

17 Reasons for Calamity, Disease, Accidents, Afflictions, Mayhem, and the Bible

Robin Calamaio 2008 – Edit 2020

freelygive-n.com

There is purpose behind each negative event that befalls an individual. Potential reasons often depend upon one's standing with God. One's *actual* standing with God determines which of the following possibilities are viable. Each person is either *outside* of Christ or *in* Christ (unbeliever or believer).

1. The Reality of This Existence - The Initial Judgment of God

Adam's fall in Genesis is accompanied by a group of judgments from God. One negative is that Adam's physical body would now be overcome by the environment. "*You are dust, and to dust you shall return*" (Gen 3:19). If Adam's physical body was already that way before The Fall (as all longevity, deep time model adherents believe), then such a "*judgment*" is nonsense. But, the burden of proof lies on the naysayer, as evolution/deep time systems remain theory – and unproven. So, one "*gift*" Adam passed to us by his rebellion in the Eden (which was under different physical laws) ... is a body that cannot survive this environment. Sooner or later, some negative "*thing*" will kill us (See Lk 13:1-5). That is the reality of this existence.

Even as Christians, we still remain, in some ways, as sons of Adam. Often it is said of believers, like king David, "*he slept with his fathers*" (i.e., died - 1Ki 2:10) or Simeon, after seeing the Christ in the flesh, said, "*Lord, let Thy bondservant depart (die) in peace ...*" (Lk 2:29). In those instances, there is no indication the person had done something specifically wrong, or evil, to bring death *at that time* ... it is just the reality of being alive in this age. Our body cannot survive the current natural laws imposed at The Fall.

2. Direct Judgment on an Individual

This is always in response to some specific incident. "*(F)ire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed*" Nadab and Abihu - Aaron's sons (Lev 10:1-20). Read of Korah's rebellion (Nu 16), or Ananias' and Sapphira's fatal error (Ac 5: 1-11). And Herod, after delivering a seemingly great speech, failed to give God His proper due and "*an angel of the Lord struck him ... and he was eaten by worms and he died*" (Ac 12:23). The only reason we know these are direct judgments from the living Creator ... *is because He told us*. I am absolutely certain similar actions occur around us all the time - but aren't written down. In Ephesians, after listing several sins ("*porneia*" - the root of pornography, translated, "*sexual immorality*" and also "*uncleanness*" and "*covetousness*"), it is then stated, "*on account of these things the wrath of God comes (present tense) upon the sons of disobedience*" (Eph 5:3-6. Also Col 3:5-6). This is happening all around us - but, His actions are not declared to us *in writing* like those cited above. He moves - at the time and place of His choosing. Jesus has "*the keys of death and of Hades*" (Rev 1:18) and ... He uses them. It is indeed "*a terrifying thing to fall into the Hands of the living God*" (Heb 10:31).

3. Judgment on a Group

While each person will only account for his/her own actions, many times an entire

group is judged by God - and calamity comes *sooner* than it might have otherwise. The flood killed people of all ages (Gen 6-8). So also the fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah and environs (Gen 18:7 through 19:29). He warns nations that forget Him. *"He makes the nations great, then destroys them ... He changes ... a fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it"* (Job 12:23 and Ps 107:33-34). The end of this age will be a worldwide group judgment (Mt 25:31-46 and Rev 20:11-15). The moment is approaching when His Name will be damned ... one time too many.

4. Demon Possession

This is particularly dire in my estimation. Fallen angels are phenomenally powerful beings and often mercilessly torment their victims. The torments are sometimes physical, sometimes emotional and sometimes volitional - or varied combinations. The Gerasene, multi-demon possessed man, was violent, lived in the tombs, and was *"constantly ... crying out and gashing himself with stones"* (Read Mk 5:1-20). He was afflicted physically, emotionally and volitionally which is evidenced by his deliverance. As soon as Jesus freed him from *"Legion,"* he became His herald throughout the entire ten cities area.

Fallen angels caused one boy to convulse and *"often be thrown into the fire and into the water to destroy him"* - to kill him (Read Mk 9:14-29). Others suffered physical maladies like the woman, *"who for eighteen years had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all"* (Lk 13:10-17). I have no discernment on which illnesses might be demon-driven. Maybe others do.

