

ACTS OF GOD

WHY NATURAL DISASTERS?



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By Gerald E. Weston

*Why do natural disasters ravage our world?
Are hurricanes, earthquakes, and other
disasters simply the natural order of things?
Is mankind responsible for them, or does the
label “acts of God” carry far more meaning than
many realize? And what does the future hold?*

*The answers to these questions will dramatically
impact your future. You need to know!*

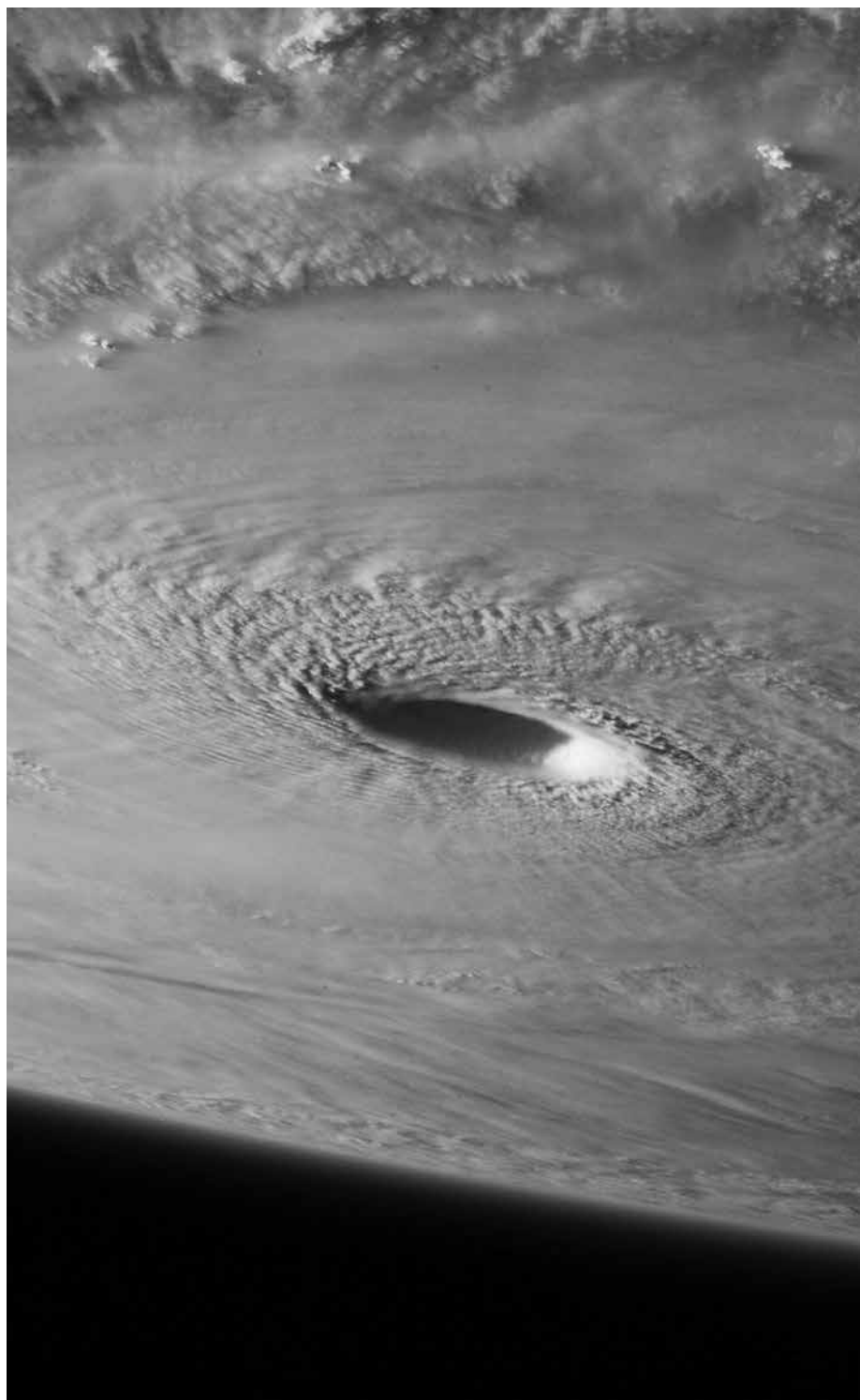
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Chapter I

Introduction

“**I**t’s not nice to fool Mother Nature.” This was the punchline from a series of catchy 1970s margarine ads. Apparently, when “Mother Nature” is fooled, bad things happen, including bad weather.

When destructive weather occurs, and when earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions wreak havoc, we generally consider them purely natural phenomena—all part of the natural order of things. Volcanoes and earthquakes are part and parcel of the creation of islands and mountains, but with them come tsunamis and other destructive effects. Hurricanes often cause serious damage, but they also transfer heat from warm ocean water to cooler areas of the planet and have been known to end droughts.

The fact is our home in the cosmos is very different from every other planet we have yet discovered. While there may be millions or even billions of planets in the universe, Earth has special features that allow for life as we know it. All one has to do is consider the other planets we see in our own solar system to realize how uniquely designed for life our planet is. It is reasonable to speculate that because there are so many planets of all kinds in the universe, some must be similar to ours. This seems rational, but it is nevertheless a speculation, still without proof or evidence to support it. Such speculations are in part driven by a naturalistic agenda that yearns to prove life evolved, that we can have law without a Lawgiver, design without a Designer, and life without a Life-giver—no God and no intelligence

behind it all. This is naïve when we consider what we know for sure, and there are serious questions to which we should expect answers.

Where did the dirt under our feet come from? We take for granted that all physical matter came from somewhere at some time in the past. The “cosmic expansion,” or “big bang” as it is commonly referred to, indicates that there was a beginning, a time prior to which matter did not exist. So how did matter come to be? How did it form? And why? These are serious questions.

Most scientists now agree that there was a *beginning* to our universe. They also recognize that our universe is fine-tuned and designed in such a manner that allows life as we know it to exist. This creates a difficulty for those who subscribe to materialism, the belief that all things can be explained by material forces without the need for any outside intervention. If so, how could we be so lucky?

Several hypotheses have been put forward over the last century to explain a universe without God. Some have suggested that the universe expands and contracts—exploding into existence, then collapsing down to an unbelievably tiny, energy-packed point in empty space, only to expand again and start all over. In this way, some hope to avoid the idea of a beginning to our universe, suggesting that our cosmos came from an *earlier* cosmos that preceded it. Setting aside the fact that there is literally no evidence for such a claim, the idea raises another question. Even if this were so, how did the process begin? By what laws would this occur? Even modern cosmology says that such a process can’t go back forever into the past. There had to be a beginning.

