



The Bible For Our Times

“WEeping MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.” PSALM 30:5

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Earthquakes: an “Act of God”?



And what about volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, hurricanes, cyclones, tornados, blizzards and floods? Also wildfires, famines and plagues? Not easy questions to answer...especially when loved ones are hurt—or thousands of people including children are injured or die.

Are earthquakes increasing? *Newsweek* (April 14, 2010) summarizes, “Yesterday, a 6.9-magnitude quake struck Qinghai, China, resulting in an estimated 400 dead and 10,000 injured. One week before that, a 7.7 tremor hit Northern Sumatra, Indonesia. Two days before that, a 7.2 shook Baja, Mexico. At the end of February, Chile shuddered under an 8.8 earthquake, little over a month after a 7.0 crumbled Haiti and killed nearly 230,000. With such a list, 2010 appears to be the year of the apocalypse or, at the very least, unnaturally active for these natural disasters.”

Population and Earthquakes

But *Newsweek* raised the question, “The Year of the Earthquake? Not Quite. Despite High-Profile Events, Quakes Are Not Increasing (Populations Are).” So it’s the consequences of specific earthquakes that have made the big difference!

According to the United States Geological Society (and other experts), “We’re not getting more quakes than

usual, we’re just paying more attention. Even earthquakes of magnitude 7.0 or greater have remained fairly constant through history. Based on records since about 1900, approximately 17 major earthquakes, ranging from 7.0 to 7.9, and one ‘great’ earthquake—at 8.0 magnitude or above—are expected in any given year.” (*Newsweek*)

Earthquakes, Famines, Wars Throughout Gospel Age

But some Christians are saying—based on “Our Lord’s Great Prophecy”—that Earthquakes are a sign of the time of the end and Jesus’ imminent return. However, if we follow closely the answer to the apostles’ questions about “the sign of thy coming [*parousia*, presence], and of the end of the world,” we notice that Jesus first warned them it would be awhile before he returned:

Matthew 24:3-14 “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and **earthquakes**. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And this **gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come**. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Jesus thus described the whole Christian Gospel Age during the time the “gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness [though not a conversion] unto all nations, and then shall the end come.” So, yes, we are living in End Times, but literal Earthquakes are not a sign.

“Curse” on Earth Will Be Lifted

Still, questions about God causing or allowing Earthquakes begs an answer. Does God care—or is our God just too powerless to prevent such suffering of mankind? Or is there only such a thing as the “morality of Nature”?



Actually, when God created Adam and Eve, he planted them on a Paradise Earth over which man had complete “dominion.” (Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:3-9) But then, of course, when Adam sinned, his posterity was condemned—but *also* the Earth was “cursed.” (Genesis 3:17) However, as the last book in the Bible assures us—as a result of the Kingdom of Christ for the “healing of the nations.... There shall be no more curse” on man or the earth. (Revelation 22:2,3) Mankind’s perfect—friendly—beautiful Earth will be restored to him by our loving, all-powerful God.

In the meantime, God has permitted evil to take its course not only on a dying race and its governments—but also in nature. Solomon observed that the good and righteous often suffer and that everything is left to “time and chance” (Ecclesiastes 9:11 NAS)

God’s Intervention with Nature

So, although God does not generally orchestrate or interfere with nature, He certainly has intervened at specific times for specific reasons for His specific people—Israel. Before the Exodus, the various natural plague phenomena of frogs, lice, flies, hail, locusts, darkness were miraculously implemented with God’s timing. When Dathan led a rebellion against Moses, “The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan....” (Psalm 106:14-21; Deuteronomy 11:1-8)

Understandably, God intervened in nature and so heightened the importance of two crisis moments concerning His beloved Son. When God withdrew His presence from Jesus on the cross,

“From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.” (Matt 27:45) Then when Jesus finally expired, “The centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the **earthquake**, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” (Matthew 27:54)

Then at the time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the sepulcher, “Behold, there was a great **Earthquake**: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.” (Matthew 28:1-2) Yes, the resurrection of Jesus—accentuated by this natural phenomenon—was the key important event for implementing God’s Plan. “This Jesus hath God raised up....” (Acts 2:32)

In the early church, God did not usually rescue those who were “persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” (Matt 5:10) But on one occasion when Paul and Silas were in prison—singing—there was a sudden, great earthquake. “And suddenly there was a great Earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.” (Acts 16:26) The Earthquake shock jarred the walls and, an angel no doubt, loosed their chains. Their release was quickly and wonderfully accomplished when God saw fit to manifest His power.

