

Is Every Natural Disaster an 'Act of God'?

I have often wondered why some insurance companies and news outlets describe tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods and wildfires as "acts of God." I understand part of their reasoning: These things are normally beyond human control. But why not label rays of sunshine, singing birds and colorful rainbows as "acts of God"? Those are beyond our control as well. If natural disasters are always a major sign of His involvement in human affairs, God could be blamed for any resulting tragedies. Some might propose that the Creator is cruel and unjust. Quite the opposite is true biblically:

"He is the Rock; His work is perfect; for all His ways are just. He is a God of faithfulness and without injustice; righteous and upright is He" (Deut. 32:4, MEV).

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If this is accurate, why would our heavenly Father allow natural disasters that cause, not just the wicked, but good people to suffer? Isn't the Creator capable of preventing things like this? Skeptics often suggest, "If God could have prevented these tragedies but didn't, then He's not all-loving. If God wanted to prevent them but couldn't, then He's not all-powerful."

Is our reasoning limited to these two options, or are there additional possibilities?

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Does the Wind Have Free Will?

Could it be that God allows evil and the unpredictable quality of nature in this world as part of His overarching plan to preserve the valuable gift we call free will? If people were hardwired by God only to do good, then loving worship toward Him could never be authentic. Instead, it would be robotically controlled by the very one who then became the object of that love. There's no reality in that.

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