

## The Storm

The tornado was almost a mile wide and was headed straight for their home, destroying everything in its path. It was a monster of a tornado, the worst storm he had ever seen, and he had minutes to get everyone into the shelter before it was going to be right on top of them. First he got his wife and children into the shelter, then the dogs and one of the cats. But two of the cats would simply not let him catch them. He tried to catch those two cats right up to the moment he began to bleed from the storm tossed gravel that was pelting his body. Out of time, he ran to the shelter as fast as he could, practically jumping in and closing the door behind him.

When they emerged a few minutes later, there was nothing left but bare earth and a few stumps where the big oak trees used to be. The house, the cars, even the fences were gone, just gone - nowhere to be seen. There was nothing left – it was all gone. They could see the twister heading off in the distance maybe a mile away by now and moving fast. They looked for the missing cats for days, but the twister had taken them away, along with everything else they owned. All they had left was the dirt they were standing on and each other, and of course their storm shelter.

Many people say their problem with Christianity is that they can't believe in a God who would send people to hell. Others say that they feel like God is putting conditions on them, asking them to jump through hoops, obey certain commandments they don't like, etc. in order to get to heaven and avoid hell. But the truth is, there is a storm coming, and God is just trying to get us all in the shelter before it hits. The storm's name is death, and it is going to hit every one of us eventually. Anyone left outside the shelter will be destroyed. God isn't trying to make us jump through hoops, He is trying to get us all into the shelter before it is too late. Out of His love for us, He is doing everything He can to get us in to Christ, so that when the Angel of Death shows up, he will pass over us instead of taking us.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26) He also said, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3) Heaven and hell is about whether or not you will live or die when the storm of death hits your life. It is about a loving Father trying to get everyone into a safe place so that death will not harm them. He loves and cares about all of us, and wants us to be spared the ravages of the storm of death. Are you running from God? Let Him catch you and bring you into the shelter. Let Him bring you into Christ, that you may live.

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and <sup>[o]</sup>acts on them, <sup>[p]</sup>may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the <sup>[f]</sup>floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not <sup>[a]</sup>act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the <sup>[s]</sup>floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."

(Matthew 7:24-27)