

Be careful how you judge

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By Lenny Cacchio

LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—It's tempting to attribute every natural disaster to God's judgment, and maybe there is a time to do that. But the Almighty didn't call me last week and tell me that tornadoes and floods would ravage large portions of the nation, and that it's all our own fault. So I'll refrain from speculating on that one for now.

But I will quote the words of Jesus:

"There were some present at that very time who told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered thus? I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish' "(Luke 13:1-5, RSV).

It seems to me that Jesus is telling us to refrain from judging others who have suffered calamities and not to impute motives to God. He does give some indication of God's protection if we are His followers, but with the reminder that we are all in need of repentance.

Elsewhere we're told that time and chance happen to all (Ecclesiastes 9:11) and that the rain falls on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45), with both positive and negative implications.

It is wise and loving to avoid pointing the finger of judgment toward those who have suffered calamity. Read the book of Job and find out why.