

Is God Omnipotent? Yes  
Does God tell us why He allows disasters? No

JOHN: Yeah, it's like Job. You know, you would think that if anybody deserved an answer, it would be Job, right?

The most righteous man on the planet by God's own assessment. God says to Satan, "He's the most righteous man there is."

Isn't he at least entitled to know why? All his kids are killed. He loses all his crops. He loses his health. All he's got left is a cantankerous wife who has given him bad advice. The level of misery is incomprehensible. And then to add to his misery, he has a bunch of friends who come and tell him all the wrong information and give him foolish counsel.

If anybody deserved an explanation, that good righteous man deserved one, and he never got one, absolutely never got an explanation from God. God just did say to him, "Who do you think you are even asking?" So God does not...does not consign Himself to some necessity to answer our great questions, except the prevailing reality is, this is a fallen world, you are sinful, calamity suits itself perfectly, it adapts perfectly to a fallen, sinful world and a sinful humanity. It is inevitable. Death is inevitable and you need to be prepared for it.

PHIL: And beyond that, we have to do what Job did, basically, and put our hands over our mouths and let God be God.

JOHN: And trust in the wisdom and the sovereignty and the perfection of God.

PHIL: There are other people who ponder that question, where was God...why would He let this happen...and decide then that maybe God just isn't powerful enough to stop this. How would you answer people like that?

In fact, before you do, let me read you this from a famous Christian leader, it's actually Tony Compollo, he says this

# Katrina: Not God's Wrath--or His Will

*The Hebrew Bible doesn't say God is omnipotent. When disaster strikes, he cries with the rest of us.*

BY: Dr. Tony Campolo<sup>1</sup>

Whenever there is a catastrophe, some religious people inevitably ask, "Why didn't God do something? Where was God when all those people died?" Among the answers we might consider is the one that Martin Luther gave as his wife asked a similar question upon the death of their infant son. Luther answered, "The same place he was when His son died!"

Unfortunately, there are a lot of bad answers. One such answer is that somehow all suffering is a part of God's great plan. In the midst of agonies, someone is likely to quote from the Bible, telling us that if we would just be patient, we eventually would see "all things work together for the good, for those who love God, and are called according to His purposes." (Romans 8:28)

I don't doubt that God can bring good out of tragedies, but the Bible is clear that God is not the author of evil! (James 1:15) Statements like that dishonor God, and are responsible for driving more people away from **Christianity** than all the arguments that atheistic philosophers could ever muster. When the floods swept into the Gulf Coast, God was the first one who wept.

There are still other religionists who take the opportunity to tell us that God is punishing America for its many sins. Undoubtedly, there are some al-Qaeda fanatics who right now are saying that Katrina is the hand of God, striking America for what we have done to the people of Iraq and to the Palestinians.

Furthermore, there are Christians who, in the weeks to come, can be counted on to thunder from their pulpits that Katrina is God's wrath against the immorality of this nation, pointing out that New Orleans is the epitome of our national degradation and debauchery. To all of this I say, "Wrong."

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2005/09/Katrina-Not-Gods-Wrath-Or-His-Will.aspx?p=1>

The God revealed in Jesus did not come into the world "to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:17) There can be no arguments over the claim that, for a variety of reasons, our nation deserves punishment. But when the Bible tells us about the grace of God, it is giving us the good news that our loving God does not give us what we truly deserve. Certainly, God would not create suffering for innocent people, who were--for the most part--Katrina's victims.

Perhaps we would do well to listen to the likes of Rabbi Harold Kushner, who contends that God is not really as powerful as we have claimed. Nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures does it say that God is omnipotent.

Kushner points out that omnipotence is a Greek philosophical concept, but it is not in his Bible. Instead, the Hebrew Bible contends that God is mighty. That means that God is a greater force in the universe than all the other forces combined.

In scripture we get the picture of a cosmic struggle going on between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. The good news is that, in the end, God will be victorious. That is why we can sing in the Hallelujah Chorus, "the kingdoms of this world [will] become the Kingdom of our Lord."

Personally, I contend that the best thing for us to do in the aftermath of Katrina is to remain silent, and not try to explain this tragedy. Instead of asking "Why?" we should be asking, "What does God want us to do now?" The loving God calls all believers in the face of Katrina's devastation to seek ways to express love in concrete ways towards those who have lost friends and **family** members; and to those who have lost homes along with most of their earthly belongings.

In the Bible, we read this passage: "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." (I Kings 19:11-12)

Instead of looking for God in the earthquake or the tsunami, in the roaring forest fires blazing in the western states, or in the mighty winds of Katrina, it would be best to seek out a quiet place and heed the promptings of God's still small voice. That voice will inspire us to bring some of God's goodness to bear in the lives of those who suffer.

But those are just statistics to most Americans. What seems to get the public's attention are the "mass murders", the murders that happen in public places. We have had far too many this past year.

## America's Mass Murders of 2012

Here's a timeline of some of the worst deadly shootings in the U.S. this year:

1. **January 10, 2012:** Three teenagers were shot dead in an ambush in Philadelphia.
2. **February 21, 2012:** Near Atlanta, a man killed four relatives before himself.
3. **February 27, 2012:** A 17-year-old student, went into his Ohio high school cafeteria and shooting students at random, three students died.
4. **March 30, 2012:** A gunman opened fire on a crowd of mourners outside a funeral home in Miami, Fla. Two people died and 12 more were injured.
5. **April 2, 2012:** A student in Oakland, California killed seven fellow students.
6. **April 6, 2012:** Five African-American men were gunned down in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
7. **May 29, 2012:** A man went to a cafe in Seattle's University district, shooting and killing four people, then fled to a parking lot and shot another woman before killing himself.
8. **July 20, 2012:** A 24 year old shot up a theater killing 12 people and injuring 60 more.
9. **August 5, 2012:** Seven people were gunned down at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin.
10. **August 13, 2012:** Three people including a police officer were killed near the campus of Texas A&M University.
11. **August 24, 2012:** A man shot a former coworker and injured nine more people before being shot and killed by police.
12. **August 28, 2012:** A 15 year old boy brought a gun to a Baltimore High School and shot a fellow student, resulting in a critical injury.
13. **August 31, 2012:** A New Jersey supermarket worker killed two of his coworkers before shooting himself.
14. **September 28, 2012:** Another man walked into his former office, and "carefully selected" five people before turning the gun on himself.
15. **October 21, 2012:** An estranged husband in Wisconsin killed three people, including his wife, before shooting himself.
16. **November 6, 2012:** A worker at a Fresno, California meat-processing plant killed two people and himself.
17. **December 12, 2012:** A man went into an Oregon shopping mall and killed two bystanders before shooting himself.
18. **December 14, 2012:** Adam Lanza opened fire at a Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. 28 people died, including 20 children, plus educators, his mom, and himself.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.businessinsider.com/mass-murders-in-2012-2012-12#ixzz2H2PuYsMn>