In recent years, many scientists have become increasingly enamored by the concept of a multiverse—the idea that there are possibly an infinite number of universes in addition to our own, each with its own random set of laws. It is widely recognized that the odds of randomly obtaining a life-supporting universe like ours corresponds to only one chance in millions, billions, or even trillions. By hypothesizing an infinite number of universes, these theorists hope to overcome those incredible odds by assuming life has had an infinite number of “attempts” to get it right. We might refer to such a theory as a “universe lottery.”

The problem with this? There is no proof. In fact, *zero evidence* supports such a wild, baseless speculation. And multiverse theories still fail to answer the more fundamental question: How did the en-

tire process begin? Even multiverse theories must conform to the requirement of a beginning. What is the source of matter and energy in the first place, and what kicked off this hypothetical multiverse? Regardless of their answers, why are materialists forced to speculate such things? The answer is obvious. They are convinced *against all evidence* that there can be no intelligence (i.e., “no God”) behind all that we see and know. As cosmologist Bernard Carr said bluntly in *Discover* magazine, “If you don’t want God, you’d better have a multiverse.”

Evidence Hard to Deny

Yes, our universe is fine-tuned to exist and our planet is fine-tuned to support life, but life is not a given on even the most fine-tuned of planets. The gap between dirt and living organisms is as great as that between the nothingness of empty space and a full-blown universe containing billions of star-filled galaxies with planets and moons. As Michael Denton writes regarding the likelihood of life coming into existence on its own:

Although the tiniest bacterial cells are incredibly small... each is in effect a veritable micro-miniaturized factory containing thousands of exquisitely designed pieces of intricate molecular machinery... far more complicated than any machine built by man and absolutely without parallel in the non-living world.... The complexity of the simplest known type of cell is so great that it is impossible to accept that such an object could have been thrown together suddenly by some kind of freakish, vastly improbable, event. Such an occurrence would be indistinguishable from a miracle (*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, pp. 250, 264).

Few today understand just how complex life truly is, but as atheists and evolutionists with PhDs discover this truth, is it any wonder that many quietly admit that evolution is a fraud? For many, it is easier to believe in “random miracles” than in an intelligent Creator who has rule over our lives. Here is the reason why: “Because the carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). And so, the truth is suppressed (1:18).

The one time that God *is* brought into the picture is when we want to blame Him for some terrible misfortune. Insurance companies often have clauses in their policies that address circumstances they term “acts of God.” So, while men reject God, they are not shy about blaming Him when it suits their cause. Now to be fair, insurance companies have probably settled on this convenient expression as a simple way to refer to events no one can control. So, who *is* responsible for natural disasters?

That may sound like an easy question to answer, but apparently it is not. Are natural disasters merely part of “the way things are”? Are they a matter of chance? Are they from God? Are they the result of man’s deeds—products of human-induced climate change, or even government conspiracies?

Chapter 2

Can Man Control the Weather?

Natural disasters have doubtless been with us longer than records have been kept. Man has learned to lessen their disastrous effects through early warning systems and stronger building codes. Nevertheless, when man meets the fury of nature, man is no match.

The year 2019 had barely begun before two major weather disasters struck. On one side of the earth, hope turned to tragedy:

After seven years of drought, elated cattle farmers in the Australian state of Queensland welcomed the rainstorms heading their way as a blessing. But now, after one of the most devastating deluges in state history, a billion-dollar industry could be left in tatters. Authorities estimate that nearly 500,000 cattle... have been killed by flooding in Queensland's north since the rain began falling late last month ("Australian floods: 500,000 cattle survived years-long drought only to die in the rain," *Fox61.com*, February 13, 2019).

Only a month later, on the other side of the globe, melting snow and massive rains brought some of the worst flooding in history to the American Midwest. The agricultural state of Nebraska was hit hard, with 70 percent of its counties declared natural disaster areas. Cattle were stranded and many farmlands were left so wet that there would be no planting for the year. Ranchers and farmers were already hard-

pressed, and this made some question whether to call it quits. As one rancher put it, “Maybe it’s a sign from God” that it is time to change professions (*Washington Post*, March 19, 2019).

Natural catastrophes can change the course of history and bring down nations. The American Dust Bowl of the 1930s spurred the migration of whole families from Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas as they pulled up stakes to seek their fortunes in California. Disasters etch times and places into our minds when we are personally affected. How could anyone who lived in New Orleans or along the Gulf Coast in August 2005 ever forget Hurricane Katrina? Even when the scale of the disaster is comparatively smaller, those who live through nature’s wrath are often changed forever.

Violent thunderstorms, tornadoes, and hurricanes (also known as typhoons or cyclones) are a constant problem in some parts of the world. Hailstorms inflict damage to homes, automobiles, and crops. Droughts result in crop losses, destructive fires, starvation, and loss of life. Blizzards take lives and make life miserable for any caught out in them. All these and more happen around the world, seemingly at random. While scientists can explain most of them, as well as other natural disasters, what are the causes of unpredictable and extreme weather?

According to some conspiracy buffs, the U.S. government controls weather through chemicals dispersed into the atmosphere. A surprising number of people believe that some, if not most so-called weather disasters result from chemical trails (chemtrails) seen in the sky and dispersed at high altitudes by government aircraft. That rumor began spreading in 1996 and continues today, even though it has been debunked by numerous proofs, such as old photographs demonstrating the presence of such contrails in the sky, caused by WWII aircraft—decades before the so-called conspiracy began. Of course, that will simply lead many to “reason” that the conspiracy goes back further than anyone thought. It is harder to knock down a conspiracy than to turn lead into gold. Some people are convinced by what they read on the Internet, no matter the facts. Flat earth, anyone?

There is no doubt that attempts to alter climate have been and are still being made. “Cloud seeding” schemes have been around since the mid-1940s, and are not only practiced by the United States, but by other countries as well. One famous claim for success came in 2009, when Hebei Province in China used cloud seeding in an attempt to end a se-

vere drought. “Engineers blasted more than 400 cigarette-size sticks of silver iodide into the sky shortly before the storm, and a senior engineer told Reuters that it was ‘a procedure that made the snow a lot heavier’” (*Scientific American*, February 19, 2009). The snow that followed the seeding was the area’s first precipitation in more than three months.

Cloud seeding expert Arlen Huggins of the Desert Research Institute in Reno, Nevada, responded to a question regarding the Chinese experiment. “Generally, you can’t look at one individual storm. Would it have snowed anyway? You don’t know... Attributing one storm to seeding is very difficult unless the cloud system is incredibly simple, like fog that has no chance of precipitation. If you see snowfall then, that’s pretty demonstrative evidence that you succeeded” (ibid.).

