



The Message of Katrina

by Scott Huckaby – preached at FBC Sargent on September 4, 2005

I'm glad to have the opportunity to share a message with you today.

I did not have to consider very long what the Lord wanted me to preach today given the events of the week. Hurricane Katrina has become perhaps the worst natural disaster that this nation has suffered in my lifetime. We still do not know how many people have been killed, there are hundreds of thousands of refugees and it will be months before New Orleans functions as a city again.

It is only by the grace of God that the Texas coast did not suffer the same thing. If Katrina had stayed in the Gulf a little longer and made landfall anywhere close to Sargent, we would not be meeting in this building today. And Katrina has affected everyone in this country... anyone who has put gas in their car in the last few days knows this. And I wouldn't want to have to build a house in the next few months, the cost of building supplies will be sky-high.

When a disaster of this proportion happens, people often question why God would allow such a thing. Some even lose faith in God that He is able to prevent such a tragedy. But God has revealed Himself to us in His Word which says in no uncertain terms that He is almighty:

1 Chronicles 29:11 - Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. (NKJ)

God is in sovereign control of all matter and forces in the universe that He created, "*upholding all things by the word of His power*" (Hebrews 1:3).

Colossians 1:16-17 - For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (NKJ)

Since God made it all, He controls it all... so this begs the question: since God is in control, why would He allow such a disaster to take place?

While God is not the author of evil, He does allow evil to happen. We don't always understand what God's purpose is because we do not have His omniscient perspective...

Isaiah 55:8-9 - For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. (NKJ)

God allows bad things to happen to serve a higher purpose, but we can trust that whatever He allows to happen will be used in the best interest of His people...

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (NKJ)

This is a promise that we can bank on. Even if what God is allowing to happen does not make sense, we can know that it is serving a purpose that will ultimately bless those who love Him.

Some would say that "those people must have deserved the judgment of God." This thought certainly crossed my mind when I recalled New Orleans' reputation as a party town and I saw pictures on the news of the destroyed casinos. But Jesus addressed this very issue, look at:

Luke 13:1-5 - There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." (NKJ)

Rain falls on the just and the unjust... and this can be either a good thing or a bad thing whether you need rain or not. The important point here is that our lives can either be over or change suddenly without notice.

So tragedies like hurricane Katrina serve a purpose to call us to repent and turn to God while we can, before it is too late. To repent means to change directions, to turn from the path you are on away from God and turn to Him. It also refers to a change of mind about God, to turn from an anti-God world-view to start seeing things from God's perspective. I guarantee that there are a lot of people considering their relationship to Jesus as a result of Katrina. Even those of us who are assured of our salvation should evaluate our relationship with the Lord to see what things we need to change so that we may be closer to Him.

2 Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?-- unless indeed you are disqualified. (NKJ)

It is a healthy thing to reflect on what God is saying to me personally when we are shaken up by events that happen. Christians can fall out of fellowship with God, or as I heard one preacher say, we can fall out of "fellowship." We may need to make some mid-course corrections to get back on the path God would have us to be on.

Those who dismiss the call-to-repent that Katrina represents are quick to offer up a natural explanation for it. There are many who are saying that storms like Katrina are proof that human-caused global warming is on the increase. They blame carbon-dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels causing a green-house effect as the culprit. Those making these claims have made mankind into an idol... having such faith in the "almighty power" of human beings that our activities can actually change the climate.

Those who whine about global warming are not even using good science. God has blessed us with natural systems to maintain a balance in the atmosphere. If there is too much carbon dioxide in

the atmosphere, this will stimulate plant growth which thrives on CO₂ and provides us the oxygen people and animals need. The idea that mankind is causing global warming is controversial even among secularists because the average temperature of the planet is more tied to variations in solar radiation than an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide.

The attitude that the global warming alarmists have is the same attitude that people had at the Tower of Babel:

Genesis 11:4 – Let us make a name for ourselves.

They think that if we have enough time, money, education and if we can all just work together, then there is nothing that mankind can not do. The global warming fear-mongers have abandoned rational thought about the subject and are blinded by their “globalist” political agenda that seeks to undo what God did as a result of the Tower of Babel.

However, we can not deny that climate change is taking place... Those who study the Polar Regions have been raising alarms that the ice fields are shrinking. But the average temperature of the planet has not changed enough to account for the shrinking polar ice.

