

SENATOR: GOD JUDGING U.S. **WITH DISASTROUS HURRICANES**

Alabama Republican cites culture of 'gambling, sin and wickedness'

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An Alabama state senator says the reason why the Gulf Coast is suffering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is because God is judging Americans in that region for sinful behavior.

"New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast have always been known for gambling, sin and wickedness," wrote Sen. Hank Erwin, R-Montevallo, in a column, according to the Birmingham News. "It is the kind of behavior that ultimately brings the judgment of God."



Alabama State Sen. Hank Erwin, R-Montevallo

Erwin said he was awed, but not surprised after surveying the damage to hard-hit regions including Gulfport and Biloxi, Miss., and the fishing town of Bayou La Batre on the Alabama coast.

"Warnings year after year by godly evangelists and preachers went unheeded. So why were we surprised when finally the hand of judgment fell?" he wrote. "Sadly, innocents suffered along with the guilty. Sin always brings suffering to good people as well as the bad."

"America has been moving away from God," continued the former talk-radio host and now a media consultant and senator. "We all need to embrace godliness and churchgoing and good, godly living, and we can get divine protection for that point. "The Lord is sending appeals to us," he said. "As harsh as it may sound, those hurricanes do say that God is real, and we have to realize sin has consequences."



Robert Baxter pushes Grand Marshal Robert Doucet Sept. 7, 2005, during homosexuals' Southern Decadence Parade in Exile in Lafayette, La., just 9 days after Hurricane Katrina (courtesy: The Daily Advertiser)

Erwin said the catastrophic storms are part of a pattern evident in the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, claiming God has removed an umbrella of protection from America due to an increase in abortion, pornography and prostitution. "If you are believer and read the Bible, you know sin has judgment," Erwin said. "New Orleans has always been known for sin. ... The wages of sin is death."

"I have no idea what sort of senator or politician Mr. Erwin is, but he's sure no theologian," William Willimon, bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, told the News. "I'm certainly against gambling and its hold on state government in Mississippi, but I expect there is as much sin, of possibly a different order, in Montevallo as on the Gulf Coast. If God punished all of us for our sin, who could stand?"

Fisher Humphreys, a professor of divinity at Samford University, didn't respond directly to Erwin, but he did say Christians believe God cares about sin. "There is a standard about right and wrong conduct, and God is fully aware of whether our conduct measured up to the standard or not," Humphreys said.

As to God's control of events, he told the News different believers answer the question differently. "A God that is irrational and vindictive, and filled with anger – that understanding of God is not the understanding we find in Christ. We don't believe in a God that is vindictive or cruel."

However, the Book of Revelation describes the return of Jesus Christ

to Earth, using terms indicating God is filled with wrath, and will Himself slay many people:

[I]n righteousness he doth judge and make war. ... And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ... And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. (Rev.19:11-21)

As WorldNetDaily previously reported, some believe Katrina is divine judgment for U.S. support of the ouster of Jewish residents of Gaza.

There have also been claims from some political leftists such as Robert F. Kennedy and Barbra Streisand that the hurricane activity is being heightened by so-called global warming, rather than any action by God.

That idea has been refuted by Max Mayfield, director of the National Hurricane Center, who says hurricanes historically have appeared in an up-and-down cycle. "The 1940s through the 1960s experienced an above-average number of major hurricanes, while the 1970s into the mid-1990s averaged fewer hurricanes," Mayfield told the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee's Subcommittee on Disaster Prevention and Prediction.