



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

April 22, 2018

P.O. Box 416  
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**Elders:**

Dana Carter  
Kenneth Carter  
Don Chandler

**Deacons:**

Kendall Bear  
Larry Brackett  
Roger Carter  
Steve McCreary

**Minister:**

Todd Houston

**Secretary:**

Susan Chandler

**Service Times:**

**Sunday**

Bible Study 10 am  
Worship Service 10:45 am  
Worship Service 6 pm

**Wednesday**

Bible Study 7:30 pm

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## DURING THE VALLEYS OF YOUR FAITH

The Christian life is all about peaks and valleys. When we are feeling good about our relationship with God and Jesus and something happens to re-enforce those spiritual feelings, we call that “peak times” or “mountain top experiences.” When things don’t go right and we wonder if God is really listening to us (or if He really cares), those are the “valley experiences.”

The prophet Jeremiah gave the Hebrews people a “Peaks and Valleys” lecture. Jeremiah witnesses the brutal takeover of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. by the Babylonians. The Hebrew people who survived the ransacking of their homes and property were taken into captivity and marched hundreds of miles from Jerusalem to Babylon. This was a real down time – a real valley time in their faith.

And that’s were Jeremiah comes in with words of hope. He tells them (and us) God’s promise: *“For surely I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).* In these words, Jeremiah delivers Gods answer to His people’s questions: “The valley you are in right now won’t last forever. God is with you and will see you through.”

Jeremiah’s words still ring true for us today. God has plans for us – as individuals, and as a community of faith. God offers us – each and all – a future with hope. Isn’t that good news? Especially on those days when the terrain feels more like a valley than a peak! God offers us a future where pain can be transformed into joy. God offers us a future where relationships can be restored. God offers us a future where brokenness can be made whole.

**Larry Fitzgerald**

# DOES GOD EXECUTE JUDGMENT WITH EARTHQUAKES AND HURRICANES?

Recently we have been witnessing some incredibly impressive events in our natural world. Hurricanes and earthquakes and floods, of, and I also heard something about an eclipse happening somewhere. With these events there has also been some conversation through the media and other channels concerning their occurrence and what part God might possibly play in it all.

Have you heard anything like this before?

“Well, New Orleans got hit with Katrina because God was cleaning up all the sin down there...”

“God is punishing Texas with Harvey because they voted for Trump...”

And let’s not forget this one, though not associated with anything weather related – “9-11 happened because God is sending His judgement upon America for its ever trending loss of Biblical morality.”

These statements do, in fact beg the question: Does God execute judgment today on the physical world through natural calamities as a way of disciplining sinful humanity? I believe the answer is unequivocally and undoubtedly, “No.”

Now to this someone might say, “What about Noah and the flood? Wasn’t that because of sin?” Or, “What about the plagues of Egypt? What about the locusts in the book of Joel?” We could go on and on with similar examples. If we look at the Biblical record there is no doubt that in times past God did in fact use nature to discipline or even completely wipe out particular nations. In truth, there has never been a time when anything in the universe was not at God’s disposal in the case that He did indeed want to execute His divine and just judgment on His created world.

But it is my firm belief that since Christ came, and the Holy Spirit completed God’s revelation in the pages of the Holy Bible, that to say that God is inflicting mankind with specific storms as a way of divine justice is not only irresponsible, but nothing more than mere conjecture. Here’s why...

**Nobody knows what is on God’s mind unless God reveals it (I Corinthians 2:9-13).** If God isn’t specifically explaining His intentions and activities, who are we to speak for God? To say God is doing this or that without Him saying so is really the sincerest form of blasphemy.

**These statements people make about the weather events or terrorism and God’s justice are also skewed to fit their own personal agendas.** Far right wing conservatives used Katrina to make expressions that suited their politics. Now far left wing liberals are using recent events to do the same. It’s almost as if these terrible disasters that are killing people are being used as fuel by whoever is not currently considered as “in power.” It’s grossly inappropriate, entirely uncompassionate, and it needs to stop. As if anyone will ever be “in power” but God anyway...

I remember as a kid hearing people say that the AIDS virus was invented by god to punish the gay community. As time has gone on I have realized just how inappropriate and unhelpful that statement was. Are we willing to paint a picture of God that He Himself has not painted? While STD’s in general happen because of sexual immorality – God is not using viruses to make a statement. He has already said everything He needs to say about moral activity in His word. His appeal is instead the grace of Jesus, which has come to all, to draw us to a lifestyle that loves and honors Him and Him alone.

And so what about natural calamities? They have always been here, and they will always be here. And I guess you can say in their own way they are a form of divine discipline. They are a reminder to all of us that this world is not our home, and that earthly life is only temporary. And they help us to count the good days as blessings, and be prepared for true Advent of our Lord. Because, “*He sends His rain to fall on the just and the unjust,*” and because, “*Behold, He cometh with clouds...*”

“*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age*”  
**Titus 2:11-12**

**By Jeremiah Tatum**