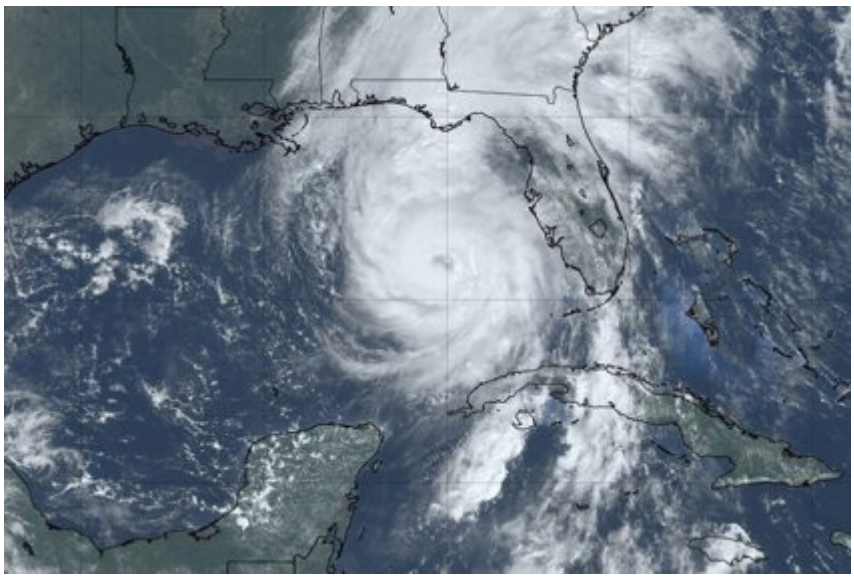
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Hurricane Helene: GOD Is Telling US to Wake Up!



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #314 ~

Hurricane Helene over the Gulf of Mexico. September 26, 2024 Credit: NOAA

NOTE: *I am extremely concerned about our country's spiritual condition, and the fact that most people are asleep and aren't aware of the great danger we are in. Today's post, adapted from my sermon this past Sunday, conveys this message.*

Imagine a well-known person knocking at your door and walking into your house. And you don't even acknowledge him. Then he starts talking to you and you don't listen to Him – you act like he's not there. You completely ignore this person who is trying to tell you some vitally important information.

This is what, to a large degree, happened from Sept. 26-28. Hurricane Helene, this fast and furious storm, came to millions of people, and it was God who sent her. And all these people saw and felt and were impacted by Helene, but most of them didn't know that God caused this super-powerful, super-destructive storm, and that He was talking to wake them up.

The vast majority of people in the path of this storm didn't know God was talking to them. Many thought it was mother nature or climate change – they did not believe that God Himself was speaking to them. But it's spiritually dangerous and arrogant to ignore God, to not listen to Him, whether it was during the storm, after the storm, or anytime. Ps. 119:70 explains why people didn't hear God – *"Their hearts are callous and unfeeling."* Jer. 2:5, 11-13; Rom. 1:18-25

Let me tell you more about this storm. It was about 420 miles in diameter, about the distance from Tampa to Atlanta. It was a strong Category 4 storm with 140 mph winds when the center of it went by to the west of Tampa. Even though the storm's eyewall was far from the Florida coast, we still felt it's strong winds and waves. This caused an enormous storm surge, immense walls of water that pounded the shores of St. Petersburg and Tampa. This resulted in extensive damage to downtown areas, the homes of both rich and poor being flooded, trees and power lines being knocked down, and thousands losing electricity.

This massive storm continued north, greatly damaging Florida's west side, until it finally made landfall between Tallahassee and Perry. And it was still a Cat 4 storm when it slammed into this same coastal area that had been recently hit with other hurricanes (Idalia – Aug. '23, Debby – Aug. '24). God was once-again speaking to them and, as we now know, to millions of others.

Then it went to Georgia as a Cat 2 storm, which meant big blasts of winds racing around at 100 mph. It rapidly tore though that state, striking Atlanta with some of the worst rain and flooding they had ever seen. Then it continued its destructive work as it traveled north through

western S. Carolina, western N. Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and eastern Kentucky.

Along Helene's God-planned path there was booming-loud thunder, thousands of lightning strikes, 41 trillion tons of rain by one estimate (enough to cover the entire state of N. Carolina with 3.5 feet of water), record high flooding, over 100 tornadoes, road-wrecking landslides, tens of thousands of destroyed cars and homes and businesses, and millions of people shocked, saddened, and devastated by the effects of what many considered to be unprecedented, the *"perfect"* storm.

