

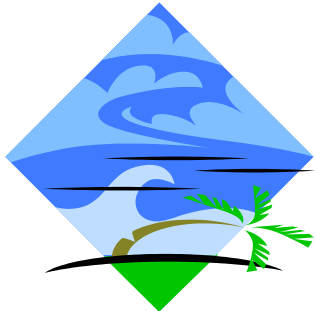
Do Hurricanes Just Happen?

Jim Elliff

Though some postulate that hurricanes are spawned merely by natural causes, this answer is one “cause” too short. The Bible teaches they are first decreed by God.

The Psalmist wrote: “Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightening for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures” (Psalm 135:6-7).

“Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that woe and well-being proceed?” asked Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:38.



A hurricane is definitely in the “woe” category. Such physical catastrophes are often called “natural evils,” and they come by that misnomer honestly. What devastation! We are moved by the plight of those who have endured this kind of trouble.

But can we really say *God* did it? Most do not want to. Yet, occasionally, even among those who assume God exercises no true sovereignty over the *wills of men*, there is the admission that God does control the *weather*. He does, that is, as long as nobody is seriously hurt. God might comfort

during the storm and help pick up the emotional pieces after the storm, but He would never create such ruination.

However, God’s own Word speaks otherwise: God is at work doing His perfect will, even during hurricane season. These spinning engines of destruction originate from Him as Ruler (*first* cause), through nature (*second* cause), all for His purposes.

Though God owes us no explanation, one or all of the following possible objectives may help us understand “why” God decrees such fear-producing events:

1. God is recognized as powerful and not to be trifled with. God often asserted that cataclysmic events were done to display His power to men. (Exodus 9:14-16; 14:31)

2. Society is warned of the greatest calamity, eternal judgment. A physical disaster is nothing compared with eternal damnation. A hurricane is an announcement: “If you don’t repent, worse than this is coming.” (Luke 13:1-5)

3. Some people are deservedly punished for their rebellion. The Bible states that “the wrath of God is revealed [lit. *is being revealed*] from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . .” (Romans 1:18). That means *now*. Hurricanes are just one of the ways that might happen. (Psalm 7:11-13)

4. Some true believers are tested or disciplined and made stronger in their faith. The same storm that judges a non-believing man may be the crucible of testing and/or chastisement for a true Christian, and will toughen and purify him for the future. (James 1:2-3; Hebrews 12:5-11)

5. Believers may be taken to heaven; and some enemies of God may be removed from the earth. This is a reality that is hard to accept, but nonetheless true. The Bible says that our days are ordained by God even before one of them is lived (Psalm 139:16). He also promises that many rebellious people will face a calamitous end. (Psalm 73:18-19)

6. The godly are given an opportunity to love sacrificially. Because of the nature of the true believer, you will always find Christians among those on the scene helping to relieve the distress. (1 John 3:17; Galatians 6:10) Their love may point many to Christ.

There could be more, but this will suffice to highlight the purposefulness of God in such massive displays of his power.

If it is *not* true that God has ordained the powerful forces of nature for His own ends, then the alternative answer is that this event was only an irregularity in the interplay of warm water and thermals. And that is no comfort when you stand in the wet rubble that was once your home.

I would much rather know that God has a *purpose* in mind when it costs me so dearly. I can learn from that, and even thank Him for His perfect, though sometimes shocking, will. God knows what He’s about.

“He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” (Daniel 4:35).

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