The United Arab Emirates is one of the driest places on earth and began regular cloud seeding in 2000. In 2017, the UAE performed 242 seeding operations. Seeding cumulous clouds—the only kind that offer such operations any chance of success—with a mixture of potassium chloride, sodium chloride, magnesium, and a few other chemicals, they hoped to increase the amount of rainfall from an individual cloud by 15 to 30 percent. The government is confident it is increasing the amount of rainfall, but admits this is difficult to gauge. Amar Aly Azeedi of the UAE National Centre of Meteorology says, “Until now there is no way that you can measure the success rate for each individual cloud... [since] no two clouds are the same, and you don’t know, for example—before actually you see the cloud—is it going to rain by itself or not and by how much” (“Cloud seeding: How the UAE gets creative to increase rainfall.” *The National*, January 18, 2018).

Project Stormfury was an attempt made by the United States to lessen the power of hurricanes. The U.S. government began the experiment in 1962, and while there *appeared* to be some early success, later analysis of the results demonstrated that the results were illusory. The project was dropped in 1983.

It is reasonable to believe that human efforts have modified individual storms to a small degree, but this is a far cry from boasting that man controls the weather.

The Question of Climate Change

Much time and many resources are currently spent promoting the theory that human activity is warming the planet, with disastrous

consequences on the horizon. Of course, those of us who remember the 1970s recall similar cries of warning about catastrophe awaiting mankind because of “global cooling”! I lived in Michigan at the time, and seven of my nine years there were colder than normal, so it did not take much to convince me. However, anecdotal evidence is simplistic and far from scientific. While it is known that climate can change due to natural causes over time, much of the evidence for human-caused global warming relies on computer models and simulations. Weather is complex and is affected by many factors, such as solar cycles and volcanic eruptions. Some scientists believe these are greater contributors to global temperature variations than mankind’s activities. The sales pitch aside, computer models are simply sophisticated forms of speculation at best.

Some may take offense to the idea of calling human-caused global warming a “theory” instead of a “fact,” but the Climategate scandal that broke on November 19, 2009, gave powerful ammunition to those who question the conventional wisdom concerning climate change. A treasure trove of e-mails and other sensitive documents from the Climate Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia in England were leaked to the public, revealing manipulation of data regarding global warming research—manipulation that some say amounted to fraud, though such a conclusion is understandably disputed. The significance of this was immense, because the CRU at East Anglia is a high-profile promoter of the theory that the planet is warming, disaster is on the horizon, and mankind is the cause. Climategate, as it was dubbed, received a lot more attention in the United Kingdom than in North America, where a liberal press avoided it, but as the following news report brings out, it was no trivial issue:

What we are looking at here is the small group of scientists who have for years been more influential in driving the worldwide alarm over global warming than any others, not least through the role they play at the heart of the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Professor Philip Jones, the CRU’s director, is in charge of the two key sets of data used by the IPCC to draw up its reports. Through its link to the Hadley Centre, part of the UK Met

Office, which selects most of the IPCC's key scientific contributors, his global temperature record is the most important of the four sets of temperature data on which the IPCC and governments rely—not least for their predictions that the world will warm to catastrophic levels unless trillions of dollars are spent to avert it (Christopher Booker, “Climate change: this is the worst scientific scandal of our generation.” *The Telegraph*, November 28, 2009).

We can avoid the political debate while still recognizing relevant facts: *Global cooling* in the 1970s was replaced by *global warming*, which morphed into the broader *climate change* to cover all localized eventualities. Of course, climate does change. There were periods in earth's history when large sheets of ice covered much of the Northern Hemisphere. The evidence is there for anyone willing to check into it. Then there was the Medieval Warm Period when, according to some scientists, temperatures on the earth—or at least parts of it—were 1.6 to 3.2 degrees centigrade warmer than during the early twentieth century, which is considered a more typical time (John P. Rafferty, “Medieval Warm Period.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 18, 2014).

Deniers and Devotees

Those who promote global warming or climate change typically accuse those who do *not* agree of being climate change “deniers,” when often the opposite is true. Many “deniers” are the ones who believe climate changes and goes through various cycles, as clearly seen from historical records found in literature, tree rings, ice core samplings, and other sources. They simply question the popular understanding and interpretations of what is currently happening with our climate.

There is no doubt that some take manmade global warming seriously, so much so that a team of Harvard University researchers plan an experiment to cool the earth by diminishing the sun's impact on our planet. *Nature* magazine online had the following headline: “First sun-dimming experiment will test a way to cool Earth.” The article went on to say that in early 2019, “Researchers plan to spray sunlight-reflecting particles into the stratosphere, an approach that could ultimately be used to quickly lower the planet's temperature.... The idea is simple: spray a bunch of particles into the stratosphere,

and they will cool the planet by reflecting some of the Sun's rays back into space" (Jeff Tollefson, November 27, 2018).

The \$3 million experiment will spray a very small amount of calcium carbonate, the stuff people take for heartburn, into the stratosphere in the southwest United States. Researchers will then observe how it disperses and monitor other effects. But meddling with nature does not come without criticism. According to *Nature*, "Researchers have largely restricted their work on such tactics to computer models. Among the concerns is that dimming the Sun could backfire, or at least strongly disadvantage some areas of the world by, for example, robbing crops of sunlight and shifting rain patterns" (ibid.).

It may be that we are experiencing a warming trend, and it may also be true that mankind is partly or wholly responsible for it. Or, it may be that political and monetary forces are responsible for a great hoax. Such an exploration is beyond the focus of this work. However, *the truth about who controls the weather can be known*. No matter how much man tampers with or carelessly causes changes in weather, this booklet will show that there is yet another source that has infinitely greater power to affect the forces of nature.

Chapter 3

The Power of Nature

The twenty-first century had barely begun before one of the worst tragedies in mankind's history struck. On December 26, 2004, an underwater earthquake measuring between 9.1 and 9.3 on the Richter Scale struck off the coast of Sumatra. An estimated 225,000 victims succumbed to the tsunami that followed, as it traveled to coastlands surrounding the Indian Ocean.

On March 11, 2011, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Japan and triggered a tsunami with catastrophic effect. Loss of life was not as great as from the Indian Ocean tsunami, but still significant. More than 15,000 people are confirmed to have died, with 2,500 still missing. Property losses, including the destruction of the Fukushima nuclear plant, are estimated to be \$199 billion, and as late as 2017, some 50,000 Japanese were still in temporary housing.