But there are some accounts where fallen angels seem to work *with* their victims. Possible examples include a slave girl with a spirit of divination or perhaps the demon possessed man who attacked two of the sons of Sceva (Ac 16:16-19 and 19:13-17). And Satan himself went in and out of Judas, strengthening him to betray Jesus Christ (Lk 22:3-7, Jn 13:2 and Jn 13:26-30). But whatever the mode of the possession, these malicious beings always cause havoc and death in those they enter. It will probably always remain a mystery to me why some under Satan's domain are so horribly afflicted while the majority under his rule just walk around in his/her flesh all the days of his/her lifetime. I have known some in such demonic, dire straights and I trust the Lord will extend deliverance and mercy to them. This age is already hard enough. May the Lord come to the rescue.

5. Demon Destructions

Job's children, and all but four of his servants, were killed by several forms of directed demonic (Satanic) attack. It included the stirring up two marauding bands of killers, a targeted lightning strike, and a wind that collapsed the eldest brother's house on all of Job's children (Job 1:13-19). In this loss of life, it is likely it was a mix of believers and unbelievers. As this was actually a conflict between God and Satan over Job, it appears to me those killed were collateral damage you might say. I have no idea if Satan, and his, still possess this type of power. I hope this was lost as part of a disarming that occurred at Christ's triumph at the cross (Col 2:15). But the Revelation of John contains a lot of destructive, demonic-driven activity that sinks humanity into various horrific calamities and mayhem (i.e., Rev 12 and 13, Rev 16:13,14, etc.).

But even in the pre-cross time, Satan had to get permission from God before he

could enact an onslaught (See the Job 1:6-12 exchange between Satan and God). So, I am of the persuasion that #4 and #5 and #14 in this list can only occur with God's permission. If these beings could act freely, they would have killed me when I first began reading the Bible. They surely recognize the steps when God is "*drawing*" a person to the Son (Jn 6:44). They know such a person will be transferred from their domain "*into the kingdom of the beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*" (Col 1:13-14). These beings know what "*hedges*" God has placed around a person (see Job 1:9-10), and would rip through every one if they had the power. It took six months of reading the Bible before I finally called upon the Lord. They would never have allowed eternal pardon, eternal life and eternal bliss for me - or you - if their hands were *free*. Are they powerful? Yes. Lethal? Yes. Free to impose their will at will? No. And in all this, God remains clean.

6. Succumbing to Satanic Temptation

One of Satan's "*titles*" is Tempter: "*And the tempter came and said to Him (Jesus) ...*" (Mt 4:3). Paul feared for those in Thessalonica that "*the tempter might have tempted*" them and his "*labor (be)... in vain*" (1Thes 3:5). In the parable of the four soils, the first soil consists of unbelievers who have heard the word of God and "*(i)mmediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them, so that they might not believe and be saved*" (Mk 4:15 & Lk 8:12). How might he "*take away*" or "*snatch*" (Mt 13:19) God's word from their heart? Most assuredly often with some sweet temptation. Vivid examples I witnessed of this dynamic occurred when I worked at a street gospel mission. Right after hearing a message, many listeners would walk right into someone offering them drug, drink or some sex exploit. Immediately, the message evaporated. But sometimes, to fall into a Satanic temptation trap can bring immediate massive trouble. How many "*one night stands*" rupture a family for the rest of this life? Or an intoxicated driver maiming or ending lives? The list is almost endless. The initial temptation to sin is often generated by the Tempter and his target included the Son of God, it includes all Christians, and he is also quite interested in destroying the lives of unbelievers as well.

7. Succumbing to Self-Generated Temptation

Often, we can not claim, "*The devil made me do it!*" No, we do many things ... all on our own. "*Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death*" (Ja 1:13-15). I have caused me more trouble than any outside force. And sometimes, to fall into a self-generated temptation trap can bring immediate massive trouble. How many "*one night stands*" rupture a family for the rest of this life? Or an intoxicated driver maiming or ending lives? The list is almost endless. You probably noticed the last four sentences were cut and pasted from the last paragraph. Maybe a different generator ... but the same song. As another example of self generated and inflicted wounds ... "*(b)ut those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction*" (1Tim 6:5). This category of troubles belongs to Christians and non-Christians alike.

8. Reaping What Has Been Sown

I make a distinction between this category and the two previous ones in this respect; big troubles can come from Satanic temptation or self-generated temptation in a one-off fall. But a reaping of what has been sown is more in reference *to a lifestyle* of some activity that eventually “*grows up*” - or matures. There are multitudes of applications to this. For example, if one ingests destructive materials, or otherwise violates *natural law*, negative things will eventually come. If one habitually violates *civil law*, at some point, those “*ships*” normally “*come home.*” And there is also *spiritual law*. For example, James said, “*judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy*” (Ja 2:13). “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap*” (Gal 6:7). If you sow to the wind, do not be surprised if you “*reap the whirlwind*” (Hos 8:7). Many of the violations of afore mentioned laws are often little seeds. But, when judgment comes due, a life-taking whirlwind arrives. “*... calamity will come upon him suddenly. Instantly he will be broken and there is no remedy*” (Pr 6:15). Reaping is not ... a one-to-one ratio.

