



THE GATHERING STORM!

As another hurricane threatens the U.S. Natural disasters herald the end of the present age.

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This is the *Bible in the News* brought to you once again by Paul Billington from Ontario in Canada.

Well—it looks as though it's going to be rather windy this weekend as another hurricane threatens Louisiana again and the Texas coast. Forecasters are telling us that this Hurricane—named Rita—could intensify into a Category 4 or 5 as it moves over the warm waters of the Gulf—or it may, on the other hand, weaken to become a Category 3. In any case, the most likely place for it to strike, they say, is Texas. That is where Mr George Bush comes from, so he won't like that will he?

Many are already leaving the area, say news reports. People like 59 year old Ldyyan Jean Jocque of Galveston who, says the Associated Press, “packed her Bible, some music and clothes into plastic bags” ready to hop on to an evacuation bus.

Well—as another natural disaster looms, we can learn a lot by reading what the bible has to say about such things—not by packing it away! There is no doubt that abnormalities in nature are the characteristic of the end of an age. Hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts and diseases are all things which are under the control of the angels. We only have to consider God's dealings with Israel and with other nations during Old Testament times. There was the Great Genesis Flood, the catastrophic overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues on Egypt—and other, apparently natural phenomena.



Disasters of this kind were a sign of the end of the age—the Mosaic age; which Jesus warned about in Luke 21:11. He warns of:

“...great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.”

These troubles don't require any special miracles, they just work themselves out because of the laws which God has designed as a part of the natural world. The greed of man, the mismanagement of the good earth—the pollution caused by industry—all bring inevitable consequences. They form part of the general signs of the times—they tell us that the end of this age is fast approaching.

The end of an age comes because of man's extreme wickedness. It comes because society has reached the point where there is really no alternative to its destruction. We can see this from the time of Noah, as it is recorded for us in Genesis 6:5-6.

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart... And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”

Jesus said that it would be like that again. In Luke 17:26 we read:

“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

The character of society in the last days is clearly outlined for us in 2 Timothy 3:1-4. it does not make stimulating reading—but if we *do* bring ourselves to read it, any honest-minded person just has to recognize the symptoms in society today—just look at Paul’s words:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:1-4).

What happened a few weeks ago in New Orleans puts it all together. Whether the same, or similar news now awaits Louisiana again—or whether Hurricane Rita hits Texas where about 25% of US oil production is centered—remains to be seen in the next few days. In any event, the message is clear—and sensible human beings will take heed to themselves.

In 2 Peter 3:11 we read these words: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,”

We must each look at OURSELVES. Whatever we may find wrong in our life just has to be put right. Pretty soon it will be too late—so don’t pack *your* Bible, get it out and READ IT!

You will not only find warnings of disaster in it, you will also find amazing promises of a FUTURE AGE—an age of righteousness, of peace, of great blessings for those who act IN FAITH now!

There is a prayer in Psalm 72 about this future age. The forces of nature will then bring plenty; they will then bring showers of blessing. THIS will be the time when the *Great King*, Jesus Christ, will rule the earth in righteousness.

“Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.”

So you see—there is GOOD NEWS in the Bible, but we must prepare ourselves if we want to experience it.

Join me again next week, God willing, when once again we look at the Bible and the News.



Evacuating Galveston Texas as Hurricane Rita approaches.