Our planet is very different from any other that we have been able to see. Consider its beauty and diversity, its mountains and valleys, its deserts, wetlands, frozen regions, islands, rivers, and lakes. Vast oceans warm, cool, and moderate temperatures. The Gulf Stream brings warm water up the east coast of North America and across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom and northwestern Europe. Thousands of tons of nutrient-rich desert sands blow across the Atlantic Ocean from Africa and feed South American rain forests. The oxygen-carbon dioxide cycle dances the fine line necessary for plant and animal life. Plants give off oxygen and animals give off carbon dioxide—each needing the other. Too much or too little of one or

the other would eventually cut off life as we know it. Thankfully, and amazingly, our atmosphere maintains a constant 20.95 percent of oxygen. Yes, we live on a remarkable planet—one far more complex than we might first imagine.

Complexity, beauty, perfection, and balance are found everywhere. This should cause the curious mind to wonder whether all of this is the result of a lucky accident or the result of *design*. As we noted in the introduction, when the evidence is reviewed, only the fool can conclude that our world is an accident. It has been designed by some great Being. Similarly, it would stand to reason that this Being might actually have something to do with the forces that we refer to as “nature.” Does that mean that all weather upsets and so-called natural disasters are directly caused by this Being? Is every “act of God” truly an act of God?

A Powerful and Dynamic World

We live on a dynamic planet. Many complex factors go into creating a world of changing and somewhat random weather conditions. Thunderstorms can be frightening, but they serve good purposes. They provide water needed for agriculture, especially during hot summer months. They clean our air, distribute seeds, and trim trees, and about 20 percent of the nitrogen compounds needed for plant growth are a direct result of lightning.

Hurricanes, cyclones, and typhoons move warm air from the tropics to cooler latitudes, moderating temperatures in both locations. Snow can be troublesome, but it also provides a blanket that protects soil and crops, such as winter wheat. And what child is not awed by his first snowfall? It transforms otherwise unremarkable landscapes into a wonderland of beauty and play, for both children and adults.

Some earthquakes build mountains, as do volcanoes. Hawaii is a very popular tourist destination, as are the islands of the South Pacific. These beautiful volcanic islands are the stuff of songs and musicals. But as we know, volcanoes can be very dangerous to anyone living too close to them. Thousands of people perished in Pompeii and the surrounding area when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.

Fifty-seven people died when Mount St. Helens erupted on May 18, 1980. On *Historylink.org*, Greg Lange describes the devastation wreaked by that event:

One couple died while watching the eruption 25 miles away from the mountain. The deaths were caused by heat, by being buried under the debris avalanche, or by suffocation when ash raining down was inhaled.... At 660 degrees F., hot gases and pulverized pieces of the mountain were blasted to the north and swept along the ground at speeds of at least 300 mph.... In less than five minutes after the eruption, the seething blast continued out 18 to 23 miles from the mountain, killing nearly all vegetation. Trees, mainly Douglas Firs, some 200 feet high, were stripped of branches and bark and blown down like toothpicks. Some old growth trees were picked up, roots and all, and thrown over a ridge 1,500 feet high.... In moments Mount St. Helens dropped from being the fifth highest mountain in Washington at 9,677 feet to being the 30th highest peak at 8,364 feet. The south side of the mountain lost 1,313 feet in elevation and the north side lost about 2,900 feet. The volcano left a crater more than a square mile wide.... Some 1,000 miles of state highways and roads have to be closed, some for months, and highway repairs alone run into hundreds of millions of dollars ("Mount St. Helens erupts on May 18, 1980." May 15, 2003).

There were warning signs of a catastrophe in the making, just as there had been before Mount Vesuvius erupted. The north side of St. Helens bulged some 300 feet and was growing five to six feet a day. Warnings to evacuate the area were given, but as is often the case, people do not heed such warnings: "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished" (Proverbs 27:12).

Some effects of wild weather can be mitigated by avoiding low-lying and coastal areas that are prone to flooding. Few places on our dynamic earth are totally free of danger, but we must take some responsibility for where and how we build, considering the potential for danger where we live. Structures can be built to withstand high winds and earthquakes. There are often warning signs that indicate it is time to move to safer ground. Self-proclaimed "intelligent beings" that we are, we ought to be able to figure out some of these things!

In fact, the destructiveness of many natural disasters can be lessened, or even totally eliminated, by wise planning. Building in an area

prone to flooding is not wise. Building on beach sand may provide a beautiful view, but it comes with a calculated risk. We did not have to wait until the twenty-first century to learn this lesson. It was known 2,000 years ago that building a house on sand was considered an act of foolishness (Matthew 7:26–27).

Building a city on the side of a volcano has certain advantages. Fresh running water from the mountain and the nearby natural harbor contributed to make Pompeii the prosperous city that it was, but there was a known risk. Additionally, there were warning signs that the mountain was about to explode. Some got out. Those who did not paid the ultimate price. When the eruption occurred, destruction came quickly. Thick, choking ash rained down for 18 hours before the cone collapsed and sent a wall of mud down its slopes at 100 miles an hour. An estimated 10,000 to 25,000 people were buried where they fell, frozen in time.

Yet, as we have noted, the world around us clearly has a Designer, Architect, and Engineer! Does He not have some purpose for us? Why does He allow such calamities to befall His creation? Can He prevent these disasters? Does He ever cause them? Is it possible that He has communicated the answers to us in some fashion?

Yes, He has! And what He has to say should get our attention.

Chapter 4

The God of Nature

The Bible is unique among all the “holy books” ever written. No other book compares. Some 40 different authors wrote it over a period of 1,500 years and over a geographical area stretching some 1,500 miles, from modern day Iraq to Italy. It contains history, genealogy, poetry and prose, proverbs, songs, and prophetic pronouncements. The accuracy of its prophecies, which make up one-fourth to one-third of its pages, has been remarkable. Some easily understood prophecies were fulfilled millennia ago. Other prophecies are being fulfilled right now, with more to take place as we near the end of the age.

The consistency of the Bible’s message is also remarkable. A simple comparison of its first and final books illustrates the point. The *Companion Bible* lists more than 20 shared themes between the books of Genesis and Revelation. Yet two different men—who were separated by 1,500 years, two very different cultures, and two different languages—wrote these books.

When this amazing book tells us something about natural disasters, we ought to sit up and take notice. Those who never read the Bible may be surprised to learn that weather and other seemingly natural calamities are discussed in its pages. According to this book, many calamities involving weather, earthquakes, volcanoes, and asteroids are in our near future!