I believe that the Bible tells us why the polar ice can shrink without the average temperature of the planet having to change. Events such as Katrina that look like climate change should remind us that Christ is coming back. Jesus told His disciples in the Olivet Discourse what signs to watch for signaling His return:

Luke 21:25-26 - And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. (NKJ)

Certainly we have always had storms that cause the sea and waves to roar, but what makes this a sign is that these fearful events will be increasing in frequency and severity.

Most people today deny that Jesus is actually going to come back. Even some who profess to be Christians think that this will not literally happen, that the return of Jesus is symbolic, that references to Jesus coming back pertain to Him coming into our hearts. Or Christians think that the return of Christ is so far away as to not matter. But the pervasiveness of such lack of regard for the return of Jesus is in itself a sign that Jesus will return soon:

2 Peter 3:3-6 - knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. (NKJ)

Notice what those who scoff at the Lord's return are forgetting: that God once before poured out judgment on the earth in the form of a world-wide flood during Noah's day. The point here is that God poured out His wrath on all the earth in judgment once before and He will do so again. Scoffers about the return of Christ dismiss the evidence of the flood... there are fossils everywhere on the planet, even on the tops of mountains. Fossils don't just happen in the

normal course of things... when things die in the ocean, they fall to the bottom and are eaten by crabs or rot away. It takes a catastrophic event causing living creatures to be covered by silt for fossils to form... this is what the flood of Noah's day was, the catastrophic event that caused the fossils to form.

Those who say that the activity of man is to blame for the shrinking polar ice assume conditions on earth have not changed for millions of years.

I believe that the bulk of the polar ice was formed suddenly at a catastrophic event. And the shrinking polar ice is the result of the Second Law of Thermodynamics being played out on a global scale.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics basically says that all matter and energy in the universe has a tendency to become more random. It explains why things rust... the combination of iron and oxygen is a mixing of two substances – thus they are more random. The same thing applies to energy... the heat in a closed system will become more dispersed over time.

If the polar ice was formed suddenly, its existence is not the natural state and we should expect polar temperatures to rise as global temperatures become less polarized.

The Bible describes a time when conditions on earth were very different than today. Dinosaurs roamed the planet, people lived to be hundreds of years old, and it did not rain. All this changed with the global flood of Noah's day.

The Bible does describe dinosaurs... the behemoth in Job 40:15-18 had to be a dinosaur because its tail was compared to a cedar. And this was no central Texas cedar, when the Bible refers to cedars, they are always huge trees.

Those who reject a literal interpretation of the Bible use Darwin's theory of evolution to explain that the dinosaurs disappeared because they just couldn't compete with mammals. But the Bible tells us what really happened... dinosaurs disappeared after the flood because conditions on earth could no longer support them. There may well have been dinosaurs on Noah's ark but I suspect that this wasn't the case because there were space limitations and God knew they could not survive in the conditions after the flood. I recall seeing a cartoon that showed the animals lining up two-by-two to enter Noah's ark and there is two dinosaurs watching all this and one turns to the other and says, "it looks pretty crowded, let's wait for the next boat."

In the beginning, God created our world out of nothing. The earth was originally created with an atmospheric layer of water vapor called a firmament in the Bible...

Genesis 1:6-7 - Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. (NKJ)

The water vapor canopy kept temperatures uniform across the planet so it did not rain.

Genesis 2:5-6 - the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth... but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. (NKJ)

This dense water vapor layer compressed the air beneath resulting in a higher atmospheric pressure than today. It also diffused the solar radiation so that temperatures were moderate everywhere across the globe. This facilitated the growth of more plant life than we have today resulting in a higher oxygen content. Thus, the atmosphere was like a gigantic hyperbolic chamber which hospitals use to accelerate healing. This helps explain how people could live longer than they do today.

Over time, centrifugal force caused the water vapor canopy to mass over the equator so that there was a thinner vapor barrier at the poles. We've seen that happen in our day with the ozone layer... this is an atmospheric layer that filters out harmful ultraviolet solar radiation. Holes have developed in the ozone layer near the poles.

At the worldwide flood, most of the water in the vapor canopy precipitated down to the earth causing the vapor barrier to break up.
Genesis 7:11 - the windows of heaven were opened. (NKJ)

Since the vapor barrier was thinner at the poles, it broke up there first.