9. Afflictions Designed to Bring One to God

A man might be “*chastened with pain on his bed, and with unceasing complaint in his bones ... his flesh wastes away ... and his bones, which were not seen, stick out God does all these oftentimes with men, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life*” (Job 33:19, 21, 29-30). I am certain we will find there were many deathbed conversions ... but, not by ones who presumed on God that such an opportunity would be afforded them. Also, Psalm 107 depicts several similar type scenarios where “*they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end*” (Also see Ps 119:67,71). A classic example involves the Christian-killer, Saul. “*... a light from heaven flashed around him, and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying ... 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'*” After some instructions, he got back up, “*and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing*” (Ac 9:3-4 & 8). This is the beginning of the Christian life ... of the Apostle Paul.

10. Miraculous Deliverance

This may be somewhat related to the previous point. A man, who had been born blind, was in such a condition “*in order that the works of God might be displayed in him*” (Jn 9:3). God may allow, or even cause, some negative thing (Ex 4:11), with the intention of miraculously delivering the afflicted one as a demonstration of His power, ability and mercy. Incredibly, these feats *do not* always end in the conversion of the one so delivered - or the onlookers (See Lk 17:11-19, Jn 5:2-16, and Mt 28:2-4 and 11-15). So such deliverances can actually end ... in a greater judgment. Amazing.

For Unbelievers ...

... that's about it. With the exception of Number 9 (and sometimes Number 10), unbelievers are subject to all kinds of mayhem - with no constructive purpose behind it. Maladies are simply black events escorting one to an ultimate destination of “*outer darkness*” (Mt 22:13). For unbelievers, their “*portion in life is of the world*” (Ps 17:14). This is tragic. There is more to life than this life. Please become jealous for your own soul. Forget “*offenses*” by professed Christians ... or whatever is holding you back. Do this re-examination for yourself. For you.

For Believers ...

... well there's more to come. I am sure that is just what you wanted to hear. But first, a Christian is subject to *some* of the above sources of trouble - with modification. The most important modification is this promise: "*God causes all things to work together toward good, to those who continue loving God*" (Ro 8:28). The preposition, "*eis*" (toward) primarily means, "*motion towards something.*" God uses evil (be it natural or moral) to accomplish *solid life gains* for the one who continues to esteem and respect Him ("*agapao*"). "*Let those who suffer according to the will of God continue entrusting their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good*" (1Pet 4:19). By the way, some believe, "*in doing good ('en agathopoiia')*" refers to God. Others think it is calling *the believer* to continue doing good - while trusting God. It appears this can be legally translated either way. This may be deliberate ... as both understandings are indeed accurate. This Book continues to astound me.

So, what else might be a generating source of trouble for a Christian?

11. Individual Discipline Replaces Individual Judgment

"*Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord ... He scourges each one He welcomes as a son ... All discipline, for the moment, seems ... sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness*" (Heb 12:5, 11). These disciplines are individualized actions from God. "*He disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share His holiness*" (Heb 12:10). He is responding to a believer's **sin** - with the goal of driving it out - thus making the believer more Christlike. This takes God's profound wisdom.

12. Abuse of the Lord's Supper

This is actually an extension of Number 11 above. If a believer partakes of the Lord's Supper - and yet is also casually partaking of some sin, this is presumption - making one "*guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord*" (1Cor 11:27). Whoa! This is addressed to Christians! This is a sure-fired way to bring down the Hand of God. "*When we are judged, we are disciplined that we might not be damned along with the world*" (1Cor 11:32). In Corinth, many were made "*weak, sick and a number sleep*" - died (with the assumption they repented before their exit) on account of this. Do not assume ... God has gone soft.

13. Testing God

God protects believers, but that does not mean the Christian can be reckless and expect God to come to the rescue. Satan quoted protective Scripture and then dared Jesus to jump "*from the pinnacle of the Temple*" (Lk 4:9-11). Jesus rebuked him, "*You shall not force a test on the Lord your God*" (Lk 4:12). There is a line somewhere between stepping out in faith - and presumption ... thus testing God. Some individuals are quite daring and adventurous and should not be censured by the more reserved among us. This is ultimately a matter determined between the individual saint and God.

