

## 246 “Pray this ends .... ”

The news headlines are currently dominated by a succession of fearful hurricanes – Harvey, Irma and José - bringing havoc and death to communities in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and Florida. One message sent by a British person hiding in a stairwell during what was described as an “apocalyptic” hurricane simply reads – “Pray this ends”.

There is no denying that dreadful things are happening in the world, which are brought so vividly into our homes these days by television. (How powerful television has become, and how quickly we tend to forget awful situations continuing elsewhere as soon as the TV crews move on). No wonder then that when it comes to “natural disasters”, as opposed to the suffering caused by straightforward human folly and wickedness, debates continue over “climate change” and its possible causes, (most of which debates entirely omit Almighty God from the discussions).

But those of us seeking to be Christ’s “faithful sheep” in these turbulent times are given to know by God’s grace that all that is happening around us is under the clear gaze, authority and power of Almighty God. For whatever reasons He may have, all current events are known to Him, and are being either allowed by Him or positively directed by Him, so in this crucial spiritual sense the various physical causes of climate change miss the point. This awareness - that the living God is in total control - gives the lie to the foolish notion that God is some well-meaning but wholly-feeble Figure wringing His hands in impotence as He sees everything going wrong. It isn’t like that at all, as even the most cursory knowledge of God’s Word makes clear.

We know from His Word that sometimes, as part of His gracious warnings to fallen mankind, the Lord God allows matters to take their course, so that the woeful consequences of human sinfulness will become increasingly apparent to one and all. A well-known example of this is found in Romans Chapter 1, where the Holy Spirit tells us through Paul that because of the wilful denial of God as our Creator and the foul behaviour that had arisen as a consequence, God “gave them up” and “gave them over” (vv 24a, 26a and 28).

Is it not highly significant that the context for this teaching concerns: firstly, the blatant rejection of God as Creator (poor Darwin was only the latest in a very long line who promoted this rejection, but see what appalling damage he and his ilk have done); and secondly, homosexual practice (concerning which we are all the targets of incessant propaganda, and over which most western churches have got themselves into such a wholly unnecessary muddle).

At other times the Lord God, in the face of wanton human sin, says “Enough is enough” and first warns, then acts, by way of direct intervention. In Genesis 6.2 we read of the Lord’s decision that “My Spirit shall not always strive with man .... his days shall be an hundred and twenty years”. As Noah built the ark during those years, the people were presented with the clear divine warning of “trouble ahead”, a warning that no doubt caused much hilarity. When the time was up, “the Lord said

unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark", soon followed by those terrible final words, ".... and the Lord shut him in" (from Genesis 7.1 and 16b).

It is obvious that the Lord has ample reason these days both to "give them up" and to intervene with direct judgement, His merciful desire throughout still being to grant to lost souls, while there is yet time, the gift of forgiveness and salvation by faith in His Son our Lord Jesus Christ (egs., Matthew 11.28-30 / John 3.36 / Acts 4.12 / Romans 5.1).

As we encounter human suffering in its many forms, be it on our televisions or at closer quarters, may we always be people of prayer and compassion for the afflicted. May we also continue to "watch for the coming of the Lord" (eg., I Thessalonians 4.13 – 5.11), while faithfully "holding forth the word of life" in Christ (Philippians 2.16a), for things are clearly moving towards their climax, exactly as promised in God's Word.

That desperate Twitter message reads, "Pray this ends". Such terrible events around us will indeed end, but will only end when those wonderful words from I Corinthians 15 are a reality: "Then cometh the end, when he (Christ) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (vv24-26, limited space prevents quoting more).

Let us praise God that above and beyond all the headlines He is in total control, and that crucially the door into the Ark that is Christ, He still, in His mercy, holds open.

© 2017 Faithful Sheep Ministries - [www.fsmins.org](http://www.fsmins.org)