

Is Japan Disaster Another Apocalyptic Sign?

✖ The crisis in Japan is worsening. At the same time, the situation in the Middle East is volatile. And let's not forget last month's seismic shock in New Zealand, Sumatra 9.1, Katrina, Rita, massive flooding in Australia, birds and fish dying around the world, and bees disappearing.

Even the secular media is using phrases like "of biblical proportions" to describe current events. Believers who recognize the signs of the times aren't surprised, and high-profile evangelists are proclaiming that the end is near.

Jesus issued an ominous warning more than 2,000 year ago: "There shall be signs, and great earthquakes in various sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for the expectation of those things that are coming upon the earth" (see Luke 21:11,25,26).

Does such an idea reflect merely the hardhearted ravings of religious fanatics bent on making a buck from humanity's misery, or is it possible that planet earth is indeed approaching the biblical "end of days"?

Charisma magazine sat down with Steve Wohlberg, director of White Horse Media and author of 25 books, including *Surviving Toxic Terrorism* and *End Time Delusions*, to talk about why things will grow worse before they get better—and the eminent return of Jesus.

Charisma: What's going on, Steve? Nobody knows the day or the hour of Jesus' return, but the signs of the times appear evident.

Wohlberg: When you look at the trend of natural disasters—and many other types of disasters and other things that are

happening in the world—it seems pretty clear to me that we are seeing an escalation of large-scale problems on the planet. To me, these are indicators that we are getting closer to the return of Jesus Christ. As you mentioned, nobody knows the day or the hour so I'm very careful not to set any kind of dates.

Charisma: Are tsunamis mentioned in the Bible as part of the end times?

Wohlberg: I used to consider the end of Luke 21:25—"the sea and the waves roaring"—as the sea of humanity being full of turmoil. But then when the big tsunami rolled across the ocean after the Sumatra earthquake, I relooked at this verse and I think it certainly applies to a big wave rolling across the ocean. When the Japanese earthquake hit, it actually moved the whole island of eight feet, and then the tsunami occurred right away.

Charisma: The sweeping fear in the hearts of men is also telling. Japan's emperor is deeply concerned and praying.

Wohlberg: In Luke 21:26, Jesus said, "Men's hearts will be failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." That sure sounds like what's happening now. People are afraid. They are concerned. In the next verse, verse 27, Jesus says, "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads for your redemption is drawing near."

Jesus talks about earthquakes, pestilences, famines, fearful sights from heaven, all kinds of different things. When you look at what's happening on earth right now, it sure seems to me that things are lining up with what Jesus predicted. So I believe that we are getting closer to the return of the Lord.

Charisma: I've never seen anything like this in my life—the convergence of events. Between Christian persecution, terrorism threats, the earthquakes and tsunamis, the revolution in the Middle East, and a number of other events over the past few years...

Wohlberg: On Friday when the earthquake hit Japan and the tsunami was rolling across the ocean, I was watching Shepard Smith on Fox News. He was covering the quake, covering the tsunami, then he bounced over to Khadafy and what's going on in Libya, and then he bounced over to Saudi Arabia and the "Day of Rage."

Smith interviewed somebody that said that if Saudi Arabia is wracked with civil war like Egypt and like Libya it has the potential to bring down the economy of America because we are totally dependent upon oil. Saudi is the main place where we get our oil. Smith made a comment right on the air. He said, "I've been covering the news for a long time and this is a new day in news. We've never seen all of these things of such magnitude happening at the same time." When I heard him say that, I just had this apocalyptic sense that this is what's going on.

Charisma: So what's the bottom line?

Wohlberg: It's going to get worse before it gets better. But the good news is that when it's all over, it's going to get really good. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. The Bible says that Jesus is going to come and He is going to get rid of sin. Satan is not going to have the upper hand like he does right now. God is going to put down evil.

Revelation Chapter 21 says that eventually there will be a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and first earth will pass away. There will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things have passed away.

I'm not a doom-and-gloomer. I certainly don't consider myself to be a far-right religious fanatic that's raising the sign saying, "The end is near." I have a wife. I have two little kids. I'm a student of prophecy. The indicators are all flashing right now that we are getting closer to the coming of Jesus. When things really get bad, the difference will be apparent between those that are genuine Christians that are trusting in Jesus and the rest of the world.

Charisma: In what ways do you expect it to grow worse?

Wohlberg: In Revelation 16, we have the seven last plagues described. Those are going to devastate the planet. That's right before the Second Coming of Christ. Those plagues haven't started yet but they are coming at some point. And in Revelation Chapter 16, verses 18 and 19, it describes a "great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." And as a result of that quake, it says that the cities of the nations fell. That's the final spasm right before the Second Coming.

The Haiti quake, the Japan quake, the Pakistan quake, and other things like this, are indicators of a much larger catastrophe that is coming. I wish it wasn't the case but that's what I see. All of this is the tragic outworking of sin. When Adam and Eve chose to follow Satan that brought sin into the world. The sin is here. The planet is suffering. People are suffering. And a loving God is allowing these catastrophes and the demonstration of the consequences of human sin so that when He finally intervenes and ends it that He can end it permanently and it will be over forever. That's why He's allowing this.

Read part two of this interview, "Does Japan Quake Signal Second Coming is Imminent?".