

God and Katrina

It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God
Hebrews 10:31

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Are you wondering where God fits into the latest natural disaster to hit the United States of America? I know that I am, and I fully admit that I do not know the details of His involvement. But one thing I do know for certain, only a person who is patently ignorant of God's character could ever question His motives, whatever His role might have been in the mighty storm that struck our southern states last month.

In an attempt to defend the character of God (which in reality needs no defense at all) one might be thinking, or saying, that God did not want Katrina to happen, it just did. To even suggest that for one moment is to deny God's sovereignty. *Our God is in heaven, He does whatever pleases Him.* (Psalm 115:3) If Katrina had not pleased our Almighty God and His eternal purpose, He would have stopped it's insidious progress in a nanosecond; he is that powerful.

One well known skeptic commentator on National Public Radio (Daniel Shorr) asked the sarcastically loaded question, "Was intelligent design behind Katrina?" That, of course, was an intentional slap against the ID oriented efforts by some scientists that are currently waging an ideological battle with evolutionists these days, regarding the comparative teaching of both theories of origin in the public schools. C.S. Lewis said this about that, "All that is made seems planless to the darkened mind, because there are more plans than it looked for." (*Perelandra*, Chap. 17, pg 281) The evolutionist dares not look for fear of what he might find.

Whatever God's reasons for causing, or allowing, the recent hurricane, we who know God are convinced that He either caused it, or merely allowed it, for the right reasons. God is Holy and every other one of His attributes spring forth from that very basic and foundational attribute of holiness. Both His wrath and His love are the by-products of His holiness. It was a holy God who poured out His wrath out upon Christ on the cross because He loves His regenerated and forgiven children so very much; love and wrath met at Calvary. Just as a garden filled with rich soil may grow flowers of various sorts, God's holy nature is the "soil" out of which flows His righteousness, justice, grace, mercy, forgiveness, faithfulness, omniscience, love, goodness and wrath. God is not good because He does good things, He does good things because he is good, righteous, gracious, merciful and above all holy.

You might be asking, "How can anyone really know God?" While no one can know Him entirely, He is in many ways incomprehensible (Romans 11:33-34), we can know Him in part, through the revelation He has given to us in the pages of His holy Word. Solomon penned

these Spirit inspired words in regard to that: *My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.* (Proverbs 2: 1-5)

The first prerequisite for understanding God is an utter acceptance of his Word; that it is infallible, inerrant and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Next, one should store up what one learns in one's heart and mind. That may simply be due to Scripture memorization or simply because of a repetitious, in depth study. One should always be open minded and teachable, laying aside all pre-conceptions; that's what turning one's ear to wisdom and applying one's heart to understanding really means. Prayer is essential; crying aloud for understanding and insight. The searcher should be as keenly looking for truth as he would for silver, gold or diamonds in a deep mine. Having done all of that, over and over again on a regular basis, eventually, a person who is committed to Christ will gain a working knowledge of God's attributes and character.

"How could a loving God allow such a devastating event such as hurricane Katrina?" That's the favorite statement being made by skeptics nowadays. Well meaning, but misinformed Christians are then prone to retort, "God had nothing to do with hurricane Katrina." That statement is patently false. God has everything to do with everything in the universe and within heaven itself. He either directly causes or otherwise allows everything to occur that ever has happened or ever will happen in the whole earth, inside all of heaven and throughout the entire universe. As R.C.Sproul has said, "If there is one maverick molecule anywhere in the universe, God is not sovereign; and if God is not sovereign, God is not God." God had everything to do with hurricane Katrina; He either was its direct cause, or He sovereignly chose to allow its occurrence: No one knows which.

