

Anne Graham Lotz: Is God Speaking Through the Storms?

As Irma was hitting the Florida Keys, I received a request from to submit an article along the lines of what I would say to those after the storms passed. I agreed to do my best, but knew immediately that I didn't want to write what I wanted to say, but what God wanted to say. And so I began to earnestly seek Him. I knew I needed to be very careful not to put words in His mouth. Did He have something to say through the storms? The following is what came to me. It was posted on the homepage Sept. 12.

Within weeks, we have experienced record-breaking fires in the Northwest, record-breaking hurricanes in Texas and Florida and a record-breaking earthquake in Mexico. What is happening? Are these disasters random? Just freaks of nature? Or is something more significant intended? The answer may be found in an incredible biblical story.

The Old Testament book of 1 Kings 19 records a dramatic scene when the Lord God passed by as the prophet Elijah stood in the mouth of a cave. The description is eerily similar to ours, because first there was a great and powerful wind, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a still, small voice—the gentle voice of Father God speaking to His frightened, weary child.

God used the earthquake, wind and fire to get Elijah's attention, because God had something to say. Our situation is so similar to Elijah's it begs the question: Is God using these storms to get our attention because He also has something to say to us? Yes, He is. What is it? I believe God is saying in essence what He said to Elijah. His message can

be broken into four parts:

- **Be comforted.** The fact that God spoke to Elijah revealed God's presence. God is with us. He has promised, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5b) God is right there. With you. Now! And He understands what it feels like to be stripped of everything.
- **Be blessed.** God told Elijah He would bring help. And God did. He brought Elisha alongside. God will bring us help, too: First responders, FEMA, friends, neighbors, family—even strangers will come alongside to help in the work of rebuilding. They are moved to do so by the Spirit of God, so even in the mess, mold, muck and misery, we are aware of heaven's blessing.
- **Be encouraged.** God told Elijah there were more faithful believers in God than Elijah was aware of, implying Elijah's life had been more impactful than he knew. Our lives also have eternal significance. No man is an island. Life is not just about you. Me. These storms have given ample opportunity for us to understand that life is about something bigger than we are. It's a good time to reorder our priorities and private world.
- **Be ready.** God gave Elijah another assignment—a purpose. And I believe God has a purpose for us. We need to look to Him and be ready for what's coming next. Because soon after Elijah's sensational confrontation with God, he was "raptured." Taken up into heaven without seeing death. Don't miss this implied message. In the words of Jesus, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you may be also" (John 14:1-3). Heaven is waiting! *Jesus is coming!* The signs He gave signal that His coming is imminent. On that day, don't be left behind. Be ready to meet Him

face to face. Turn to Him now. Place your trust in Jesus.

God is speaking through the storms. Are you listening?

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