A God Who Uses Nature

Most people in professing Christian nations have heard of Noah, his ark, and a catastrophic flood. Even those who view it as a mere

story, something akin to a fairy tale, are nevertheless somewhat familiar with it. After all, wasn't there a movie about Noah? Sadly, the movie was a horrific corruption of the original account! But was a worldwide flood for real? Did it happen? Could it happen? Consider that even the most torrential downpours lasting 40 days without any let-up could hardly cover even moderate-sized mountains. For this and other reasons, many today, even many professing Christians, find a universal flood too fantastic to accept. But a careful reading of the Scriptures reveals that there is more to the story than most realize.

According to the Bible, the flood involved not only rain, but geologic disturbances. "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11). This was more than a nasty rainstorm. Something dramatic took place. Water came from above *and below*.

Some speculate that the atmosphere changed, and that originally there may have been far greater reservoirs of water overhead, which fell as rain. If so, more radiation would have penetrated the atmosphere after the flood, thus shortening lifespans—an intriguing speculation since the Bible records that, prior to the flood, men lived as long as 900 years, but afterward "threescore and ten years" became a good long life (Psalm 90:10). We can only speculate on this, as no one knows with any certainty the reason for such a change.

Was this flood an act of God? Or was it a natural, but mysterious, occurrence? If an act of God, why? Why would God bring about such a great calamity? The Bible gives us an answer, and it helps us understand why many, though not all, disasters take place: human sin. "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:5, 11). This flood was, indeed, an "act of God."

The Bible tells us that conditions will be the same in the end time as they were in Noah's day. Jesus' disciples asked Him, "what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3). He gave the following summation in addition to very specific

signs: “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (v. 37).

Sadly, we are not far from that time! Increasingly, every intent of the thoughts of man’s heart is only evil continually, and the earth is corrupt and filled with violence! Consider the way we entertain ourselves. Remove illicit sex and violence and screenwriters would be out of work. It is difficult to find a book that is “clean” in language and content. Even our music promotes exploitation of women and violence against constituted authority.

Adultery and fornication (that is, sex before marriage) are rampant. Civility has left our public discourse. Same-sex marriage is accepted, and transgenderism is pushed on grade school children! Abortion murders millions of the most innocent among us under the guise of “a woman’s right to choose.” What about the baby’s choice? In early 2019, New York legislators literally celebrated when they passed a law that allowed killing babies at any time up to the very moment of birth. We are playing with fire. As we will see, disaster is on the horizon.

Shaping History Through Disaster

One does not have to leave the book of Genesis to learn of other “acts of God” relating to weather. God clearly had a plan in mind for the great-grandson of Abraham. When Joseph was 17 years old, his brothers sold him to a caravan traveling to Egypt, where he eventually ended up in prison on trumped-up charges leveled by a scorned and vindictive woman. But, through a series of events that you can read about in the book of Genesis, Joseph came to the attention of Pharaoh, who was greatly disturbed by two exceptionally realistic dreams. Here is what he saw in the first:

Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke (Genesis 41:17–21).

The second dream was similar, but involved heads of grain. Here is how Pharaoh described it:

Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me (Genesis 41:22–24).

Pharaoh had heard that Joseph could interpret dreams and summoned him to explain this one. Joseph responded that it was God who gave this ability, and he explained to Pharaoh that the Almighty was using the dream to warn about what He was about to do: There would be seven years of bumper crops in Egypt followed by seven years of severe famine (vv. 25–32). This happened exactly as Joseph predicted. God used both ideal weather and famine-causing drought to fulfill His remarkable plan. Others may have thought these were random, chance occurrences. They were not. They were “acts of God.”

These alternating seven years of plenty and seven years of famine brought about the touching reunion of Joseph’s family in Egypt, where they remained and grew in numbers for more than 200 years. In the course of time and under a very different Pharaoh, they became slaves to the Egyptians. When God determined that the time was right, He brought them out of Egypt and took them to the land that we know today as Israel. But *how* did He do so?

The book of Exodus records ten supernatural ecological and human disasters. Some were directly or indirectly weather-related. Notice the announcement Moses made to Pharaoh in advance of the seventh plague: “Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now” (Exodus 9:18). This disaster brought death and destruction to man and animal. All died who remained in the open. This, too, was an “act of God.”

Ending Sodom and Gomorrah

The Bible records a disaster that was wrought upon the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Much like Pompeii, this area was wealthy

and sexually perverse, so much so that God brought destruction upon it. God has limits to what He will tolerate. This should not be lost on us. Once a population reaches a certain level of sinful behavior, He says, in effect, “Enough is enough.” This is what brought the flood upon the earth. As we already read, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5).

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were similarly evil. We are told that God would have spared them if even ten righteous people were found there (Genesis 18:23–32). Sadly, there were not. The city was so corrupt that when righteous Lot took in two strangers for the night, men of the city attempted to break in to rape them. The only recourse was for Lot and three members of his family to flee the city before God destroyed it.

Some speculate that a meteor or comet blew apart overhead, compressing the air, thus heating it to a great temperature and raining down fiery particles on the cities. Archaeologists may debate the exact mechanism by which God destroyed the cities. What the Bible reveals is: “Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground” (Genesis 19:24–25). Whatever happened, this was an “act of God.”

One cannot help but wonder whether Pompeii’s destruction was similarly the result of God’s judgment, as it is known to have been one of the most licentious cities of the ancient world. Excavations reveal that there were at least 26 houses of prostitution, and the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (Napoli) closed some sections to the public for decades due to the graphic sexual nature of the displays. Even today, those 14 years old and under must be accompanied by an adult to be allowed into these rooms at the museum.

Ultimately in Control

We can now see that it is God who is ultimately in control of what happens on planet Earth.

Yet calamity comes not only to the obviously wicked, but also to the innocent. The destruction caused by natural catastrophes can appear indiscriminate at times. We may wonder why God would allow

the seemingly innocent to be injured and die in sudden disasters. We might consider God cruel and unfair. We might think this way because we do not understand the big picture.

How did the world come to be the way it is? We answer that question next.

Chapter 5

Our Past Explains Our Present

When we consider our experience on this planet, questions naturally arise. Why did God make the earth so dangerous—earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, floods, tornados, typhoons? And let's not forget about sinkholes that can open suddenly, destroying property and taking lives. Could not a loving God make a safer place for man to dwell? Is survival on our earthly home left to chance?

From the beginning, mankind has thumbed its nose at God. Our first parents started us down a wrong path, and we have individually and collectively gone down that same path willingly. God placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden with luscious fruit trees of all sorts. Every fruit- and nut-bearing tree was made available to them, except one, and that is the one they chose. In reality, it was not the specific fruit that mattered, but what it represented. By taking of that which was forbidden, Adam and Eve declared their independence from God. They said, in effect, "Leave us alone. We want to determine for ourselves what is right and what is wrong."