God is loving, that is true, but He is also sovereign, holy, just, omnipotent, omniscient and self-sufficient. Thus, as a result of those attributes, God may act out His love or His wrath, depending on the situation. God Himself has said, *I form light and create darkness. I bring prosperity and create disaster. I, the Lord, do all these things.* (Isaiah 45:7) In another place God has said, *Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come? Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?* (Lamentations 3: 38-39)

Billy Graham once said, when speaking of the 1.5 million babies that are destroyed annually in the wombs of American mothers, "If God does not soon punish the United States of America for her many sins, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah." He of course made that statement with tongue in cheek, because he knew full well that God need not apologize for any of His acts, at any time in the past or future. God's acts always spring forth from His Holy nature and as such they are altogether just and righteous.

The devastation brought on by the winds and waves of hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding due to the breach of the dam on Lake Pontchartrain and the levies along the Mississippi River, pales in comparison to that which occurred seven millennia ago in the days of Noah. Thousands may have died from Katrina's rage, but billions perished as a result of the great, earth changing, worldwide flood in Noah's time. That great deluge was brought on because of sin.

The psalmist wrote, *Our God comes and will not be silent, a fire devours before Him and around Him a tempest rages. He summons the heavens above and the earth, that He may judge His people. . . Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue.* (Psalm 50: 3-4, 22) Those beings that God summons from the heavens are mighty angels that do God's bidding here on earth. A reading of Revelation chapters 6 through 18 will inform the reader just how powerful and destructive those angelic beings can become when called upon by their Maker to mete out His wrath.

There was a time when God asked king Saul to totally annihilate a rebellious nation of people and all of their live stock. *This is what the Lord Almighty says; "I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now, go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys."* (I Samuel 15: 2-3) Does that sound to you like a God who only acts out of a loving heart? No, on the contrary He was acting on the basis of His foundational character of holiness.

Saul was not entirely obedient to that command from God. He allowed the king to live so that he could interrogate him and gain useful information. Saul thought that he knew better than God. He also saved some of the sheep to offer up as a sacrifice to God. That would seem to be a noble thing to do, but it too was an obedient act. Saul was then told in no uncertain terms that God was finished with him because God prefers obedience to sacrifice. (See I Samuel 15:22).

God has every reason to be angry with America. We have legalized abortion on demand and have murdered 1.5 million babies per year since the Supreme Court made its fateful decision (Roe v. Wade on 1-22-73). 48 million souls passed into eternity that might have included a future Jonas Salk, (polio vaccine), Edison (1000 inventions), Marconi (radio), Billy Graham, a U.S. president or a researcher who discovered a cure for cancer. 1.5 million highschool graduates from the year 1991 and every year since were destroyed in their mother's womb; reportedly the most dangerous place to be alive these days.

Our country, once founded on Christian principles by God fearing people, is slowly becoming godless. Our founding fathers were men of faith, and the documents which they produced are replete with references to God, Providence, the Creator, etc. Now, we are allowing one atheist

to attempt the removal of the phrase "under God" from our Pledge of Allegiance. We are a society where heathen judges decide that Christmas celebrations in our schools should be replaced with "winter" festivities and breaks. The Ten Commandments are no longer permitted in our schools or other public places. In stead of being free to express our faith, a minority of activists are trying diligently to abolish every expression it. We have allowed every religion access ,and the right to expression, in our country but Christianity. The demise of the northern kingdom, though begun by an invasion of the Assyrian hoards, was fully accomplished when the people of those ten tribes of Israel began to combine the truth of God's word with the heathen practices of their invaders; that is what is referred to as syncretism; an attempted union of opposite tenets, ideologies or religions. This synthesis of eastern religions and Christianity is becoming ever more evident in the mainline denominations, and is the mainstay of the New Age philosophy. That synthesis of absolute Truth with error is referred to as a good thing by the proponents of relativism; it's called tolerance, and that they say is good. Christianity, on the other hand is criticized for being intolerant and judgmental; qualities which they refer to as evil. God has issued a stern warning to those with that mind set. *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness. . .* (Isaiah 5:20)

