

Major Christian Leaders Rebuke the 'Monster' Coming Straight for the US

It's not a run-of-the-mill rain shower with wind. Irma is a beast of a storm system razing homes and history alike as it charges across Puerto Rico and the Caribbean with its eye set on the United States.

Florida Governor Rick Scott described Hurricane Irma as "bigger, faster and stronger" than Hurricane Andrew, which hit Miami in 1992 as a Category 5.

"Hurricane Andrew is one of the worst storms in the history of Florida," Scott says. "This is much worse and more devastating on its current path."

Barely a week after Harvey devastated Houston and the surrounding areas, here's what prominent Christian leaders are saying about Hurricane Irma.

Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse:

They're calling Hurricane Irma a monster. It's the strongest Atlantic hurricane in recorded history, and right now, meteorologists say it's headed straight for Florida. Evacuations are already taking place in the Florida Keys with only one roadway in and out. Pray for the safety of all those in the path of the storm—the Caribbean, the U.S. and British Virgin Islands and possibly parts of Puerto Rico before Irma reaches Florida.

Matt Lockett, director of Justice House of Prayer in Washington, D.C.:

I pray: "Father, our hearts continue to grieve with those who have suffered great loss in Southeast Texas. Thank you, Lord, for leading our president to proclaim a day of prayer to help focus our nation's attention on what matters most. We pray for great grace for those still providing relief efforts to that region. Father, we ask for divine intervention concerning Hurricane Irma. We ask for help and for resources to be perfectly directed to those already effected. We pray for divine protection for those evacuating and for those sheltering at home in Florida. Lord, restrain lawlessness in the midst of the unrest. Now Lord of heaven and earth, we ask that this storm be directed back out to sea and away from its current path. Let the winds diminish and the threat [be] removed. Release peace to affected areas and be glorified in the process. We pray for many to cry out and find you at this moment.'

In Joel 1 and 2, the nation was faced with a series of consecutive disasters, but the real crisis was that they failed to understand their predicament. God was trying to get their attention, and the prophet Joel revealed the right response of repentance and prayer. This is still God's holy prescription today. The crisis America is facing right now should produce humility, not stubbornness. Awakening is coming to America, but first we must realize that we cannot save ourselves.

Chelsen A. Vicari, evangelical program director at the Institute on Religion & Democracy:

Almighty God, so many of us are tempted to cry out "Not now! Not another storm!" But as many frustrations wander our minds while watching Hurricane Irma grow in strength, still we humble ourselves. We ask for your shelter in yet another storm. We appeal to you to divert this storm back out to sea. But already it has caused devastation for our Caribbean neighbors. Help us think of others before ourselves. Shield us from apathy when our ears hear news of more flooding. As the waters recede, stir our hearts and mobilize our efforts

to tackle destruction and devastation at home and abroad. Grant energy and wisdom to clergy and lay leaders as they minister to the physical and spiritual needs of affected communities. Show us all how to lovingly and justly respond to the victims of Hurricane Irma.

Larry Tomczak, cultural commentator:

For over 45 years of ministry, I have always encouraged people in times of difficulty and crisis to lay hold of the wonderful promises that are in the 91st psalm. This is God's "assurance policy" that starts with the first verse of "abiding in the secret place of the Almighty." My wife and I always speak to a coming storm as Jesus did in His earthly ministry and cry out for His divine intervention and angelic protection. This may sound childlike, but it works! Scores of brothers and sisters stand with you at this time in prayer.

Vernon Brewer, president and founder of Christian humanitarian organization World Help:

The Caribbean has not seen a storm of this magnitude in more than eight decades. We've already received reports of catastrophic damage in the French and Dutch Caribbean and are especially concerned for Puerto Rico, Cuba and Haiti, who are still recovering from the devastation of last year's storm, Hurricane Matthew.

The entire World Help family is praying for the safety of our friends in the Caribbean. We've already made preparations to provide immediate aid and assistance to those in need and those affected by the flooding and destruction. Our brothers and sisters can count on our prayers, and they can rest assured that help is on the way.

Landon Schott, founder and president of The Rev Ministries:

Father, we come to you in the name above every other name, the name of Jesus! We plead the powerful blood of Jesus over

Florida and that region! We pray your kingdom come and your will be done in Florida. Father, we come to you as did your servant Abraham. We ask you in the mighty name of Jesus to spare this region for the sake of the righteous! Your righteous servants abide in this region. On behalf of your righteous servants, we ask you to send this storm out to sea. We speak to this storm to go! Leave now in Jesus' name! Father, we ask you to forgive us of our sin. Forgive us personally and as a nation. Heal our land. We trust you and thank you, Lord. We speak peace in the atmosphere. We speak peace in the hearts and minds of your people. Amen.