The result was that they were kicked out of the garden to do their own thing. They were given the "freedom" to live on their own, and that meant a lot of painful lessons. God would not automatically intervene for them when trouble brewed beneath their feet or in the skies above. Note what God told Adam because of his disobedience: "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,

and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:17–19). To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (v. 16).

There is a certain amount of symbolism in these curses. When God speaks of the woman conceiving and bringing forth children in pain, He addresses not only the physical pain of childbirth, but also the pain she would experience in bringing forth children in a world cut off from God. How painful it is for a parent, especially a mother, to see a child suffer an early death due to riotous living—but we still want to do our own thing. We think we know better than God does. The results are drug addiction, sexual diseases, broken homes, and more. But also, God no longer automatically blesses our physical world. “Thorns and thistles” refer to more than just sharp objects on bushes.

A World of Our Own Making

Understanding the beginning of human civilization explains why the world is the way it is today.

Could God stop natural disasters? Could He give adequate warnings so people could get out of the way while He builds a new island or mountain? Could He direct the wind to take a course away from His children? Of course He could! Who created the dirt under our feet? Who created the law of gravity, the strong force and the weak force? Cannot the God who created the universe and life on this planet protect us? Scientists understand that our universe did not always exist. So how did it come to be? We are so arrogant we conclude that it all happened by chance—so God is allowing us to live in a world of chance. The disasters that “time and chance” throw at us should get our attention.

It is often said that when enemy bombs fall from the sky, there are no atheists in foxholes. That may or may not be true. Some atheists sincerely and deeply believe there is no God. However, anyone with even the smallest inkling that God might exist can be brought to his knees in more than one way when the earth shakes violently beneath him. How many cry out to God when a tornado tears apart their home, and debris crashes down upon them? How many cussing

sailors suddenly “get religion” when hurricane-force winds threaten to tear their ships apart?

One psalm explains the emotions we experience when confronted with fearful forces beyond our control:

Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters, they see the works of the LORD... For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea. They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths; their soul melts because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses. He calms the storm, so that its waves are still. Then they are glad because they are quiet; so He guides them to their desired haven. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! (Psalm 107:23–31).

Yes, when the waves roar, when hurricane-force winds blow, when the ground beneath our feet shakes violently, when we are stranded in a blizzard—then we cry out for help. But what happens when the ground stops shaking and the winds subside? How many promises to “turn over a new leaf” are broken?

The above psalm does not indicate that God causes every storm and calms every wind. He sets these forces in motion, and they are reminders of our need for Him. And as we have already seen, He does intervene directly at times for His purposes.

Solomon wrote that “time and chance happen to them all. For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:11–12). How sad that is. It did not have to be this way, and *it will not always be this way*, but let us not get ahead of the story.

God created us, gave life to each of us individually, and blessed us with a beautiful and dynamic planet on which to live. He gave us wise instructions on how to have abundant and successful lives and how to live in harmony with one another. He is more than capable of steering us clear of danger, but we think we know better than He does, not

realizing there is a price for our wrong-headed decisions. He put it in very simple terms. “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

We choose to go it alone without God. Only when we are in trouble do we cry out to Him. That is not true of everyone, but it is a too-accurate picture of mankind in general. Even those of us who profess to serve and worship God are flawed. This is why we have heartache and suffering in a host of different areas of life, and this is why we have “natural disasters.” There is a lesson in such moments if we are willing to learn it. Unsteady rocks beneath our feet, peals of thunder in our ears, and strong winds above our heads teach us that we are not in control of everything. At least for an instant, we are aware of our need for our Creator.

Time and chance, natural disasters, bumps and bruises—these are the results of choosing the forbidden fruit. Whenever a society or humankind as a whole becomes completely corrupt, God allows or uses these “natural” forces to wake us up. Sometimes it is merely a painful loss, but other times the loss of life is to teach others the consequences of a world without God.

Acts of the Devil?

God is ultimately responsible for “natural” occurrences on the earth. He created the earth to be the varied, beautiful, and dynamic place that it is, and as we have already seen, He directly intervenes in the natural world from time to time to bring about His purposes. Yet, within this context, there is another factor not yet considered.

Job is one of the most intriguing books found in the Bible. It tells the story of a righteous man’s suffering, and it gives us some insight into the unseen and often unacknowledged spirit world. God loved Job, but he had a problem that needed to be addressed and overcome. We read how the great adversary, the Devil, appeared in heaven. God set a trap for the Devil with this question: “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?” (Job 1:8). The Devil took the bait and unwittingly helped God bring Job to the place where he could see himself in a different light.

Satan replied that Job only obeyed God because of the protective care God gave His servant. “But now,” the Devil challenged, “stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” (v. 11). God gave the Devil permission to afflict Job, while putting limits on what he could do. The result was a series of disasters that followed one another in close succession. One was “a great wind” that caused the house to collapse and kill Job’s children (v. 19). While God could have prevented this, He chose not to. He allowed the Destroyer to bring disaster after disaster upon Job, because God had a greater purpose for him. We might term this an “act of the Devil.” But ultimately, it was allowed by God.

This account should not be dismissed. There is an evil spirit at work in this world, and he is no doubt responsible for some, maybe even many, so-called natural disasters. After all, Jesus called him “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and the Apostle Paul referred to him as “the god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Paul also described him as “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

The powerful cherub Lucifer was given a throne—a position of authority over the earth—at some time in the far distant past, but he was not satisfied. Thinking he was wiser than God, he wanted to be in charge, and tried to knock God off His throne in heaven. But he was cast back down to the earth (Isaiah 14:12–15). He will remain here as the “god of this age” until the time in the future when he will be removed from influencing mankind for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1–3). After that, he will be allowed for a short time to test people once again, before being banished forever. God has a purpose for leaving him here. He allows this spirit being to test us, to see which way of life we love the most. He wants to know what is in our hearts.

Lucifer’s name was changed to Satan (meaning *adversary*) or the Devil (meaning *accuser*), but in Revelation 9:11 he is referred to as *Abaddon* in Hebrew, and *Apollyon* in Greek. Both these words mean *destroyer*. Satan is a destroyer! He destroyed Job’s family and property when God allowed him the opportunity. God used Satan to help Job learn an important lesson. Therefore, while Satan did the destroying, it was God in heaven who was in complete control. Satan could only go so far.

These facts of history explain our past. But what of the future? If God is ultimately in control, and if He uses the weather and natural disasters to achieve His ends in the world, what can we expect in the years to come? We've seen that mankind seems determined to go its own way, having done little in the years since the Garden of Eden to turn back to our Creator. What does humanity's continuing rebellion portend for our future?

The Bible reveals the answers in detail, and we examine them next.