The high pressure air venting through the vapor barrier at the poles caused a dramatic cooling effect, thus forming the polar ice. This is how air conditioners and refrigerators work... a rapidly expanding gas results in cooling.

After 40 days of rain, the earth was covered in water. At that point, all that remained living to repopulate the earth was on Noah's ark. Eventually, the flood subsided leaving conditions on earth as we know it today.

The rapid formation of polar ice is supported by evidence such as the discovery of mammoths that were frozen so quickly that some still had food in their mouths. Also, explorers in Antarctica routinely report seeing tropical vegetation frozen in the ice crevasses. Those who scoff at God's Word try to explain this evidence as proof that Antarctica was once further north. But this land mass would have to have moved to the pole pretty quick to keep tropical vegetation from rotting away.

There is a lot of evidence that the earth is not really as old as evolutionists would have you believe. I'm not going to take the time to cover this evidence but I can tell you that as I have investigated these things, it has been a blessing to me to know that I really can take the Bible literally. My relationship with God took a great leap forward when He opened my eyes to this truth. When I initially became a Christian, I still believed in evolution, that God used an evolutionary process to bring about life on earth. But this bothered me because it contradicted a literal interpretation of Scripture. If we need to interpret Genesis, does that mean we need to interpret the gospels where Jesus promised eternal life for believing in Him? If God used evolution to bring about life on earth, why doesn't the Bible say this? In fact, the Bible says just the opposite... it says that there was no death prior to the sin of Adam and Eve:

1 Corinthians 15:21 - For since by man came death (NKJ)
This is why all creation longs for restoration which will happen when the Lord recreates heaven and earth...

Romans 8:19-21 - For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (NKJ)

The God of all creation desires a personal relationship with us and speaks to us directly through His Word... we don't need any specially trained intermediaries to decode what the Bible says... we can take God at His Word.

If it took millions of years for God to bring about the creation, then it was millions of years from the beginning until Christ came to make it possible for our sins to be forgiven. If this is the case, then it is easier to dismiss the return of Christ as being relevant to our day by rationalizing that it will be millions of years before Christ returns to restore creation.

When I consider the call to repentance that Katrina represents, I can't help but consider the previous national tragedy that only happened only four years ago... next Sunday is September 11th, the day terrorists attacked our nation killing over three thousand people.

The Bible says that the course of end-time events will be a series of nation-shaking events like Katrina and September 11th. Jesus said the events leading up to His return will be "*the beginning of sorrows*" (Matthew 24:8). The Greek word translated "*sorrows*" here refers to birth pangs. As birth pangs are characterized by an increase in frequency and severity, nation-shaking events will also increase in frequency and severity.

When God shakes us up, He is trying to get our attention. God wants us to wake up and respond to Him. There will be many that do respond as a result of this shaking. Some of our great revivals have happened as a result of God shaking us up. I understand that WWII was a great boon to church attendance. The execution of God's judgment to shake his people into a relationship with Him is a pattern in the Bible.

All the shakings of the nations are but foreshadows of the final shaking of the world which God will do...

Haggai 2:6-7 - For thus says the LORD of hosts: "Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory," says the LORD of hosts.

This shaking that Haggai talks about refers to God pouring out His righteous wrath on the world as we know it which has been corrupted by sin. The Lord will recreate both heaven and earth...

2 Peter 3:10 - But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (see also Revelation 21:1)

God will shake all of creation. There is nothing in this world that will not be shaken. But those who have trusted in Jesus Christ, God's provision for salvation, can not be shaken...

Hebrews 12:25-29 - See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now

He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.

This is an irrevocable promise of God... the children of God can not be shaken by God burning up heaven and earth.

While the age we live in is a scary period for the world, Christians can take comfort in knowing that God is still in control. And as we see events taking place that show the Lord's return as being near, this should cause us to draw near to Him and get on with doing what He has called us to do.

Maybe you don't feel any comfort from knowing that God is in control. If this is the case, you should see Katrina as God calling you into a relationship with Him so that He can bless you with His comfort. I would encourage you to let Jesus into your life immediately before it is too late...

2 Corinthians 6:2 - Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Jesus has already done everything necessary for you to have eternal life by paying the price for your sin. All that needs to be done is receive Him into your life.

Acts 2:21 - whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.