



World Kids

Fun for kids! true stories!



PAL Project

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Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night with feelings of panic and your heart pounding because of a nightmare? I expect we can all answer "YES!" to that question! Our dreams can seem so real at times that we feel we are really living through the terrifying experience - but then we wake up to find it was all just a nightmare, and we can get a comforting hug from our parents and go back to sleep again! But sometimes frightening events hit the headlines, and we see pictures of hundreds or thousands of people, including children, whose lives have been turned upside down in just a few moments. Maybe you've heard of some of these that happened in just the past few years:

HAITI



Just a month ago **Haiti** was hit by a terrible earthquake that killed over 150,000 people, destroyed whole towns, and affected the lives of one third the population there. Many children are now orphans and millions have lost their homes. It was truly terrifying - but miraculously this 16 year old girl, Darlene, was discovered alive in the rubble 15 DAYS later and she is now recovering.

MYANMAR

In 2008, a gigantic cyclone (like a hurricane) hit the country of **Myanmar**, also known as Burma. 95% of the homes in many rural areas were completely destroyed and more than 2 million people were affected, with up to 100,000 killed.



USA

Just 2-3 months later, devastating Hurricane Ike almost completely destroyed Galveston, Texas, and even though less than 100 lives were lost, many communities were totally destroyed. Only 3 years earlier, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans causing terrifying destruction and flooding, and suffering for hundreds of thousands of people.

SOUTHEAST ASIA



On December 26th 2004 a huge earthquake under the Indian Ocean caused a gigantic tsunami (tidal wave) to go out in all directions. Within a few short hours, over a quarter of a million people were killed and millions made homeless over a huge area that included **Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India** and even **Somalia** in East Africa! Because so many people were affected in so many places, it is hard to really know how long it has taken for people to recover and start over.

PHILIPPINES

In 2009 parts of the **Philippines** experienced the worst flooding in that nation's history...

INDIA

Flooding was also reported to be the worst in 100 years in parts of Central/Southern **India**...

WEST AFRICA

Catastrophic flooding was again reported in 2009 in **Togo**, and **Burkina Faso**, affecting up to a million people in many West African countries...





Ash and rocks from erupting volcanoes can be thrown 10 miles high or more, and the ash from Mt. Pinatubo that erupted in the Philippines in 1991 covered everything for many miles around in many inches of horrible ash.

Hopefully, such frightening experiences as earthquakes and erupting volcanoes will remain only in the headlines for each of us, but the truth is that sooner or later we will probably all be affected by some type of catastrophe. Less than two years ago, our little farm was hit by a tornado - but, praise God, our house, vehicles and animals were all OK. But we are STILL working on cutting up the many big trees that were torn up by the roots, and it has taken us months to repair our barn and fences! Also, in recent years, TWO of our daughters and their families lost everything when their homes caught on fire! Lives are turned upside down by car wrecks, sudden accidents or illness - life can be very hard at times, and VERY unfair!



Sometimes people call such disasters "Acts of God" (saying that God is to blame or is punishing people!) and often people cannot understand and so want to ask God "WHY?" One of the best examples in the Bible of a man who lost EVERYTHING is the story of Job in the Old Testament. This is a long story and not easy to read, but it tells that Job's children were all killed when the house collapsed; all his animals and servants were killed; and his body was covered in painful sores. Even his friends said Job must have sinned terribly to have caused the punishment, but Job still finally kept his trust in God. At the end of the story we see that God healed Job and blessed him with twice as many more children and animals! So how can we understand it all? In the New Testament, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:24-27 that 5 times he was whipped with 39 lashes; he was beaten with rods 3 times; he was stoned; and also he was shipwrecked 3 times!! When I read that, I said to God: "That really isn't fair!! I can understand that sometimes we may be persecuted and suffer for preaching the Gospel, but you, God, could have prevented the storms and saved Paul that much suffering at least!!"



But then I knew God's answer - He said: "Problems and disasters are always going to be part of life on this earth - THIS is not Heaven yet!!" Jesus promised us in John 16:33 that we would have trials and sorrows in this world, but we should take heart because he is with us and has overcome this world. There are many bible stories that remind us that God is with us and will take care of His people (those who trust and follow Him), so we do not need to be afraid when we hear news of disasters. Can you name the bible heroes who survived these disasters?

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| FLOOD - | Who was saved from the biggest flood ever? |
| STORM - | Who was thrown overboard in a storm then eaten by a big fish, yet survived? |
| FIRE - | Who went through fire in a very hot furnace, but came out alive? |
| TORNADO - | Who was taken up to Heaven in a tornado (whirlwind)? |
| EARTHQUAKE - | Who survived an earthquake that broke down the prison walls? |

During our life on this earth, we learn that we cannot understand everything that happens, no matter HOW clever we are! But God gave us Jesus and the Bible to encourage us and guide us through it all. If we believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord, and follow his example every day, God will guide us and help us; and when our life on this earth is over, we know for sure that we will go on to live forever with Jesus in Heaven - where we will understand everything, and there will be no more tears or sadness, and no more disasters or fears. THAT is what God promises us in the Bible. THAT is the Good News that we must share with everyone we meet! That is why, when we learn of disasters around the world, we need to help in any way we can (by sending special offerings or supplies) - and we also need to PRAY for those who are suffering, and help send bibles and missionaries to share the Good News to bring hope and encouragement. 'Til next time,

Your Friend, Shirley