



► Luke 13:1 "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices."



► Luke 13:2 "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?"



► Luke 13:4-5 "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?"

The Right Response to Catastrophe

John 9:1-3 And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Catastrophes should connect you with Christ

What were you doing when the towers fell? This question and many others have been asked by most Americans since the 9/11 catastrophe hit this nation. Many have even asked what our response should be as a nation, as a people, and even as the church.

How should we respond to this tragedy? Do we just hide ourselves under a rock, or bury our heads in the sand? Should we seek retaliation for this terrorist attack? Is someone to blame? Everybody wants to know what to do when catastrophes comes their way.

A **CATASTROPHE** is a tragic event of extreme misfortune. So when you face a tragic event in your life, how do you respond to it? Do you become more cautious in travel? Some people won't even fly today because of some tragedy. Others won't even date someone because they feel they may lose them like they lost a loved one.

You may say that you don't respond to catastrophe in that manner, but you have become more compassionate towards people because of a tragedy that has happened in your life. Some people become advocates for individuals with disabilities because their child is disabled or a son returns home from a foreign war disfigured. And to show their concern or compassion because of a catastrophe, they become advocates for some cause.

Not only do people respond to catastrophes by becoming more cautious or more compassionate, some become more spiritually conscious when extreme misfortunes take place.

According to the Barna Research Group, church attendance went up 25 percent the weekend after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. However, by November of the same year, attendance had retreated back to normal levels! George Barna, president of Barna



Research Group, said "...while churches succeeded at putting on a friendly face [they] failed at motivating spiritual explorers to connect with CHRIST in a more *INTIMATE* or *INTENSE* manner."

People become God-seekers when tragedy first strikes. Churches fill up with people looking for answers and trying to make sense out of what seems to be the most horrific event imaginable. But after a short amount of time, human nature takes over, and those same individuals who were God-seekers, are now somehow able to go forward without God as their focus. However, in reality, this is the true tragedy when a catastrophe strikes.

WRONG RESPONSES

Jesus was confronted with a question regarding catastrophes in His day (see Luke 13:1,2,4). People will make assumptions that tragedy often is the result of men's sin. The implication is "don't rebellious people get what they deserve"? However, there are two false conclusions that people make regarding tragedies: (1) Tragedies are always connected to personal sin (John 9:1a). This kind of thinking brings people under condemnation and paralyzes them from moving forward. The other false assumption is that (2) There is no connection between tragedy and man's sin. It is false to assume that 'bad things happen to innocent people'. Both of these assumptions cause us to respond to tragedy wrong.





We often think that when something happens to people, we think that they had it coming, or in some way deserve the catastrophe. Are we supposed to respond that way?

Others assume that God is only interested in judging peoples sin. God has other things going on besides judging people. He is trying to glorify Himself. Neither of these assumptions is correct.

While we may be innocent in respect to our perpetrators, the ones who caused the tragedy to happen, **no one is innocent before God** (see Luke 13:4). The word ‘sinners’ here means ‘debtor’, as in one who owes someone something. God does not “owe” anyone freedom from devastation, deliverance or salvation. **We “owe” God everything!**

God does not have to be “GRACIOUS.” The truth is God will never be accused of being unfair (unjust). However, we cannot DEMAND grace or mercy (Romans 9:15). It is false assumptions like this that keep people from taking personal responsibility in their lives.

God does not “owe” anyone freedom from devastation

Romans 3:19 “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

We like to blame others and look outside of ourselves when problems happen. This type of attitude breeds laziness in us because we feel that God should have done something to prevent tragedy from happening. People never exam themselves and the characteristics between the event that happened and their own attitude and spiritual condition.

So what should our response be when tragedy strikes? How should believers respond when catastrophes happen, and we are left with few answers? The correct response to any catastrophe is to REPENT (Luke 13:3, 5). This answer is not a popular one but it is the RIGHT Response to Catastrophe. We need to repent or perish.

When it comes to our repentance, there is a “continual” repentance as seen in Luke 13:3 and a “once and for all” repentance found in Luke 13:5. Both types of repentance are essential of we are to avoid *perishing*.

The Church is continually called to repent as seen in Revelations 2:5. Whenever Jesus reveals sin in our lives, we are expected to repent of it right away. This is not the same as the “once and for all”

repentance unto salvation that should never be repented of (see 2 Corinthians 7:10). The daily act of repentance is always necessary because the Light of Jesus always reveals new areas of sin in our lives. If we want to see His new mercies daily, then we have to daily ask Him to forgive us of our sin to receive His mercy.

Although you don’t have to ask God to keep saving you, you do have to keep examining yourselves, weeding out bad behaviors, negative attitudes and bad desires.

Our response should always be repentance. What if you were in a catastrophe and you had not repented when the tragedy struck? You may not have time to repent later.

Let’s not be like Job who was so busy looking at his self-righteousness that he could not see his sin. We often exclaim that ‘we don’t deserve this’ and we fail to consider whether ‘we need this’.

You should ask yourself today, as you face various challenges in your life “does this tragedy in my life reveal something that I need to repent of”? There is a response to the catastrophes that happen. It is our job to make sure that we have the RIGHT response.

IN THE BIBLE: TOWERS SYMBOLIZE SALVATION



. Proverbs 18:10

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

The only safety that we have as believers is in the Lord. True assurance is not in our money, and not in our government, but in the Lord God our Savior. Everything ever built by man has within it the capacity to fall. David showed us when he went up against Goliath that even giants can fall.

You may have towers in your life, strongholds that have been built up over time and it seems that nothing can make them fall. But there is a Strong Tower that can destroy every strong-hold, and this Strong Tower can never be shaken.

When the vicissitudes of life (*changes of circumstances or fortune*) come your way, make sure that you are holding on to God’s unchanging hand, and have built your hope on things eternal. Christ is our solid rock upon which we can stand in times of trouble, tragedy and catastrophe.



CLOSING NOTE: Jesus promises us that we will not perish in John 10:28 “*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*” Perish does not mean that you won’t be in any danger. But if we never fail to repent, we will never lose our eternal life with God.