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Council

As Hurricane Irma, one of the largest hurricanes ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean, barrels through Puerto Rico ... I want every Puerto Rican to know this: your Christians brothers and sisters are already on their knees, praying for your safety and the safety of your families. We are with you, and we will not forget or abandon you.

We pray for God's protection on every precious life, and that the worse of this storm might pass quickly. The Scriptures say, if one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it. I call upon every member and every church that's part of the NHCLC family to be one with Puerto Rico in prayer. Puerto Rico desperately needs our prayers tonight.

Ronnie Floyd, president of the National Day of Prayer and senior pastor of Cross Church:

I'm praying for our brothers and sisters in St. Martins, the British Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean who've already experienced the catastrophic gales and rains of Hurricane Irma. I pray God would comfort them during this time of hardship and give them the strength they

need as they rebuild their homes and communities after this disaster.

I pray also for the safety of those still in the path of Hurricane Irma, especially as Florida braces itself for impact with this storm. Scripture says, 'God is our refuge and strength, a well-proven help in trouble' (Ps. 46:1). May God—who oftentimes works His glorious purposes in ways we cannot fully comprehend—be their refuge, comfort and strength.

Zach Drew, TRUNews:

In five or 10 years from now, will we be looking back on this September of 2017 as the month the next world war began? Will my future grandchildren be studying what we are experiencing right now? If so, don't you think God would give us clear warning signs of such an event? Maybe, just maybe, the hidden message within Irma is telling us something.

Greg Stier, Dare 2 Share:

I'm praying that God would slow it down and throw it into a different pathway that won't affect so many people! The same Jesus who calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee 2,000 years ago can calm the one in the Atlantic right now!

I'm praying for the safety of those who already been affected by Hurricane Irma, for those who've been hurt to be healed and for those who've lost houses to find food and shelter. I'm also praying that the Lord would help those in Florida who are in the danger zone to take the safety precautions they need to and that God would surround them with his presence and protection. More than anything, I'm praying God would use this tragedy to draw people to himself and that they would come to understand the gospel. Jesus, the One who died for them on the cross and was raised from the dead, the

One who is King of kings and Lord of lords, the One who is sovereign over every storm that rumbles and leaf that rustles, can calm the storm in the hearts of those terrified of Hurricane Irma. Through faith in him they can be saved.

We need to rally to support those who are hurting. Of course, this means sending financial support and/or manpower to rebuild what has been destroyed. It's also a crucial time for the people of God in the affected areas to bring the hope of Jesus Christ to those around them. I believe that the churches in the path of Hurricane Irma will rally just like the churches of Texas have been doing since Hurricane Harvey. As a matter of fact, in two weeks, we are doing Dare 2 Share Live in 70 cities across the country. We have host sites in Texas that have been impacted by Hurricane Harvey and host sites in Puerto Rico, Florida and Georgia that could be impacted by Hurricane Irma. We are believing that God will use Dare 2 Share Live as a rally point for thousands of teenagers in these areas. They will gather on Sept. 23 to pray for their cities, collect canned food for local rescue missions (who will desperately need it) and share the Gospel of Jesus to thousands of people who need some good news amidst all this meteorological bad news. I believe that these Dare 2 Share Live host sites will become lighthouses of hope in these storm darkened cities.

Those in the pathway of this storm will be greatly impacted. It's a historic storm. But it's also a historic opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus with people both directly affected by the storms and those watching the weather unfold outside of the hurricane's path. Everyone is glued to the Weather Channel, watching in horror as this devastation unfolds. People need some good news. People need the gospel. Why not begin a conversation with someone today by asking, "What do you think of all these hurricanes?" And then, after you listen to them, share how Jesus has been your good news in the midst of all this bad news. Share with them the Gospel

of Jesus. As horrible as hurricanes are, they create conversation. Why not turn this conversation to Jesus and introduce others to the only One who can offer lasting hope amidst the storms of life?

Sam Rohrer, president of the American Pastors Network:

As a Christian, I am ultimately praying that "God's will be done" through this storm. As Jesus Himself prayed while in the garden just prior to His crucifixion, "Lord let this pass, but if not, may Your will be done." In the face of all circumstances of life, be they blessings or judgment, the believer's prayers must follow this same model. The reason is that since God is sovereign, and since He controls the weather (either by causing or permitting events to occur), we must look to determining His reason. In the case of our nation, where we have rejected the God of heaven, proclaimed His truth to be void and proclaiming evil to be good in so many ways, it should not be hard for us to look to the God of heaven and ask of Him how we as a nation should respond.