14. Conflict in the Heavens

Job's troubles were brought on ... by a conflict in the heavens. Actually, *the Lord* challenged Satan ... with Job. Satan took up the challenge - and disaster struck. Read Job

1 and 2 - and ask God to spare you from such an ordeal. I sure do. Also, if Job is not the author of this book, he may never have learned - on this side - that a conflict between God and Satan was the genesis of his sufferings and loss. He may have learned this *after* his exit from this age. But, might troubles like this also be the case for others today?

In another instance, Satan "*demanded permission*" (that is an interesting phrase) to sift Peter "*like wheat.*" It appears that was granted (Lk 22:31-34). Again, can such *demands* occur with others today?

15. Testing

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (Ja 1:3). It does not appear these episodes are brought on by overt sin(s) - thus attracting God's discipline. "*The Lord tests hearts*" (Pr17:3). These tests are *hard things* - and often bring up dark stuff ... exposing deep attitudinal and/or character flaws (See Ro 5:3-5). Read of Job's personal heart exposures - while being the target of this "**Conflict in the Heavens**" referenced above. When such testing is successfully navigated, the believer is more sound in the faith. Moral defects are acknowledged (1Jn 1:9), renounced (Tit 2:12) and then, by His grace, put to death (Ro 8:13).

16. To Keep One From Sin

"And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me ..." (2Cor 12:7). Does it even matter what the physical problem was? Satan meant ill - but he actually kept Paul useful to God. This is an amazing use of evil. Your seemingly debilitating situation may actually equip you - for eternal labor. You know, our God ... is real big.

17. Suffering for Christ

"For to you it has been granted ... not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil 1:29). Paul did his share "*in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions*" (Col 1:24). God came into His own domain and was rejected (Jn 1:10-11). Believers are going to experience rejection as the world is still rejecting God. And, like Paul, we will thus be doing our part in filling up God's rejection by His own world. This is amazing. No Christian should go looking for this. It will come on its own. (Also see Mt 5:10-12, Phil 3:10, 2Tim 1:8, 2Tim 2:3, 9, 2Tim 3:12, 1Pet 4:12-19, Rev 13:7, etc.).

"Why Me? vs. "Why?"

When struck by some negative event, I have heard some Christians testify to this exchange: "*I asked God, 'Why me?' The answer then came back, 'Why not you?'*" That ends the discussion. Well, if that works for them ... great. But, I can come up with a bunch of reasons why I should be spared some life-interfering challenge. Additionally, as a believer, I know God can prevent any particular negative event. Indeed, that is my fate in the coming, eternal age - no negatives will have any place there. So, my time here is going to be *the only time* in my eternal life-line that negative things come. So, when He decides to let the hedges drop (Job 1:10) - I know there is a reason - or reasons - behind that. So, ... *I ask why. I seek why.* I am certain that many times I will benefit by *knowing why* ... even if not thrilled with the answer(s). Paul entreated the Lord three times about

his *“thorn in the flesh”* before getting an answer (2Cor 12:7-10). But, the *“why”* I am asking is not one of a selfish, childish peevishness. It is a *“why”* more along the lines of, *“What is Your purpose with this? Are You wanting to get something through to me?”* etc. At least that is where I want to be - as quickly as possible. So, maybe a good starting place is to review the 17 possibilities above, lay each one on the situation at hand and see which ones can be immediately dismissed - and which are possibilities. The other option ... is to stay in the dark.

Conclusion

While there may be just one reason behind some *“event”* - that is not always the case. Job’s situation started with a conflict in the heavens, but it was also a test designed to bring out a deep self righteousness in Job - from which he repented. And it is also true we may never have things totally defined for us in this age. But, there are two things of which I am certain concerning these blows. First, God wants us to serve Him *here and now* in *“righteousness, peace and in joy”* (Ro 14:17). In order for this to become our reality, we must have enough resolution with troubles to be able to live in that level. Second, whatever the troubles - even the most massive - I have asked the Lord, *“Are You bigger than this?”* This is a rhetorical question as the answer is always, *“Yes.”* I then ask, *“Then as Your son, I ask that You would make me bigger than this. If you will do this, You will bring honor to Yourself as I will be a testimony to such power ... and if I am too dull to thank You for such assistance now, I will surely thank You at the Judgment.”* I know me. *“In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, for I have overcome the world”* (Jn 16:33). I know He wants to make us overcomers, too. *“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us”* (Ro 8:37). Oh, how we need His power. It is my hope that this article may provide some tools as You seek Him through the depths you enter.

freelygive-n.com

In 1977, Robin Calamaio became a Christian. BA, Bus Admin (Milligan College '90) and Master of Divinity (Emmanuel School of Religion '92).