The first schools founded in this nation were established in order that young folks might become literate, to be able to write and to read; especially enabling them to read the Bible. Since that time, the Bible has been all but banned from the public school system and in the institutions of higher learning a majority of professors are either agnostics or atheists. This was even so in the fifties when William F. Buckley, Jr. matriculated at Yale (See his best selling book at that time entitled *God and man at Yale*). The failure to teach absolute truth in our public school system, in favor of teaching relativism, led the late Alan Bloom (professor at Harvard) to write that 90% of all freshman students entering his class each fall denied the existence of absolute truth. (See *The Closing of the American Mind*). God also has a caveat for those professors: *Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. . .for they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.* (Isaiah 5:21, 24)

These educators are teaching as a fact, a theory of origins which has yet to find objective evidence for its validity; the theory of evolution. On that subject C.S Lewis had this to say; "If minds are wholly dependent on brains, and brains on bio-chemistry, and biochemistry (in the long run) on the meaningless flux of atoms, I cannot understand how the thought of those minds should have anymore significance than the sound of the wind in the trees." In other words those professors are proposing the self defeating notion that randomness (like the blowing wind) is responsible for their own brain function. In psychiatry we call that "flight of ideas."

Then the Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so

grievous that I will go down and see. . ." And when God saw the sodomy that was so openly displayed and rampant in those cities He wiped them from the face of the earth. It has been said that on the very day that Katrina hit New Orleans a gay rights march had been scheduled. Whether or not that is true, sodomy is rampant in America as well and the legalization of same sex marriages is insidiously creeping and crawling, as surely as a slimy night crawler on a dew soaked lawn, through society. Because our nation has . . . *exchanged the truth of God for a lie. . .* (Romans 1:25) *God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity. . .even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.* (Romans 1:24, 26-27) That due penalty surfaced in the 1980s in the form of HIV and AIDS.

Hypocrisy was a sin that pervaded the nation of Israel and God soundly rebuked them for it in Isaiah chapter one. Therein He indicted that their phoney worship practices were neither appreciated nor needed and that He had closed His ears to their prayers. The church in America today is very much like that. Jesus speaks of that worship style and religious activity in Revelation chapter three. His letter to the local church in Laodicea is harsh and critical. That church mirrors many in America in the 20th and 21st centuries. Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, predicted a time when the church would reach a point where it would be *having a form of godliness, but denying its power.* (II Timothy 3:5) That time is now.

Paul offered this caveat to the children of God: *See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basis principles of this world rather than on Christ.* (Colossians 2:8)

Included in the philosophies concerning which we have been warned, is the unproven theory of evolution. That is making God very, very angry. In his letter to the church at Rome Paul spoke of that anger. *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities_his eternal power and divine nature_ have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.* (Romans 1:18-20)

A critical examination of the evidence will tell any reasonable person that the intricate and highly complex life forms on our planet could not have evolved by mere chance but are instead the handiwork of an omniscient and omnipotent intelligent being. Those who promote the empty theory of evolution know full well down deep inside their souls who it is that is responsible for all that we see, but they suppress that truth because they do not want to be accountable to anyone higher than themselves. For that reason, and that reason alone God calls them fools. *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."* (Psalm 14:1)

Thus, the answer to our question regarding God's role in Katrina's devastation becomes more clear. America is deserving of judgement for those reasons alluded to above, as well as for many other explanations which I have not addressed, and God has a track record of inflicting such judgements on rebellious nations. By reading and understanding God's word, the information that He has revealed to us, we know those things. Did God have another purpose? Only God knows the answer to that question; it remains God's secret.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29) Those things revealed enable us to know the Lord, and His will for our lives. Having gained that knowledge we can say, along with the writer of the letter to the Hebrews: For we know Him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again "The Lord will judge his people. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

God's purpose in all of this was thus fourfold:

- 1) To repay the rebellious, and avenge the sin of those God rejecting persons who would not listen to the Truth that He exists and demands obedience to His Word.
- 2) To call those believers home whose time had come. (See Isaiah 57:1-2; Psalm 116:15)
- 3) To afford those who have suffered trial to grow stronger in Christ. (James 1:2-4)
- 4) To enable those Christians who were not directly afflicted by the storm to come to the aid of those who had. (See I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 9:12-14)

Soli Deo Gloria.