Prophetic and Symbolic Earthquakes

Of course, the Bible also speaks often in symbolic language. “Wheat” can refer to true Christians as opposed to “tares” as imitation Christians. (Matthew 13:26) Our faith is tested in the “fire” of hard trials which burn away our pride and self will. “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:7) Earthquakes can be symbolic too! Basically, an earthquake is an eruption from beneath—like a revolution.

“Earthquake” is mentioned a few times in Revelation. The prophetic Book of Revelation opens by identifying itself as a Book of symbolic language—“signified it [*senaino*, Strong’s 4591 “to give a sign...with the expression by signs”] by his angel.” (Revelation 1:1) One example of its symbolic nature is a brief decoding of the “waters” the harlot was sitting upon as literal peoples. “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.” (Revelation 17:15)

Earthquake and Babylon

When the “earthquake” of Revelation 11:13 occurred, “the tenth part of the city fell.” In another instance of an “earthquake,” the whole City falls! The City? Babylon.

Revelation 16:18-19 “And there were voices, and **thunders**, and **lightnings**; and there was a **great earthquake**, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the **great city was divided into three parts**, and the cities of the nations fell: and **great Babylon** came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”

What is “Babylon”? Since the literal ancient city of Babylon had long disappeared even before the Apostle John saw and recorded the visions of Revelation—what does “Babylon” represent? “Babylon” comes from “babel” meaning “confusion”—the mixing of things of God with the things of men. Satan functions as an “angel of light,” mixing truth with error. (2 Corinthians 11:14)

Because of today’s increased “lightnings” of truth and information, there are “thunders” rumbling against “Babylon.” People are concerned with the institutions of Christendom which claim to be Christ’s Kingdom. They see the hypocrisy of leadership—and the worldly minded lukewarmness of Christianity for the most part. As in Europe, so in America now, the *major* Christian denominations are losing numbers fast. Except for the growth of some non-denominational churches—the traditional churches are emptying. (“Tenth of the city” fell in the French Revolution ending absolute Papal power—a forecast of the future.)

Earthquake Finishes in Middle East

But as also indicated prophetically in Revelation, there will come a desperate rallying when the governments of earth—called the “kings of earth”—seek the support of the



churches...both Catholic and Protestant. (Revelation 16:13-16) But actually they will be gathering to “Armageddon.” They will croak as pompous “frogs,” “Peace, peace—don’t rock the boat!”

Then will come the time when an “earthquake”—a revolution within from underneath—will erupt. The “City” will begin to split apart: “The great city was divided into three parts...” (Revelation 16:19) “The kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.” (Revelation 18:9) Thus “the kings”—the government third—will implode later.

But then, whatever is left of earth’s governments will notice Israel in the Middle East prospering—but vulnerable (Ezekiel 38:11)—and will decide to attack. Then when God fights for His People and His Land—“my people,” “my land” (Ezekiel 38:14)—the residual governments will be destroyed. How?—by a final revolt from within, a symbolic Earthquake (perhaps also a literal Earthquake). Eventually, however, the “shaking” will see “every man’s sword shall be against his brother”—anarchy.

Ezekiel 38:18-23 “And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face....Surely in that day there shall be a **great shaking [Earthquake] in the land of Israel**; and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall....**every man's sword shall be against his brother....Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.**”

Jerusalem, the Capital of God’s Kingdom on Earth

However, after this “shaking” earthquake and the “fire” of anarchy, will come the turning point of man’s destiny in God’s Plan. After the old social order has been devoured by anarchy, mankind will receive the purified language of the true Gospel. Instead of every human against every other human being—mankind will then serve God “shoulder to shoulder”—the exact opposite!

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This issue...

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Zephaniah 3:8-9 “Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to **gather the nations** [Armageddon], that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the **fire of my jealousy**. For then will I turn to the people **a pure language**, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent [‘shoulder to shoulder’ NAS].”

So after the gathering of the nations to Armageddon—mankind will finally understand that God’s Kingdom is being established—beginning with Jerusalem! (Isaiah 2:2-4) Earth will be man’s Paradise home restored. No more tears, no more death, no more war, no more terrorism—and, yes, no more earthquakes permitted by God. (Revelations 21:1-4)



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