

# *Destruction*

**(A brief essay)**

**Charles A. Pledge**

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# **Destruction!**

## **(May 1, 2011)**

**The world is accustomed to destruction.** Wars, earthquakes, floods, famine, and other natural occurrences leave behind death and destruction of many types. Wanda and I were in Arkansas trying to clean up after a storm of a few weeks back. We were hindered by tornadoes and violent thunderstorms for three days, so we did not get through as planned. (Plus I am a little slower with a chain saw than I was in former days.)

For three days and nights we lived with predictions of violent thunderstorms and tornadoes for Marianna. On two occasions (the same early evening) the sirens in town were sounded indicating that a tornado had been sighted in the immediate vicinity. I heard at least three tornadoes passing by overhead. Once you hear that sound, it is not soon, nor easily forgotten.

On the way home Friday afternoon late, we saw more. Flooding was all over eastern Arkansas. Rivers were raging. Lakes and large reservoirs were overflowed by the rains. Houses were partly under water in areas not considered as flood plains. Predictions are for a worse flood along the Mississippi River than in 1937. I remember that one from childhood. Also houses were damaged and destroyed by tornadoes and violent thunderstorms. Beautiful large trees were broken, twisted, and uprooted by storms.

### **Destruction was visible everywhere.**

When we left Memphis going north, we began to notice along the interstate trees uprooted in massive streaks. Once, several miles south of Jackson, a streak several miles long from south to north was observed where trees were broken and uprooted, in many places they were thrown together in piles as if by a massive hand. What has all this to say to us today?

**It is God who forms the frost, sends the snow, rains, hail, and the winds.** No, not in a direct, vengeful way, but by the laws

governing nature which he set in motion at the creation of the universe. He was making a statement when he set those laws in motion. That statement was: “ I am Lord of all! My rules apply across the board with no favoritism. All (nature, heavenly bodies, mankind, and all creatures; the entire universe) are to be in subjection to me by bowing to the laws I reveal.” That is God’s statement being constantly proclaimed by the heavens and earth around us, Romans 1:20. Paul declared that this message was so strong that no one has an excuse for not believing in God, the creator.

Yet, during the time of destruction by natural means, mankind and animals alike show terror. I respect the power shown in massive destruction by such means as mentioned. I fear a hot stove, but I am not terrorized by the presence of one. Wanda and I had no shelter to run to in Marianna. It was just sit and wait the storms out. Or sleep through them, which we did during some.

**We all shall die in one way or another.** Getting sailed through the air for 100 feet in a car wreck, or being sailed through the air for thousands of miles in a tornado makes no difference. Death results in either. Why wait until the last minute and go to pieces in terror because one is not ready. God teaches us to prepare each day as if that is the last moment we shall live. Be vigilant! Be diligent! Give all diligence! Now is the time! Today is the day of salvation! Be ready! We know not when our Lord shall come, either in the power of natural destruction, or in a Day of Final Judgment! It matters not when, if one is faithful. **That is the key;** being faithful: full of faith. Being full of faith, in submission to the will of the Lord in all ways, diligently serving him each day as if that is the last day, filled with the knowledge it takes to know and do his will, and the faithful practice of that which is known.

**God has a statement in every catastrophic event.** And God has a message in every calm and peaceful day. Wisdom shouts from every corner, nook, cranny, depth, and height. The question is, “Are we listening?”

**God is always in control.** That does not mean that he is micro-managing the affairs of the world. God created man with a free will in order that man can glorify his creator with the choices of life he makes. Or he can shame the name of God by acting in a shameful way, contrary to the purpose for which God created man, Ecclesiastes 12:13. Many have lost their lives in the storms and floods. More shall die in that manner. Some will die in terror. Others will die in peace. Most will die unprepared to face the Lord in judgment. A few will be prepared.

**In everything in life, there are lessons to be learned.** This is what God tries to tell us in his word. Wisdom cries abroad. There is no place where her voice can not be heard if one determines to listen. (Psalm 19:1-3.) We all are here for the same purpose; to honor and obey God, Ecclesiastes 12:12-13. Wisdom demands that we search our own hearts and determine according to the word of God what our daily status is before God. I can answer only for my self. And I must answer, for no one else can answer for me; nor for any one else. We each must stand before the judgment bar and give an answer for what we have done in our bodies, 2 Corinthians 5:10.

The question for each of us to answer is: “What have I learned this past week from all the natural calamities, and loss of life?” Does that have any significance to me at all? Have we learned to respect God the Father any more? Have we learned to appreciate the tender mercies of God more? Have we learned a deeper, higher reverence toward God, and a new respect for his will? If not, why not?

