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A Big Storm is Coming and I Don’t Mean Hurricane Irma



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #34 ~

Meteorologists, the weather experts, have been telling us for 10 days now about this huge hurricane named Irma that’s coming to Florida. They know the seriousness of this storm and are greatly concerned, and therefore have been regularly updating us about the storm track, where it’s headed and when it may hit. But all this advance notice about hurricane Irma reminds me of all the advance notice God has given us about Christ’s return. *“Take heed, I have told you everything in advance”* (Mark 13:23). God really wants you to know what will be taking place in the time leading up to the return of His Son, and that’s because He wants to give you a general idea as to when He’s coming back. And the first things will be the *“birth pangs”.*

God’s Word gives us a lot of information about these *“birth pangs”,* for there are four similar passages describing these conditions that need to be met before Christ’s return. Matthew 24:4-8 talks about false Christs,

famines, wars, rumors of wars and earthquakes. Mark 13:6-8 tells us the exact same thing. Similarly, Luke 21:7-11 says there will be false Christs, wars, disturbances, great earthquakes, famines and also plagues. Finally, Revelation 6:1-6 focuses on false Christs, wars and famines. Now it's true these kind of events have occurred throughout history, but the fact that four prophecy passages all talk about them confirms the certainty of them, and that they're happening in that time leading up to the coming of Christ. They are also different than past events in that they are unique in size, extent and effect.

Now the words *"birth pangs"* portray a vivid picture, illustrating to us an important truth. Just as the labor pains of a pregnant woman indicate that the birth of her child is near, so too these end times' *"birth pangs"* are letting us know that Christ's coming is near. But there's something else we need to learn from this illustration. Having been with my wife before and during the birth of our four children I know that labor pains start slow, but then increase in both frequency and intensity. They get closer and closer together, but also stronger and stronger. At the outset of these pains my wife would be up and about, doing things around the house, but there came a time when we had to head to the hospital, for my wife knew that the hard labor was coming, and that our child would be born very soon.

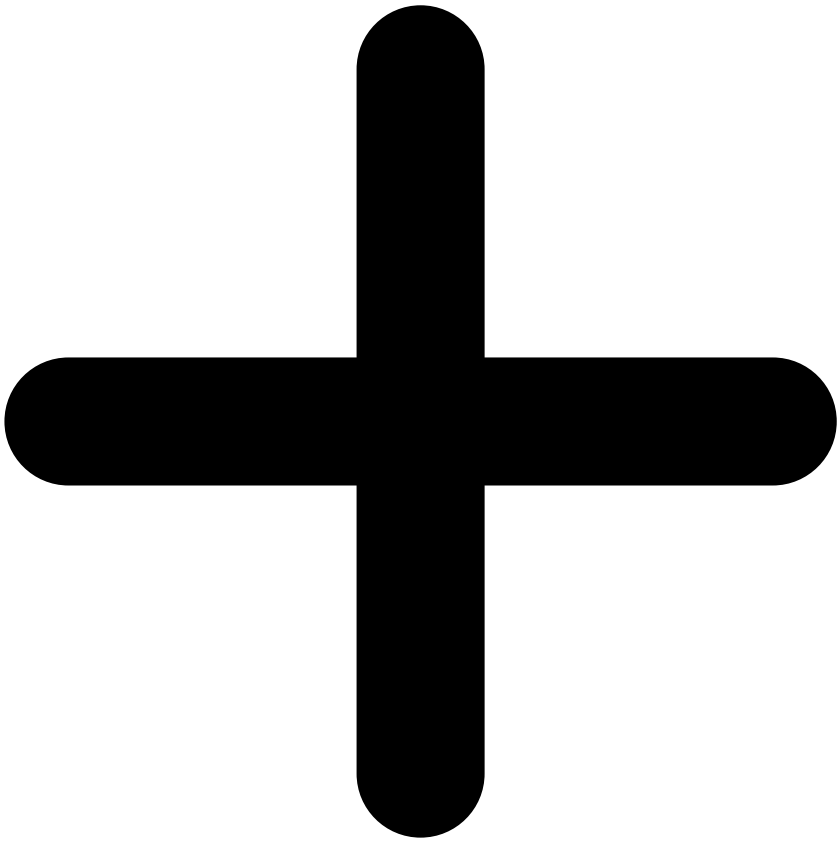
I personally believe the *"birth pangs"* are already taking place. Now some say they haven't yet begun, that they start at the beginning of Daniel's 70th week, and then continue for about 4-5 years until the coming of Christ. But I don't believe you can cram all those events, wars, famines, plagues, earthquakes, etc., in those few years, particularly since we know that it takes some time for events like these to increase in intensity and frequency. Not only that, but God's work with the Jews is in conjunction with His work with the church, and I would add, with these *"birth pangs".* I believe these labor pains have been taking place in this elongated time frame going back to the late 1800's when the Jews began returning to Israel. Then in Matthew 24:8, Jesus gives us some insight as to the general timing of these wars,

famines, plagues, etc., and therefore, the general timing of Christ's return. He says, *"All these are the beginning of birth pangs"*, which means a whole lot more things need to take place after these beginning *"birth pangs."*

Where are we at then with respect to Christ's coming? It's 2017, and we're in the *"beginning of birth pangs"* stage. Right now they may not be so obvious, but as time goes on, they will be. The closer we get to the end of this age, the more you're going to see and / or feel these labor pains – more earthquakes, famines, plagues, wars, etc. But I need to remind you that the hard labor is still to come. I hate to say this but I have to say this – the conditions in this world are going to get worse and worse before Christ's return.

Many other prophesied signs will be fulfilled, making it very clear that Christ's coming is getting closer. There'll be the building of the Jewish temple, realigning nations, increasing lawlessness, the Jews' peace treaty with the Antichrist, increasing desire for globalism, more persecution of Jews and Christians, world evangelization, etc. It's all part of God's eternal plan, and all under His control. We should be thankful that God knows what He's doing, that He told us ahead of time what's going to happen, and that we can serve Him at this very important time in history. I urge you to be spiritually alert as to what's taking place in the world, and don't be afraid as you see these signs, but be encouraged, for you know you'll soon be seeing your Savior and King.

P.S. – In my post title last week I wrote that *"A Storm is Coming".* Honestly, I wasn't thinking of Hurricane Irma – I was thinking of the coming *"birth pangs".* But now at this time, realizing the certainty and devastation of this storm, I ask you to pray for God's mercy with respect to all our lives here in Florida, physically and spiritually, and particularly for those who aren't saved. Pray too that God would be greatly glorified through this catastrophic event. Again, I encourage you to read Job 37, and look at my article on trials.



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