

## Good News in Bad Times

Many people in this world are experiencing difficulty and suffering through tragedies and disasters, both natural and man-made. The important thing to remember is that God is in control of it all because He created it all.

During the process of creation, on the Fourth Day, the Bible tells us that the sun and the moon were set in the heavens for "signs, seasons (Appointed Times), for months and for years." Genesis 1:14 The Hebrew word for sign is "owt" (אוֹת). It refers to something visible - like the rainbow was set in the sky to be an "owt". It is intended to be "a signal, a beacon, a monument, an omen, a mark, a miracle or a token."

On August 21, 2017 the United States of America experienced a Biblical sign through the sun and the moon popularly known as The Great American Eclipse. A solar eclipse is a sign involving the sun and the moon, when the moon blocks the light of the sun on a portion of the planet. On August 21, 2017, a solar eclipse cast a shadow upon the entire continent as it tracked from the west coast to the east coast. A sign such as this, focused on one specific country, would typically be seen as an omen – something foreboding concerning a future event.

Most in America did not see it as an omen – simply an interesting phenomenon. Incredibly though, within days of the eclipse, Hurricane Harvey began to deluge the Houston area with historic flooding causing hundreds of billions of dollars of damage. This was quickly followed by the powerful historic Hurricane Irma that ravaged the Caribbean and then tracked north spanning the entire state of Florida and beyond. These back to back Category 4 Hurricanes hitting America in such a short span of time was unprecedented.

At the same time, the west coast has been experiencing historic fires, and let's not forget that earthquakes and volcano eruptions are occurring at record levels and an 8.2 earthquake just struck Mexico causing extensive damage, loss of life and a 3 foot tsunami wave, all while Hurricane Katia slammed the east coast of Mexico. And if that were not enough, Hurricane Jose, a category 4 hurricane, trailed behind Irma leaving many in the Caribbean in suspense. Lot's of things happening that should get our attention.

As we see all of the weather events occurring in and around the United States of America, it makes us think about the words that Messiah spoke to the multitudes: <sup>54</sup> "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. <sup>55</sup> And when you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather' and there is. <sup>56</sup> Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?" Luke 12:54-56

The people were able to predict the weather, but they failed to recognize the fulfillment of prophecy occurring right before their eyes. Those words should resonate to this generation as well. With all of our scientific knowledge and instrumentation we are able to model and predict the path of monster storms, but many fail to discern the signs, the times and the greater implications of these events.

There can be no doubt that the United States is in the midst of a "wake-up call" from the Almighty. No one likes to think that a loving God would allow disasters and tragedies to occur, but the Bible is very clear on that point - He does. Remember, He once flooded the entire planet because He *"saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* Genesis 6:5 He is absolutely in control of the weather. According to Psalm 107:25 *"For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea."*

In fact, when considering the One Who controls the weather, the Proverbs ask an interesting question that most people cannot answer. See if you know the answer. *"Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His Name, and what is His Son's Name, If you know?"* Proverbs 30:4

Many people will answer that the Father's Name is "The LORD" and the Son's Name is "Jesus", but neither of those answers is accurate. It is important to realize that the Father revealed Himself and His Name in the Hebrew Language. Therefore, it is important that we look to the Hebrew Scriptures for the answer. Within those texts we see that the Father revealed His Name nearly 7,000 times to be אֱלֹהִים in the Ancient Hebrew language. It looks like this יהוה in Modern Hebrew. Some pronounce it in English as Yahweh, but a better pronunciation of the Hebrew Name is Yahuwah.

So while the Father revealed His Name to the world in the Bible, most English speakers do not know that powerful and important Name – but that is changing. The Prophet Jeremiah spoke of this time when <sup>19</sup> *"... The Gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, 'Surely our fathers have inherited lies, worthlessness and unprofitable things.'* <sup>20</sup> *Will a man make gods for himself, which are not gods? <sup>21</sup> "Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know My hand and My might; And they shall know that My name is יהוה."* Jeremiah 16:19-21 We also read in Jeremiah: <sup>35</sup> *"Thus says יהוה, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (יהוה of hosts is His Name)."* Jeremiah 31:35

The reason you have been given this information is because of the unique timing of the eclipse and the events that followed. You see the eclipse occurred on August 21, 2017 and essentially began in Salem, Oregon. At the same time that the eclipse was reaching totality and progressing across America, the sun had set and it became dark in

Jerusalem, thus starting a new day in Israel. That day was the beginning of the 40 days of Teshuva (repentance) leading up to Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement.

