

# Does Bible Prophecy Say Earthquakes Far Worse Than Those in Turkey, Syria, Are Coming? Yes, and Israel Isn't Ready

Are earthquakes—massive, deadly and destructive—signs of the End Times?

Are they part of the “birth pangs” of what Jesus spoke?

And does Bible prophecy say the worst is yet to come?

In light of the horrific quakes that just hit Turkey and Syria and left more than 100,000 people dead and wounded—and millions without homes—these were the questions we tackled on THE ROSENBERG REPORT last week.

To set the context let me take you back to 2006. That's the year I wrote my first non-fiction book, EPICENTER: Why The Current Rumbblings in the Middle East Will Change Your World.

I laid out 10 specific headlines that the world would one day read.

Chapter 11 was called, “FUTURE HEADLINE: New War Erupts in Middle East As Earthquakes, Pandemics Hit Europe, Africa, Asia.”

That was 12 years ago, and sure enough these are headlines we've been reading ever since.

To be clear: I'm not a prophet, a psychic, or a “modern Nostradamus.” I don't have any unique ability within myself to see the future.

Rather, as I explained in EPICENTER, I'm writing about what God says is coming.

Bible prophecy is an intercept from the mind of the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-sovereign God of the universe.

God doesn't tell us everything He is going to do—or all He is going to sovereignly allow Satan to do—in all countries and all regions of the world at all times in history.

But He does tell us some of the things that are going to happen in some countries and some regions at some periods of time in the future.

Unfortunately, too many Christians ignore Bible prophecy.

But I take it seriously.

And when I write books about prophecy, or teach about it, I encourage people to study the Scriptures carefully, take the prophecies literally and consider how to walk with Christ more faithfully in light of what God says is coming.

## **WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY ABOUT EARTHQUAKES—AND WHAT ARE WE SEEING HAPPEN IN OUR TIMES?**

In the New Testament, for example, Lord Jesus warned His disciples that in the “last days” terrible wars, earthquakes, and infectious plagues and diseases would spread across the globe, just to name a few of the “signs” – the “birth pangs” – that Jesus said would precede His Second Coming.

In Luke chapter 21, for example, our Messiah prophesied that “when you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven” (Luke 21:0-11).

When I wrote EPICENTER based on this and related prophecies, many critics and skeptics called me loony. One anchor on CNN called me the “Mayor of Crazy Town.”

But just look at what’s happened since 2006. Not only did we see the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq intensify and devastate the Middle East, we saw the rise of the Islamic State—and its genocide against Christians—and then the war to destroy ISIS and dismantle its Caliphate.

Last year, Russia launched the biggest land war in Europe since World War II. More than 200,000 people are dead. And now, Vladimir Putin is poised to escalate. He’s massing more than a quarter of a million additional troops on the borders of Ukraine and threatening to use nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, in 2020, we saw Communist China unleash the Wuhan virus—the COVID pandemic—the deadliest plague in a century, killing nearly 7 million people.

Also since 2006, we’ve seen one horrific earthquake after another strike around the world, including those in Turkey and Syria just last week, the deadliest series of earthquakes to hit the Middle East in nearly 100 years.

The images are heart-wrenching.

Death. Destruction. Shrieking, orphaned babies. Shattered, despondent parents.

The initial quake registered 7.8 on the Richter scale.

Then came two more quakes, nearly as bad.

These were followed by dozens of aftershocks.

Witnesses in Turkey told reporters it “felt like the apocalypse.”

An aid worker in Syria’s war-ravaged city of Aleppo told the

BBC,

“We were in hell before the earthquake—we’re now in the deepest level of hell.”

The U.S. has sent billions of dollars’ worth of rescue equipment, tents, blankets, medicine, clothing, and other emergency assistance, as have other governments.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—whose government has worked hard in recent months to reconcile relations with Turkey—immediately sent nearly 400 rescue workers, doctors, nurses and other emergency response specialists to help the Turkish government deal with the crisis.

### **CHRISTIANS ARE MINISTERING TO THOSE DEVASTATED BY THE QUAKES**

Christian ministries are also providing desperately needed aid.

Franklin Graham’s ministry—Samaritan’s Purse—immediately sent an Evangelical Christian medical team and a mobile field hospital to Turkey.

A man who runs an Evangelical ministry in Turkey told Christianity Today magazine that Christian doctors and engineers have rushed to the frontlines, eager to love their neighbors and care for those who are suffering, just as Christ commanded.

