

PRELIMS. The Haiti earthquake was a terrible tragedy. All of us must be asking ourselves questions how God could allow such things to happen? A nation that was **already severely impoverished** experiences one of the worst disasters in the world! In almost **every newspaper** there are articles referring to the earthquake in Haiti, and **making strong assertions** that there cannot be a God who would allow such things to happen. Article after article suggests, that Xnity cannot be true. In ‘The Times’ on Friday 29 Jan 2010, Richard Dawkins made a scathing attack on Xnity calling believers in the Bible nothing else but **hypocrites!** The Haiti earthquake proves it.

He started off by saying ‘We know what caused the catastrophe in Haiti. It was the bumping and grinding of the Caribbean Plate rubbing up against the North American Plate: a force of nature, **sin-free** and **indifferent** to sin, unpremeditated, unmotivated, supremely unconcerned with human affairs or human misery The religious mind however, hubristically appropriates the blind happenings of **physics** for petty **moralistic** purposes. As with the Indonesian **tsunami**, which was blamed on loose **sexual morals** in tourist nightclubs; as with hurricane Katrina, which was attributed to **divine revenge** on the entire city of New Orleans for organising a **gay rally**; and as with other disasters going back to the famous Lisbon earthquake and beyond, so Haiti’s tragedy must be **payback** for human ‘**sin**.’

The arguments, Dawkins and other writers have written are very **compelling** even to those who **do** know God!! They seem to be very **logical** and seem very convincing. These articles must put a lot of **pressure** on those who are **considering** Xnity and the Bible as a legitimate world-view! How do you answer such arguments? Well, we must answer it the way the Bible does!

First: the Bible **acknowledges** such tragedies. It does **not pretend** there are **no inexplicable providences!** There are. Dawkins mentioned the underground Plates rubbing against each other.

There are **astounding** and **shocking** events within Biblical history.

*“You have made Your people **see hard things**; You have given us wine to drink that made us **stagger/astonished**”*[Psa 60:3] Shocking!

When Jeremiah sat down on a pile of **debris** looking at the disaster that came on Jerusalem he was amazed at the **indifference** of the public. He was **amazed** at how many **never saw** the fulfillment of God’s Word! *“Is it **nothing** to you, all you who **pass by**? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow...which the **Lord** inflicted..... Look, O Lord, for I am in distress; my **stomach churns**”*[Lm1:12,20] *“The **elders** of the daughters of Zion **sit on the ground in silence**”* [Lam 2:10] **APP** Did **your** stomach churn over Haiti? Speaking of the ground being sinless, God said immediately after man’s **sin**, *“**Cursed** is the **ground** because of you; in **pain** you shall eat of it **all the days of your life**”* [Gen 3:17] The ground, as well as man himself is to suffer **contradiction, inconsistency!** Thorns, briars, + a host

So the **fact of inexplicable** disasters which astounded the people of God is acknowledged in the Bible. *One response in Scripture then to inexplicable disasters, is simply to **sit in silence**. *“Her prophets find **no vision** from the Lord”*[Lam 2:9] The church had **no answer!** And we Xns today have no answer to many of the things that are going on in the world today. We admit we have no answer...we **wait!**

Having no answer does not mean we concede! Just because **we, poor midgets**, do not know what is happening does not mean there is no answer. Job had no answer - and his friends had wrong answers! But there **was** an answer and purpose. Job & Co did not know about what **was** going on between God and Satan, amongst the Spirits in heaven!

Even among the **redeemed saints** in heaven there is **no knowledge** of **why** things happen on earth - or are **not happening!** Regarding the *“souls of those who had **been slain** for the Word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice ‘O Sovereign Lord, **holy** and true, **how long** before You will **judge** and **avenge our blood** on those who dwell on the earth”*[Rv 6:10] If these saints who died for their faith are puzzled how long it takes before God will deal out **justice**, it’s not surprising that **we** are puzzled! We must never even **think of giving up** the faith because we cannot

understand what is going on in the world of a Sovereign, Almighty, **Mysterious God. God is a mystery!** The great theologian Apostle Paul spoke of the “*mystery of His will*” [Eph 1:9] and said “*Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness*” [1Tim 3:16] Paul could not understand everything either. **What pride** to presume that we humans **could comprehend** the mind of the God of the Bible! *So we must never be ashamed or embarrassed to say **we do not know, we cannot explain** and give answers to these things.

Think of the **unanswerable questions** the saints in Scripture were asked? “*He saved others, Himself He cannot save*” “*Come down from the Cross*”!! How could the **disciples** answer that? The question made sense - to one who did not know God or the **purposes** of God! Or indeed to the disciples! At least not until some time afterwards. **We** can say **now** - it was to save the world. But not until the **resurrection** could the disciples have any answer to this question. All they could say “*we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel*” [Luke 24:21] But their hopes were absolutely **shattered** beholding the cold, lifeless body of Jesus! But there **was** an answer!

Think of **Moses**. God told him that Pharaoh **would** let the people of Israel go, and then things **only get worse!** Their burdens are **increased**. Moses is nearly at his wits end! He **cannot understand!** But everything, but everything, is going according to God’s plan!

Think of **Habakkuk!** “*O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and You will not hear?*” [Hab 1:2] And then God answers with an **even more complex** answer! ‘I will send the **Chaldeans** to punish the Assyrians’!! Wow - what kind of sense did that make to Habakkuk?

Think of the **Psalms:** “*How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?*” [Psa 82:2] “*O LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked exult/triumph?*” [Psa 94:3] *There is **nothing new** in the disaster of Haiti regarding the Sovereignty of God and the **mystery** of providence! Such questions always existed - and are **mainly unanswerable** by humans! “*there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long. How long, O God, is the foe to scoff? Is the enemy to revile*

your name forever?” [Psa 74:9,10] *So, do **not** be discouraged that you have no answers to give to those who disbelieve the Bible.

It is very **painful** to suffer **injustice!** The world is **full** of injustices! But never forget that God has **promised** that there is a day **appointed** when **every injustice** will be put right! “*He has **fixed a day** on which he **will judge** the world in **righteousness** by a Man whom He has appointed; and of this He has **given assurance** to all by **raising Him from the dead**”*[Acts 17:31] Paul to philosophers!

Now - we need to be very careful **not to attribute** to ‘innocents’ the severe providences they may experience. Innocent people may have a very hard life. Just because a tragedy has come on a person or community, **we cannot say** this is because **they** have sinned greatly! Jesus rebuked His disciples about the **blind man**. God’s judgments are **unevenly** distributed **across** humanity. Just as **blessings** come to the **unrighteous**, so judgments come on the righteous. Sol: “*there **are** righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked...there **are** wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous*”[Ecc 8:14] Sol saw this long ago!

It seems the Haiti people themselves still believe very much in God! ‘The Times’ on Monday gave an account of them. One said “*I am **rejoicing** because **the Lord** gives and **the Lord** takes away*”!

It is **not until** the Great Judgment Day will **everyone** get **exactly** what they deserve! “*we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that **each one** may receive **what is due** for what he **has done in the body**”*[2 Cor 5:10] On **that** Day, we will **all** receive “***according to our works***” -ie, exactly what we deserve!

We must “*judge nothing **before** the time until the Lord comes who **will bring to light** the things **now hidden** in darkness*”[1Cor 4:5] There will be a **revealing** of all things to vindicate the righteous. “*God will bring **every deed** into judgment, with **every secret thing***”

For believers it will be: “*You who have made me see many **troubles and calamities**, **will revive me again**; from the depths of the earth **You will bring me up again...and comfort me again**”*[Psa 71:20]