When considering the timing of the eclipse, one cannot help but think about Jonah and Nineveh. Recall that Jonah warned Nineveh that judgment would befall them in 40 days unless they repented. (Jonah 3:4) The important thing to realize is that all Nineveh repented – *“from the greatest to the least of them.”* Jonah 3:5 That collective repentance is what forestalled judgment. So from Jonah we understand that יהוה judges nations, but He also gives them fair warning and an opportunity to repent. We also learn from the story of Jonah that יהוה actually uses the weather to accomplish His purpose. When Jonah tried to flee his prophetic mission to Nineveh יהוה *“hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.”* Jonah 1:4

Now we mentioned that the Name of the Son is not Jesus. Jesus is not a Hebrew name, it is an English version of a Greek name. The Son of יהוה was from the Tribe of Judah and He had a Hebrew Name יהושע pronounced Yahushua. Yahushua said that only one sign would be given to the wicked generation of His day - the sign of Jonah. He also said that *“The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.”* Matthew 12:41 It is truly amazing how Nineveh has been in the news so much lately with the battle against ISIS in Mosul (Nineveh). We can only imagine what the men of Nineveh will have to say about this generation in the judgment. America has lost its way because it has rejected יהוה and His Commandments. America is in rebellion and is being given warnings – just like Nineveh.

So, “What about the good news?” you might be asking right about now. The good news is that these catastrophic events are meant to get our attention and point us to repentance. The Hebrew word for “repent” is “shuv” and it literally means “turn.” The Scriptures actually provide a clear and unequivocal formula for how a nation is supposed to repent, by turning. *“If My people who are called by My Name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”* 2 Chronicles 7:14 Sadly, there has been little to no humility or repentance evident in America’s response to these catastrophes. Without national repentance the United States of America is destined to go the way of all cultures that strayed from the Creator.

Before entering the Promised Land יהוה gave detailed instructions to Yisrael. The Promised Land represented a return to Eden. It was not a complete restoration, but it was a step in the right direction. יהוה was teaching His people how to live in the Kingdom so they did not make the same mistakes as Adam and Havah (Eve). Remember that Adam and Havah were given instructions how to live in the Garden of Eden. It was paradise, but they were expected to follow the “rules of the house” - the Commandments. Yisrael too was expected to follow the rules if they wanted to dwell with a “holy” (set-apart) Elohim. A failure to do so would result in an expulsion from the Land - just like what happened with Adam and Havah.

The instructions given to Yisrael are often referred to as “The Law”, but in Hebrew the word is “Torah” (תורה). The word Torah (תורה) means: *utterance, teaching, instruction or revelation from Elohim.* It comes from the Hebrew word “horah” (הורה) which means *“to direct, to teach”* and derives from the stem “yara” (ירה) which means *“to shoot or throw”*. Therefore, there are two aspects to the word Torah: 1) aiming or pointing in the right direction, and 2) movement in that direction. So the Torah reveals the straight path that we are to walk.

In particular, the Torah provided guidance to Yisrael concerning the blessings of obedience and the curses associated with disobedience. The Torah was meant for all of mankind and Israel was supposed to teach the Torah to the Nations. Instead, they rejected the Torah and went the way of the Gentiles. The Son Yahushua came preaching *“Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven draws near”* and He instructed people to *“Follow Me”*. He showed us how to obey, not only the letter of the Torah, but the Spirit of the Torah. He shed His blood to atone for our sins and cleanse us and He sent the Spirit to help us live righteously.

While many in America believe in the Son Yahushua, they have not been taught His true message. He specifically said: *“If you love Me, keep My Commandments.”* John 14:15 America has chosen to reject the Commandments and the righteous path outlined in the Torah at an alarming rate. There is no doubt that יהוה is merciful. We saw that in Florida when the waters receded instead of inundating the shoreline as predicted. There is also no doubt that יהוה is just, and there will be no escaping the wrath to come for those who reject Him and His ways. So the message is the same today as it always was – turn to Him (repent) - *“<sup>5</sup> Trust in יהוה with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”* Proverbs 3:5-6 So the message is sobering, but it is truly Good News in bad times.