Wars, earthquakes, storms, floods, and all other forms of violent actions constantly snuff out life. My life can be the next one. Does that mean that God reaches down and by pre-selection directly take that life? No! It does mean however, that I have no time to wait and do things my way. It is God’s way, or destruction. That is the message we need to hear. Then, we need to take quick action in bringing into harmony with God’s will, our life in every respect. God will not sit and wait at judgment for us to “tidy up,”

and make the final preparations. Wisdom says, “Get your life in order and keep it ready, for no one knows at what hour or what day we shall leave this life and in that state in which we leave, meet the Lord in judgment.”

I have discussed with many their status before God. In trying to get some who were flagrant, deliberate sinners, to turn to God, I have been told: “I am alright, I am prepared to meet God. I have made my peace with him.” One individual who told me that pleaded with me just hours before he died to not leave him alone; “Stay with me,” he begged. I said to him that I would do my best to be with him when he died, but at that point we must part company because I could not go any further than the door; he must go through it and meet whomever he had served in this life.

My friends, it is one thing to claim peace with God; it is often quite another thing to have peace with God. Peace with God comes only through justification by God in order that we may have and maintain the right relationship with God. Peace with God has nothing to do with the external matters of life. Neither obtaining peace, nor maintaining peace with God comes through a cut and dried set of rules, or actions, or beliefs. Some say it comes through faith alone; others by grace alone. Yet others claim that there is a set of laws we must obey in order to obtain. It is not through an exclusive thing, or set of things. Redemption is a long road of sanctification which begins with an honest heart and concludes with the physical death and then resurrection of a faithful, sanctified, saint of God. It is not a one item belief, or one gift, or x number of steps we take in a short time; peace with God is living the way of holiness; the sanctified life. It is neither something we earn, nor anything we merit. It is not a so much work, so much pay type of approach. All the riches; all the work, and all the sacrifices in the world could neither earn nor merit redemption. Peace with God is both a result of our efforts combined with the efforts of God. Our efforts are but a response of faith working in love, out of reverence, godly fear, and gratitude. The most overwhelming, greatest blessing we can enjoy is the bestowal by God of his tender

mercies on us poor, frail, poverty stricken creatures who never deserve his mercies..

**All of this has been said to forever lay to rest the false notions of the cheap grace and easy faith, peace with God concept.** Forget the magic wand concept of God just working it all inside you with you doing absolutely nothing. God can not do that without violating his own will. God is a God of integrity who must always work within the framework of his own will in order to be a God of integrity. If he ever works apart from his will, then he can not be trusted because one thing that is set forth with clarity and force is that the will of God is sovereign over all else. His word has he exalted above his own person, Psalm 138:2. His will declares that the sinner must obey his will or forever be lost. His grace declares that his salvation is freely a gift, Romans 6:23.

What are we to believe then, about salvation. Just believe what his word declares because that is truth, John 17:17. Know that man has a part which, when he does it, is still a poor lost, helpless sinner, and his only hope lies in the blood offering for our sins made at Calvary by Jesus Christ. It is to that blood we must approach by willingly crucifying ourselves with Jesus Christ in his death, Romans 6:3, and then being raised to be clothed with the character of Christ, wherein we have the responsibility to walk the rest of our days in imitation of Christ. (Romans 6:4-6.) And when we have walked that path till we lay aside our fleshly tabernacle for that eternal body, we still have to exclaim that although we have paid the price of faith in living, that now our eyes behold the fulness of his grace in redemption; the gracious, priceless gift of salvation full and free.

You will never convince me that redemption is the instant gratification of the prayer of a lost sinner, because that flies in the face of everything God sets forth in his word. Neither can you convince me that we have worked our way to heaven in the sense of so much work and so much pay. Nor can you convince me that all the work we did is **not related** to redemption. You can never convince me that you made your peace with God apart from his

will set forth in his word. If you really believe that and are ready to rebuff every effort to help you find the peace with God which passes all understanding, then do not plead with me to go with you when you are departing this life. I can't help you over there, because over there you stand with the same one you stood with here when you left this life.

**The blood of Jesus is man's only hope.** When does God apply that blood to bring you into a covenant relationship with him, and how is that blood applied to continue to cleanse you as long as you live? Are you concerned for your soul. Do you want genuine peace with God, and are you willing to do what God requests of you before he will freely grant you his tender mercies?

**Then get in touch with us as indicated below.**

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