I am praying that the most important decisions regarding eternal destiny are considered first. This means, for the true believer in Jesus Christ, to ask: "Lord, let my faith in You not waver. Let my life, my decisions, my actions and my choices reflect the unchanging reality that we are just passing through this life and our eternal home in heaven is where my heart lies. And, oh Lord, as Job responded, may I respond: "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord." For the person who does not have the hope of heaven and an unchanging faith in Jesus Christ, I am praying that his consideration of loss of life and property drive that person to consider their eternal destiny and to reach out to Jesus Christ in humility and repentance and not further rejection and anger.

Every person in America should be looking within at this time

and falling on their face in repentance for trusting in things, people or bank accounts. We must consider that God is the source of all blessing; He is our only protection; He is our national protector and when and if He lifts His hand of protection, we will suffer loss. We must consider our national condition and that the divisions we are experiencing now in this nation can only be fixed when we return to a fear of God. These storms and difficult national events should be considered as acts of mercy, perhaps by God, as last warnings to our nation. Do we look to Him at this point? Do we really believe "In God we Trust" or will we continue down our current path?

American Family Association:

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the many blessings You have bestowed upon humanity throughout the world You have created—for the beauty and abundance the earth provides; for the heat of the sun and the coolness of night; for the rain that causes crops to grow and flowers to bloom.

But now we pray for deliverance from the ravaging power of nature, which destroys and sweeps away. Break apart this storm so that its destructive might diminishes. Protect the people in its path, even as we pray for consolation, encouragement and hope for those already devastated by it.

During this time of political division, we pray for the grace that heals and unites, so that neighbor might help neighbor. May those who have not been touched by this storm feel compassion for those that have, and may they be moved by the Holy Spirit to come to their aid.

In all things, we pray that hearts would turn to You in humble prayer, that souls might be saved, and that Your name might be glorified.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

Tim Cameron, author of *40 Days Through the Prayers of Jesus*:

Pray and Act

In light of the devastating impact of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, Christians must respond with the compassion and sincerity of concern that would bring glory to God. We must pray first, and then give financially or in-kind as we can.

But, it is vitally important that we not dwell on the “why” of these events. Is it God’s judgment? Is it global warming? No, we must ask the right question. What is God trying to accomplish in our lives through these events He has allowed, not caused? I hear the Spirit of God calling out, “Pay attention.” There are majestic opportunities for us if we can see in the Spirit.

Unite, body of Christ! Come together! The Lord promises that He will meet us at every juncture that deeds come alongside our prayers. In our prayerful and practical love for others, we will glorify God and prove to the world the reality of Jesus Christ. Our love, compassion and care for others will show the world that Jesus is who He said He was, One sent from God to dwell among men, bringing salvation, healing and deliverance. We, and He, will be known by our love.

Bert Farias, cultural commentator:

To all believers in the path of Hurricane Irma:

In moments like this, people ask for prayer, but we must understand the limitations of our prayers and our own individual authority as believers in Jesus Christ.

When it comes to a potential crisis such as a dangerous storm, the Lord has taught me a vital biblical principle. We,

as members of the body of Christ, have authority over our individual spheres of influence and personal domain. In this case, over our families, homes and property. Individuals who are in Christ should exercise their own authority concerning these matters. Years ago, when we lived in the Florida panhandle, we were regularly in harm's way of these dangerous storms.

As an example, in 2004, Hurricane Ivan was headed straight into our region. Before the storm hit, we met for prayer in our home with several families. The Lord spoke to us and told us that we could not stop the storm, but we could exercise our own individual authority over our families and property. We hearkened to what the Spirit of God told us, and although many homes in our area were destroyed or suffered damage, our home and property, through a miracle of God, was barely touched.

The word from the Lord is the same for every storm. Believers must exercise their individual authority over their domain while praying for God's mercy for the general populace.

Alex McFarland, religion and culture expert:

Dear Lord Jesus,

We recognize your sovereign power over all things, and recognize that in all things we depend on You. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of salvation, the blessing of serving you and especially for the incredible privilege of prayer. Lord, we fervently pray today for protection in light of the storm, and as Hurricane Irma moves closer in, Jesus, we ask that you supernaturally intervene.

Lord, we call in Jesus' name, asking that you reach into this weather system, weaken the storm and divert it out to sea. Please God, minimize the damage it could cause to human life and to our nation. Father God, we are utterly dependent on

you. So that we may live, provide for our families, minister to others, and become the righteous nation that you called us to be, please weaken or even eliminate this hurricane.

May the church rise up to help, to witness and to serve—regardless of what tomorrow may bring. Lord, as we have seen you do so many times, please bring forth good from times of trouble, and may this storm turn our nation's eyes to you.

We ask this in Jesus' name, and for His glory.

Amen.

Stay tuned for more updates throughout today!