

Lessons from Katrina

by Bryan Gibson

We've all watched in horror the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina. It's being called one of the greatest natural disasters in the history of this country, something no one along the Gulf Coast would dispute. In an event of this magnitude, surely there are some lessons we can learn. Let's look at just a few.

1. Pay attention to warnings, or be prepared to face the consequences.

Many did heed the hurricane warnings and evacuated the coastal areas. While many of these people did lose their homes, they can still be counted among the living. Sadly, a great many others did not heed the warnings. They stayed and now many of them are dead. Some of these were unable to leave, but many just chose to stay. Some maybe thought the storm would turn; others perhaps thought that it wouldn't be as bad as some were saying. They were wrong.

The Bible warns of an even greater disaster, at least for those in sin—the day of judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). That ought to get our attention, but instead, it's business as usual for many, thinking either that this day will never come, or that it won't be nearly as bad as the Bible indicates. Listen to these words from the apostle Paul: "God...now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given **assurance** of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). The Lord is coming in judgment. The "strike probability" in this case is 100%. Heed the warning and be prepared.

2. Prepare, but make sure you prepare properly.

With a storm like Katrina, widespread damage was inevitable, regardless of the level of preparation, but it is now clear that much more could have been done. More could have been done to prepare for the storm itself, and the recovery from the storm. Some who thought they were prepared found out they really were not. The same will be true in the day of judgment. Many who think they're prepared will instead hear these words, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matthew 7:21). People will learn this lesson too late: "There is a way that **seems** right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 16:25). The only way we can **know** we're prepared is to do His will (1 John 2:3, 28). He has a perfect plan—we just need to trust Him enough to follow it. It's really pretty simple—He will save those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9).

3. Have a good evacuation plan.

Some along the coast knew which route they were taking, what they were taking, and where they were staying when they got to their destination. Those who didn't have a

good one this time will most likely have one the next time. From a spiritual standpoint, we need to have a good evacuation plan from sin—a way of escape from temptation. The Lord promises that with every temptation He will provide a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). We don't always look for or use this way of escape, because we don't always see the seriousness of sin. Those who appreciated how deadly Katrina could be got serious about their evacuation plans, even before they were ordered to do so. Those who appreciate how deadly sin can be will likewise get serious about finding an escape route.

4. Cling to that which will endure.

It's sobering to witness so many losing everything they own—things which they have spent a lifetime accumulating. But those who have their minds on things above (Colossians 3:1) realize that they “have a better and an enduring possession for themselves in heaven” (Hebrews 10:34). We need to remember that our life does not consist in the abundance of things we possess (Luke 12:15), but instead in a relationship of faithfulness to the Lord, a foundation that cannot be swept away by any storm. “Whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock” (Matthew 7:24-25).