**Harvey, Irma, Jose, and Katia**

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I’m writing this as Hurricane Irma is absolutely blasting the Caribbean Islands. She’s been joined by Jose behind her and Katia in the Gulf of Mexico. Already we’ve experienced Harvey which broke all kinds of weather records. What are we to make of these storms?

We could answer simply, ‘It’s hurricane season. It just happens to be more intense than most years.’ But should we be so quick to respond with something so flippant? Maybe we ought to ask if something else is going on; something far greater than we can imagine. Could it be that these storms are of record intensity because Jesus’ return is very near?

Already I know that some people will immediately roll their eyes at my suggestion, but let’s think about it. Jesus was asked by his disciples what would be the observable signs of the nearness of his return. His response to their question is recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. In these, he gave many signs. The ones I would zero in on in this article are found in Luke 21:25-26. Jesus said, ***25“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; 26men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”***

A few weeks ago, America experienced a rare total solar eclipse. We were the only nation to experience it. As often happens, people flocked to the spectacle. They wanted to be a part of history in the making. But the sun and the moon and the stars were created by God to be SIGNS to us on earth. In earlier generations and in other cultures, a solar eclipse was thought to be a portent of judgment to the nations. Similarly, a lunar eclipse was thought to be an indication of judgment against Israel.

In the years 2014 and 2015, there were four total lunar eclipses and they all “happened” to take place on Jewish Feast Days! Was that an amazing coincident or was God beginning to say something, even shout something, already then? Was He shouting at America by sending the total solar eclipse directly across America? Is He continuing to shout now with Harvey and Irma? If God is shouting, what could He be shouting and why is He shouting at all?

The best answer for why God would be shouting is this: We’ve filled our lives with so much noise that were God to whisper, we wouldn’t hear Him. Thank God the sun and the moon and the stars and the sea and waves roaring are outside of us, so they grab our attention in ways that words do not.

So if God is shouting what could He be saying?

To that question there is only one answer. If Jesus’ return is very near, and I believe it is, then God is calling the people of the world to repent. He’s shouting, ‘Time is short! Leave sins behind! Return to me! Come to me through My Son!’ If we read any part of the Book of Revelation, we know that it is only going to get worse as the day of Jesus’ return nears. I don’t write this to be a purveyor of doom and gloom but to honestly let people know what will take place in the days ahead of us.

God has told us what is going to be taking place before Jesus’ returns. We would do well to pay attention and prepare our hearts for what’s coming. Difficult days are coming, but God has provided a way for us to come through all of the trouble. Notice that I did not say that God will keep us from trouble. No. Trouble is coming. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken. If we want to make it through all of the shakings, then we’ve got to grab hold of Jesus. He’s the only ‘life-preserver’ there is.

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