

# Hurricane Katrina and God

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If God was watching TV this past week, would he have tuned into The Weather Channel to see where Hurricane Katrina was going to hit the Gulf Coast? Of course not. I would be surprised if God watches TV – for one reason, he already knows how the stories are going to turn out, and that includes the stories about tropical storms that turn into hurricanes.

A catastrophic event like a hurricane, or an earthquake or tsunami or volcanic eruption, brings with it many questions for us. Questions like “Where does this come from?” and “Why did this happen?” Perhaps an event like Katrina also makes us ask, “What would I do if I was in that?” and maybe “What can I do to help?”

I don't have all the answers to all the questions. Never did, never will – at least not until heaven, when everything will be made known and there will be no more questions. (And just as an aside, I hope you are cautious about preachers and teachers and writers who seem to suggest they have all the answers.)

But let me suggest a few answers to the questions I pose above. “What can I do to help?” Send money to the Red Cross or to a great Christian organization like Samaritan's Purse or World Relief. Pray that help and comfort would come to those in need. In the rare cases where you could go and personally bring the help and comfort to others, go. “What would I do if I was in that?” I cannot possibly know what the answer is for you, and I can hardly know what the answer is for me. Unless we experience firsthand the devastation of something like a hurricane or a tornado or an earthquake, we can only imagine our response. But it might be good to wonder, and to wonder how happy and at peace we could possibly be if everything we owned was swept away by a flood or incinerated in a volcanic firestorm. Would your life not be worth living if all your stuff got taken away?

“Where does this come from?” is rather closely related to “Why did this happen?” The Bible teaches that God is the Lord of heaven and of earth, that God is the Creator and Provider and Sustainer and the One in control. The Lord is the Ultimate Authority; as an old hymn puts it: “There's not a plant or flower below, but makes thy glory known; and clouds arise and tempests blow by order from thy throne.” That hymn is grounded in biblical truth. *The voice of the Lord strips the forests bare (Psalm 29:9); [God] sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold?*

*[God] makes his wind blow and the waters flow (Psalm 147); [The Lord] looks on the earth and it trembles, [he] touches the mountains and they smoke! (Psalm 104:32)* Nature does not have a will of its own; God is in control of heaven and earth, even though it seems very out of control. But God is always working out his divine purposes for what he has created, and all according to the words he has spoken and the promises he has made.

And Romans 8:28 tells us God is working all things together for the good of those who love him.

In light of Katrina, we might have questions; we will not have all the answers. We should remember the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 11: *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?* And the words of the old gospel song might serve us well, too: Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand, but I know who holds tomorrow and I know who holds my hand.

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