The worst hit areas were east of the storm's path, in Georgia, S. Carolina, N. Carolina, and east Tennessee. People hit by Helene called it apocalyptic, catastrophic, cataclysmic, the biggest and baddest storm ever. Some towns were actually washed away. Other communities are, at this time, completely cut off from the world. The stories I have read or seen on the news are unbelievable, are truly tragic, horrific, and heartbreaking. It is said to be a 100-year storm with close to $100 billion in damages and over 220 people losing their lives.

This last point, that a large number of people died, is most serious and sobering. Matt. 7:13-14 suggests that the majority were non-Christians, which means they are apart from God forever. The rest were Christians, people who know Jesus Christ and went straight to heaven, and who literally saw and talked to Him.

But back on earth: it's obvious that God stopped us in our tracks and was trying to get our attention. People had plans, things they wanted to do, but God kept them from carrying them out. God stopped us because He wanted our full and undivided attention. The best weather chapter, Job 37, tells us, *"So all men that He has made may know His work, He stops every man from his labor."* Vs. 5

God's purpose is to wake up millions of both Christians and non-Christians all across this country, those who felt the direct effects of the storm, and those not even in its path, those who live in Texas, Oregon, Vermont, Iowa, and all the other states. *"The Mighty One, God, the*

*Lord, speaks and summons the earth" (*Ps. 50:1). What is God saying, why does He want to wake us up?

God wants the unsaved to realize their biggest problem, their sin and the spiritual and physical death that results. And God wants them to know that He can save them from sin and death. But what does He want an unsaved person to do? About a *"natural"* disaster, Jesus said, *"Those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them, do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no. But unless you repent, you too will perish."* Luke 13:4-5

God wants unbelievers to know that they are guilty and deserve to be eternally punished. He wants them to know that they need to repent, to confess to God that they have sinned, and believe that Jesus died to pay for their sins, and then rose from the dead. God wants sinners to look to Him for mercy, to know that only He can remove their guilt and eternal pain and punishment. And all who do will be forgiven, receive eternal life, be fully loved, and soon be in heaven with God, Jesus Christ, and all the angels and saints. 1 Pet. 3:18, Heb. 12:22-24, Rev. 21

But what about the Christians? What does God want us to learn from Hurricane Helene or any other trial that comes our way? He wants us to look to Him and learn about Himself, His character, work, and purpose. Let me share a few things:

First, God is sovereign, He is in charge, He does whatever He wants. He is sovereign over storms, people, the church, the government, and the future. *"He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: 'What have You done?'"* (Dan. 4:35). *"Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?"* Lam. 3:38

Second, God is supremely strong, infinitely powerful. *"Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts"*(Ps. 145:6). *"He fills His hands with lightning and commands it to hit its mark."* Job 36:32 , Isaiah 40:12-26

Third, God is perfectly holy, and punishes sinners for their sin, their

rejection of Him. *“He loads the clouds with moisture… they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever He commands them. He brings the clouds to punish men”* (Job 37:11-13a). *“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men.”* Rom. 1:18

Fourth, God is loving. In the midst and the aftermath of Helene, God has been showing people His mercy, goodness, and compassion. God displays His love through nature, individuals, the church, your community, organizations, and even the government. *“He brings the clouds… to water His earth and show His love”* (Job 37:13). *“God causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good.”* Matt. 5:45

Fifth, God is purposeful, and had very good reasons for every single thing He did. He had a plan for all the rain, wind, thunder, and lightning, for floods and storm surges, for the problems people had and will go through, and for those who died, some who are saved forever and others who are lost forever. *“The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations.”* Psalm 33:12

So how does God want us, His children, to respond to Him, to the fact that He is sovereign, powerful, holy, loving, and purposeful? What does He want us to do?

1. God wants us to be humble, to see who we are in relationship to Him, to see that He is God and we are but humans, and that He can do whatever He wants and we can’t do whatever we want. *“Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord” (*Jms. 4:10). *“My purpose will stand and I will do all that I please.”* Isaiah 46:10

2. God wants us to fear Him, to respect Him, to revere Him, to worship Him as the one, true, and almighty God. This is how that great weather chapter concludes – *“Therefore men, fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart.”* Job 37:24

3. God wants us to be holy, to say no to sin, to do what is good, right, and true. *“The hour has come for you to wake up from your sleep,*

because salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." Rom. 13:11-14

4. God wants us to know His love. He also wants us to know that He restrains Himself from showing us the full weight of His righteousness. *"God does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities"* (Ps. 103:10). *"The Lord has compassion on those who fear Him, for He knows how we are formed."* Ps. 103:14