Chapter 6

Prophecy Reveals Our Future

The Bible's examples of God's intervention in the weather should not be shrugged off as myth, nor as ancient history that has nothing to do with us in our world today. Scripture gives warnings regarding the relationship between our behavior and the effects of weather. Even before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God explained that good weather would result if they obeyed Him. "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely" (Leviticus 26:3-5). A similar prediction of great agricultural bounty is found in Deuteronomy 28:1, 12.

But weather imbalances would bring agricultural disasters upon God's people if they disobeyed. There would be catastrophes caused by drought and agricultural pestilences:

And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.... You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather

the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off.... Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land (Deuteronomy 28:23–24, 38–40, 42).

Similarly, Leviticus gives this warning: “But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments.... I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit” (Leviticus 26:14, 19–20).

You may be thinking, “Oh, but that doesn’t apply to us today!” That would be a mistake. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Most professing Christians are profoundly ignorant of the Bible’s message. They assume these warnings were only for the Jews. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Jews come from the tribe of Judah, and Judah is only one of twelve tribes in Israel. Some assume erroneously that the other eleven tribes have been absorbed among other peoples and no longer exist, but this cannot be so—not according to the Bible.

For example, the reward Jesus promised His apostles was that they would each rule over one of the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30). Also, we find that when Christ returns, He will bring back the house of Israel (the northern ten tribes) and unite it with the house of Judah, the Jews and Benjamites (Ezekiel 37:19–24). If you have not read our booklet *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*, be sure to call, write, or go online to receive your free copy. It will open your mind to understand end-time prophecy as you never have before.

Bible Prophecy Is Often Dual

The Bible often records prophecies that have both a former and a later fulfillment. One example of this is found in the prophetic book of Amos. This prophet was clearly speaking to the people of his day, but he was also speaking to the end-time house of Israel. Amos 5:18–20 speaks of the day of the Lord, the time at the very end of man’s misrule on earth, when God will directly intervene in the affairs of the entire world.

According to Amos, weather and agricultural disasters are in our future because of our sins.

“Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places; yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD. “I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered. So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD. “I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, your vineyards, your fig trees, and your olive trees, the locust devoured them; yet you have not returned to Me,” says the LORD (Amos 4:6–9).

This was then—and will also be in *our* day—an “act of God.”

Are these conditions not extant in our world right now? God tells us that if we obey Him, He will give us rain in its season (Leviticus 26:3–5). But is this what we see? Look about you. What we see are severe droughts followed by brush fires, and floods producing mudslides. Maybe California and Australia should pay greater attention to God!

Future Catastrophes

Bible prophecy indicates that just prior to the return of His Son, God will use “natural disasters” on a scale *never before seen* to get rebellious mankind’s attention. Revelation 6 describes the ride of four horsemen, each introducing horrors to occur on the earth at the end of this age. The first horse is white and its rider pictures false Christianity (Revelation 6:1–2; compare Matthew 24:4–5). The second is a red horse, picturing war (vv. 3–4; cf. Matthew 24:6–7).

The third horse is black, and its rider has “a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine’” (vv. 5–6). This portends famine and drought on a greater scale than we have previously known, and may to some extent be a direct result of the red horse of war.

The fourth horse is pale and pictures death through disease, earthquakes, and various other disasters (compare Revelation 6:7–8 and Matthew 24:7). The death of a fourth of humanity is attributed to the ride of these four horsemen, but the devastation does not stop there. Revelation describes a scroll with *seven* seals to be opened, and the four horsemen represent only the *first four* of these seals. The fifth seal represents an end-time martyrdom of true Christians.

The next seal represents frightening disturbances on the earth and in the sky. “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind” (Revelation 6:12–13). This is not describing a solar eclipse or a simple “blood moon” eclipse. These are the results of supernatural disturbances in the heavens and a great earthquake here on earth. These will strike terror into the hearts of all. “And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains...” (v. 15). This description might be thought of as a “natural disaster” extraordinaire, but it is, in reality, an “act of God.”

What Next?

So far, we have seen that the Book of Revelation lays out a series of end-time events, some of which involve what man thinks of as natural disasters—famines, earthquakes, and terrible heavenly disturbances. But this is not the end. When the seventh seal of the scroll is broken, it introduces the blowing of seven trumpets, each heralding a catastrophe.

The first four are described in Revelation 8, one after another, as each trumpet is blown by an angel.

They are devastating from the very beginning: “The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up” (v. 7). Apparently, one-third of the earth’s surface is affected by this mysterious disaster, which destroys both trees and grass. We find it difficult to imagine exactly what this could be, but it is clearly some kind of ecological disaster of unimaginable proportions, affecting one-third of the earth’s foliage.

The next two trumpets also symbolize disasters, and we can make educated guesses regarding what is described.

Consider the second of the seven: “Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed” (vv. 8–9). While we cannot know with certainty, it is easy to imagine this as representing the explosion of a volcanic mountain—an incident of such magnitude that the eruptions of Mount St. Helens and Mount Vesuvius would look like minor events. But is this possible? Is it realistic?

Explosions of far greater magnitude than those two events have taken place on the earth in times past. There are volcanoes known as *super-volcanoes*, and they are thousands of times greater than Mount St. Helens. One such super-volcano lies beneath Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. The caldera—the crater of the volcano—is so large that one does not recognize it while standing within it. The *entire park*, around 40 miles (60 kilometers) in diameter, is actually the caldera! If this super-volcano were to explode, as geologists believe it has done several times in the past, the devastation would stretch so far that it would be the end of the United States and Canada. It would happen in an instant, and a shocked world would stand in awe.

The good news is that the Yellowstone super-volcano apparently goes a very long time between eruptions—hundreds of thousands of years, according to geologists. Also, this second trumpet in Revelation 8:8–9 is speaking of a mountain near a very busy shipping lane. Yellowstone does not fit this description, but some super-volcanoes are found in Asia near the South China Sea, where a third of all global shipping passes, as this report (one of many) explains:

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that roughly 80 percent of global trade by volume and 70 percent by value is transported by sea. Of that volume, 60 percent of maritime trade passes through Asia, with the South China Sea carrying an estimated one-third of global shipping. Its waters are particularly critical for China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, all of which rely on the Strait of Malacca, which connects the South China Sea and,

by extension, the Pacific Ocean with the Indian Ocean (“How much trade transits the South China Sea?” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, emphasis added).

Explosive super-volcanoes do not erupt often, but when they do, the destruction goes way beyond anything man can imagine, and has worldwide ramifications. Such an explosion is prophesied to occur at the end of the age, a time we have very good cause to believe we are living in right now. But there is more.

“Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter” (Revelation 8:10–11). We often refer to a meteor entering earth’s atmosphere as a “shooting star.” Most are very small and never reach the earth. However, we know that in the past, larger asteroids have hit our planet. Some speculate that such an event is what killed the dinosaurs. Again, we cannot know with certainty, but this appears to be what is described in Revelation—a large asteroid striking the earth where a great amount of fresh water is found. Could this be the Himalayas, whose great rivers feed much of Asia? Could it be the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada? Wherever it is, the timing and sequence of these events will *truly* be “acts of God.”

“Prepare to Meet Your God!”

As we have seen, natural disasters are the consequence of living on a dynamic and changing planet. But on a deeper level, we suffer from them because humanity as a whole has said to God, “Leave us alone. We would rather decide for ourselves how to live.” When God says, “You shall not commit adultery,” we say, “It’s okay if you don’t get caught. It may even be good for your marriage.” When God says, “You shall not murder,” we say, “War is another means of diplomacy.” Tens of millions of the most innocent among us are murdered because we believe that it is a woman’s right to choose. Sex before marriage is so rampant in Western nations that we automatically assume two people regularly dating each other are sleeping together. And when a baby is born, we are now so confused that we cannot tell whether the child should be considered male or female.

Whatever God says, we do the opposite. He says the seventh day is a day of rest. We say it doesn't matter. We like the first day of the week, the day sun-worshiping Roman Emperor Constantine chose. The list of our disagreements with God is endless, and the list of "acts of God" is endless as well. Each year, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and famines ravage parts of the earth.

We mentioned a portion of Amos' prophecy earlier, but consider all it has to say. God gave that warning through Amos to ancient Israel, and—as we have seen—much of Bible prophecy is dual. This is our future unless and until we repent:

"Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places; yet you have not returned to Me," says the LORD. "I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered. So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; yet you have not returned to Me," says the LORD. "I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, your vineyards, your fig trees, and your olive trees, the locust devoured them; yet you have not returned to Me" says the LORD.... "I overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; yet you have not returned to Me," says the LORD. "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" For behold, He who forms mountains, and creates the wind, who declares to man what his thought is, and makes the morning darkness, who treads the high places of the earth—the LORD God of hosts is His name (Amos 4:6–9, 11–13).

Think it will not happen? Think it cannot happen? Think again! God is not playing games. As a loving Father, He *will* get our attention!



Chapter 7

There Is Good News!

The prophecies we have reviewed may sound as though they come from an angry, vengeful God. Angry, yes, but God's anger is not as ours. All parents understand the natural anger they feel when they see their child doing something harmful. We all want the best for our children. That is a given, and God is described as our heavenly Father. He, too, wants the best for us. He sees us beating and killing one another. He sees us divorcing our wives or husbands and leaving children in tears and confusion. He sees people so confused about how they were created that they commit suicide. He sees our self-inflicted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and diseases resulting from obesity, lack of exercise, and poor diet. He sees nations, states, provinces, and cities turning to violence, fraud, and oppression. Rejecting God's way of love, goodness, and truth will bring upon our peoples consequences and punishment, including the devastation wrought by the unmerciful forces of nature (Deuteronomy 28; Leviticus 26).

God's purpose is to show us that "going it alone" is not going well at all. Once He steps in at the end of this age, in ways our minds cannot now comprehend, using the forces of nature He created, He will have our attention. Once we repent and start looking to Him in earnest, the good news will begin. Instead of being our enemy, the forces of nature will cooperate with humanity. "The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing.... For

waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of jackals, where each lay, there shall be grass with reeds and rushes” (Isaiah 35:1–2, 6–7).

Ezekiel gave a prophecy from God specifically for the house of Israel. This prophecy addresses not the Jews, but the additional peoples that have descended from ancient Israel—the so-called “lost tribes of Israel”—and it concerns a time yet ahead, when God says through His prophet that He will even transform human nature itself.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations.... The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden” (Ezekiel 36:26–30, 34–35).

Bible prophecy describes the time when rain will come in due season and the forces of nature will work on our behalf. “Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘when the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; the mountains shall drip with sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it” (Amos 9:13).

Our Creator is a God of love. He cares for each one of us. He cares for every human being ever born. He even knows when a sparrow falls to the ground (Matthew 10:29). His plan for you is far greater than you can imagine. (To learn about that wonderful plan, order a copy of our free booklet, *Your Ultimate Destiny*.)

God had a purpose in creating these forces that are out of our control. They serve to bring us back to Him when we forget what is important:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.... Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:5–8, 11).

Your Life, Your Choice

We have seen that while mankind may play a small role in what happens on the earth, the only one in total control is the One who created all things. We have also seen that He created this planet beautiful and varied, but also capable of violent disturbances, and He did so to remind us of our need for His guidance and protection. So now we come to the crux of the matter. *What are you going to do about it?*

Will you wait until the next storm to cry out to Him? Have you sought Him when past disasters swirled around you? Did you follow through on your promise to Him, or did you quickly forget?

God has an incredible plan for mankind, but it involves our putting Him first. He demands this not because *He* needs our worship, but because *we* need *Him*. He knows that. He knows that our ways will never work, but that His ways will bring us everything that we truly need and yearn for.

We can wait until the next earthquake or tornado, or we can get serious about the purpose of life right now. You may think, “I’m okay. I gave my heart to the Lord long ago.” Don’t be too sure. The first warning Jesus gave regarding His return was to beware of false Christianity (Matthew 24:3–5). Paul gave a similar warning in 2 Corinthians 11:1–4, 13–14. Frankly, dear reader, while many professing Christians think they are on safe ground, they are standing over a figurative sinkhole that will collapse beneath them.

Life is serious. Life is short. You only have a few years on this earth to develop a close relationship with your Creator. Following the crowd and traditions handed down to you by family and friends is a very bad strategy. You need to know what God expects. Our publication

Restoring Original Christianity is an eye-opening exposé that reveals how Satan, the god of this world and the Great Destroyer, has deceived the whole world, even the “Christian world” (Revelation 12:9). If you want to learn about the Christianity of Christ and His apostles, order your free copy. You will find the contact information at the back of this booklet, or find it at *TomorrowsWorld.org*. Don’t wait for the next natural disaster that may be coming soon to where you live!

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May We Suggest?

The Living Church of God offers a variety of free publications including a *Bible Study Course*, booklets and the *Tomorrow's World* magazine.

The following booklets may help you to better understand God's plan for you and the world. To request your free literature, please order online at TomorrowsWorld.org, or contact the Regional Office nearest you.



Your Ultimate Destiny



The Bible: Fact or Fiction?



The Real God: Proofs and Promises