

And what sadder proof of that do we need than the multiple disaster in Myanmar in 2008? First of all, it’s a disaster that should never have happened on the scale it did, but the trees that had protected the land in the past had been cut down, allowing tidal waves to pour across the land unimpeded. And if that wasn’t stupid enough, then the response of the madmen in power following the terrible flood certainly was, when they refused to allow emergency supplies through to their own people. The whole mess is insane from beginning to end.

And at what point in this entire mess was it an “Act of God?”

Was it caused by God? How? Did God influence the stupidity that made people in Myanmar destroy their protective wall against the elements? Did God create the brutal pulp in the brains of the ruling junta? Did God cause the pollution we've been chucking into the air that's creating such massive cyclones in the first place?

Where in all this stinking mess in Myanmar does God have to shoulder any blame?

Well, some say, God could've stopped it. But why should he, when we rejected his involvement in our lives right from the beginning, and we still do? We only want him involved when disaster hits, to get us out of whatever immediate mess we're in, and then blame God when he doesn't.

If you were God would you want to intervene for us? He could rightly say, "Why should I? You made this mess, you lie in it."

From what I read in the Bible, though, God in his great mercy is going to intervene, eventually. He promises an end to this insane era of the world's history, ruled by the Devil. How? By what can be truly termed an "Act of God," the first step of which has already happened when Jesus personally defeated the Devil, and is continuing to happen right now in the new world that Jesus is creating through his church.

The time will then come when the Devil's influence is completely removed, and at that point we get to experience a world without him.

Then we'll know for sure who was to blame for the mess we're in.