5. God wants us to trust Him, to believe who He is, that He is our Lord, Savior, and King, and that He is sovereign, powerful, holy, loving, and purposeful. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart"* (Prov. 3:5). *"Have faith in God" (*Mk. 11:22) when there is no food or water or power, when help is slow, when the government is incompetent, or when you have lost your home or car or job or even a loved one. James 1:2-3, 1 Peter 1:6-7

6. God wants us to have hope, to know that the future will be infinitely better, that we will be with Jesus Christ, be in heaven, be with believers, be perfected, be rewarded, and have no more problems or sin or sadness or sickness or sorrow. *"Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed"* (1 Pet. 1:13). *"Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal weight of glory."* 2 Cor. 4:17

7. With regards to this terrible and trying storm, what should you do? **1. Pray** for the Christians, that God would give them grace and peace. **2. Encourage** hurting Christians with God's word. **3. Pray** that God would save unbelievers. **4. Serve** those who are suffering, if you can. **5. Give** financially to good organizations, like Samaritan's Purse, those who are directly helping those in need.

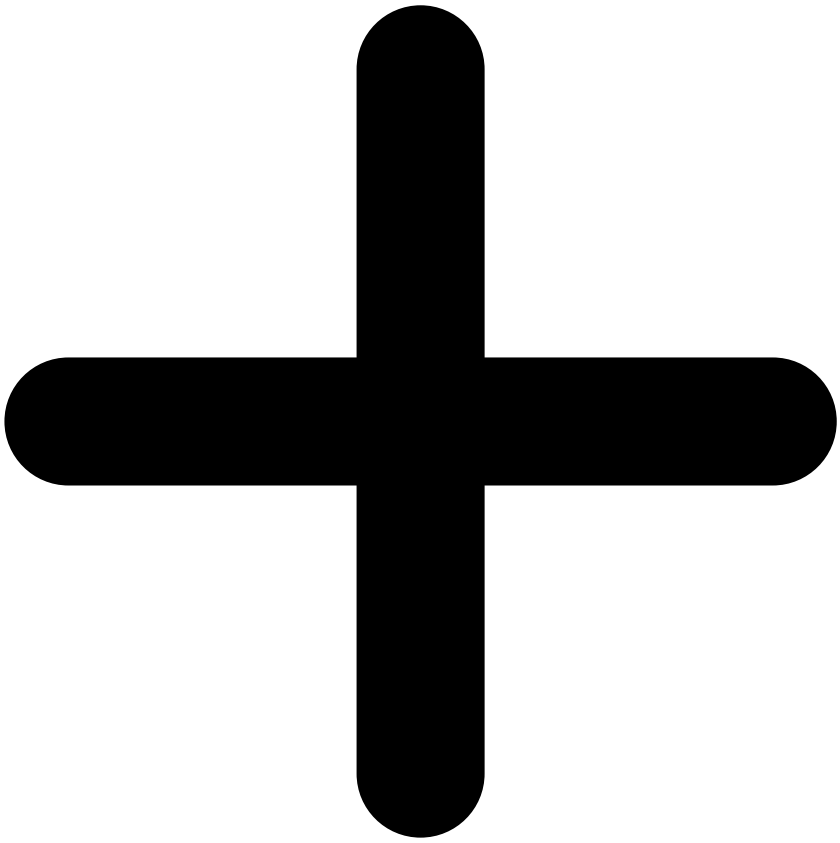
I also must say that we are now living in the end-times. This means there will be more extreme and devastating events affecting this earth. In particular, there will be *"birth pains"* – wars, earthquakes, famines, and plagues now being felt around the world, and which will be

increasing and growing stronger.

These too are wake-up calls from God, reminding Christians that Christ is returning soon to rapture the church, and that they need to live for Christ, to carry out their *"assigned task"* (Mk. 13:34). And these birth pains are warning sinners to repent and believe in Christ before its too late, before they physically die or before He pours out His wrath upon them and this sinful world.

Whatever happens, remember that God is doing His work, fulfilling His word, and carrying out His purposes for you, His church, this earth – and for His glory. Yes, life can and will be hard and, at times, extremely difficult – but keep loving the Lord – trust Him, obey Him, and look for Him to return to wrap up His work with the church, and begin His 1000-year reign over this earth. *"Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."* Revelation 22:7

P. S. We live in the end-times, and it will be very dangerous and deadly in the future – and hurricanes are good illustrations of what will be taking place. Here are some previous posts on hurricanes and prophecy. *"A Hurricane is Coming – Be Ready, Watching, and Working"*, *"The Alarm is Ringing – Wake Up America, the Storm is Coming"*, and *"When the Storms Come, Don't Be Afraid"*.



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