

# Tsunami, an act of God?

by John VanSloten Jan. 9, 2005

[SORROW SLIDE SHOW]... Over the past few days - lots of talk about How God fits into this terrible tragedy In what might be one of biggest natural disasters ever the question is - Where is God? LONG PAUSE...

It's a huge question... Why did you let this happen God?... What purpose is there in this?... What are you trying to say to the rest of us through this?

Huge questions!... Asked by humans for millennia!... but they seem even more pointed - natural disaster! PAUSE... 9/11 had a reason/source (terrorist enemy) Rwanda/WW2/Killing Fields - (wicked human hearts) But a Tsunami?... Who's to blame for that?... PAUSE... It's an - ACT OF GOD! [Divine Finger]

PAUSE... WHY GOD? first(most honest) answer - no idea!... throw hands in air... & hear God say... - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9

PAUSE... What do you do with that?... two choices - Believe in it - & run to God, hold on for dear life, trust him as having the A... as being the Answer! Reject it - push God away... try find some other place for answers ( to this Q , and other existential Q's)...

C.S. Lewis saw pain - "God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world" - wonder if this isn't exactly what's happening?... World filled with factions, religious animosity, terrorism, wars... conflicts on so many scales - from your homes/office - right up to international relations - Wonder if God saying via Tsunami - "STOP!"... stop fighting... PAUSE... Stop consuming as though its all that matters... Stop hoarding so much wealth... Stop being so selfish... (love neighbour as self for a change!) "think about someone else instead of yourself!"

Wonder if God's way - Get more responsible... behave just a bit better... with all that we've been given... (relationally and otherwise)

Why not cancel debt (instead of defer)?... money to develop own earthquake warning system?... Why not say 'No' to Drug companies - won't allow cheap generic Aids drugs into Africa... own needy seniors... You get the idea... LONG PAUSE...

[MARKET MAN DEATH]... telling tale!... maybe this tragic tsunami event - God's way - telling us to get to higher ground (morally, ethically, however!)

PAUSE... How else - God been present?... [REREAD] "You're more alive, more concerned, more sensitive, more reverent, more human, more passionate, more responsible. Looked at from any angle, you've come out of this with purity of heart."... Witnessing the

For me -Run to God... Why? [Where else can I Go?] [PAST RETROSPECT LESSONS]... & Paul - "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him" Romans 8:28 -- As I Do this... (only when I do this) - find myself in a place where - get glimpse - God's presence... small senses - of purpose... glimmers of hope - amidst all death and destruction  
Have to admit - these little pieces of 'Answers' ... signs of God's presence... probably more applicable 'This side of Pacific'... as we watch, after the fact... LONG PAUSE... But here goes... Where do I see God through the Asian Tsunami?...

First - most obviously - in hearts and hands of humanity as we've responded to this calamity... the response - unparalleled!... Seems this event - humanized us!... woken up - innately right and real about being a human being... [READING PAUL - context... ]  
"And now, isn't it wonderful all the ways in which this distress has goaded you closer to God? You're more alive, more concerned, more sensitive, more reverent, more human, more passionate, more responsible. Looked at from any angle, you've come out of this with purity of heart." 2 Cor. 7:11

I think this has happened... to the world... [Global impact - size and makeup (people from all over!)] - resulting global humanization! PAUSE... Our hearts grew three sizes this Christmas season!

PAUSE... though not near the size of God's heart!... even collectively we don't come close!... but know for certain -

explosive force of Tsunami - makes human being more reverent!  
How so?... PAUSE... first off - natural disasters - force us to face our smallness... Tsunami did that... Earthquake in Bam (30,000?)... Forest fires (Kelowna- different degree)... Pine Lake Tornado?...

There are things that are much bigger than us!... PAUSE... biggest of which is God who made it all! (who made this somewhat chaotic earth, with its occasional catastrophic event for a reason??- often a very natural thing in the big scheme of things... it could be argued that we need forest fires and floods...)

- maybe that's too convenient an explanation... we should know better than to live right on the ocean... HMMMM... Regardless... bigger strokes of nature are humbling... Finger of God is immense in power!

And we're small... mere frail human beings... with a lot less power than we'd like to think... PAUSE... small human beings who God cares for immensely!...

God cared for every single soul - perished (even w/o all answers)... knew each name (even as we can't do that!)... We trust their souls to God/his wisdom and mercy... even as we trust ours in times like this... even as we're trusting God right now for life!

Struck me... re: Where's God?... sure - in compassion... also saying 'wake up'... maybe most invisibly - everything in nature outside of disaster... [TSUNAMI's are ANOMOLIES] - not meant to

collectively we do reflect heart of our Maker!

Where is God in this? - in his image bearers- gotten back to basics - what it means to be human!

God moving - hands of doctor- inject for diseases... arms of a soldier - tosses care packages/helicopter... feet of neighbouring villagers - rushed to aid others...

Hearts of 'westerners' - given so many ways! PAUSE

Where else - see God?... Hear his voice in this?... Political Cartoon - points to another way... - another facet of our humanization - "More responsible" - even if for just a moment... PAUSE... Recall - being struck [TAMIL TIGER PEACE/ work along side]

A lot of conflicts/animosity - gets puts aside in times like these... [FUEDING STORIES] - huge reality check on how dumb/futile irresponsible we sometimes be with life!

minimize... just offer perspective... - right now... your breathing fresh air... warm... healthy... etc... God is in control... mysteriously has it all in hand...

We can get glimpses of this... know God via Storm [just like Job]... [Disciples in boat] in faith know- Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea- the LORD on high is mighty. Psalm 93:4

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