“This is the test of the church,” he said. “And I’m proud of my brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Amen—I’m also encouraged by how the Church is responding.

### **WHAT IS THE BIGGER PICTURE?**

At the same time, we need to see the bigger picture.

These earthquakes are not simply tragedies—they’re End Times prophecies coming to pass, and we need to prepare ourselves

because far worse is coming.

Now, some of you watching may be skeptics, thinking, "Joel, come on, these earthquakes were terrible—yes—but you're blowing them out of proportion. They're not prophetic. They're not a fulfillment of Bible passages, telling people to watch for earthquakes to become more numerous and more catastrophic as the world approaches 'the return of Jesus Christ.' Don't be ridiculous, Joel. These quakes are just random acts of nature."

I hear you, but look at the facts.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, 19 of the 20 biggest earthquakes in human history have occurred since 1900.

In fact, the U.S. government says the world is now experiencing some 20,000 earthquakes a year, or about 55 a day.

Given increasing urbanization around the globe—the fact that more and more people are leaving the countryside, moving into big cities to find work, and thus becoming so concentrated in big cities—even less "intense" quakes can now do horrific damage.

Take the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, for example.

It "only" registered 7.0 on the Richter scale.

That's why it's not in the top five, top 10 or even the top 100 most intense earthquakes in history.

Yet it was the deadliest earthquake in nearly 500 years—and one of the deadliest in all of recorded history—killing more than 300,000 people.

Look, I know it's not popular to say this—but I have to say it—and you need to hear it.

We are seeing more earthquakes than ever before in human history, with greater frequency, horrific destruction and massive casualties.

## **YES, THE WORST IS YET TO COME**

Unfortunately, Bible prophecy tells us that far, far worse is coming.

One such prophecy is found in the Old Testament, in the book of Ezekiel.

The other is found in the New Testament, in the book of Revelation.

Let's start with Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, where the Hebrew prophet describes an eschatological conflict known as the "War of Gog and Magog."

Ezekiel explains that in the "last days," an evil dictator will rise to power in a region known in Bible times as "Magog" and today known as the Russian Federation.

This dictator forms a military and political alliance with Persia, the country we know today as Iran.

Together, they recruit Turkey, Libya, Sudan and a range of other countries into their alliance.

Then, they order their military forces to surround, invade and conquer the prophetically revived and reborn State of Israel.

And yet, the Hebrew prophet Ezekiel—writing more than 2,500 years ago—does not describe the Israeli military defending the Jewish people.

Nor does Ezekiel describe other countries coming to Israel's defense.

Instead, just as Israel is about to be swallowed whole by this Russian-Iranian alliance, Ezekiel tells us that the God of

Israel moves supernaturally to judge and destroy Israel's enemies, with the whole world watching.

Ezekiel 38:18-20 indicates that "on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," the Lord God says, "My fury will mount up in My anger. In My zeal and in My blazing wrath, I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence."

The earthquake's epicenter will be in Israel, but its shock waves will be felt around the world, and that's just the beginning of the judgment.

"I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord God in Ezekiel 38:21. "Every man's sword will be against his brother."

In other words, in the ensuing chaos, the enemy forces will begin fighting each other.

Then, in verse 22, God says: "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him"—that is, against the Russian dictator known as Gog. "And I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone."

When it's all over, Ezekiel tells us the devastation is so catastrophic that it will take seven months to bury all the bodies—and that it would take longer but "the birds of the air and the beasts of the field" will eat most of the bodies of the enemies.

It's a grim scene—and the most dramatic judgment of God upon mankind since the days of the exodus out of Egypt when the 10 plagues fell upon the Pharaoh and his people.

Now, let's go back to the earthquake.

God tells Ezekiel that "the mountains...will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground" (Ezekiel 38:20)

Does that mean that literally every wall on the planet will fall?

Or just that every wall in Israel and the Middle East will fall?

Does the prophecy mean that literally every person on the planet will be physically shaken?

Or does it mean that the destruction will be so great throughout the Middle East that everyone on earth will be emotionally shaken by fear, higher gas and oil prices and by other less physical but no less powerful forces?

I'll let you chew on that and we'll discuss it further on a future show and a future column.

But at the very minimum, it's clear that a massive, devastating and apocalyptic earthquake is coming, far worse than anything the world has seen before.

And Israeli officials admit, they are woefully unprepared for future quakes.

## **WHAT DOES THE BOOK OF REVELATION SAY ABOUT FUTURE EARTHQUAKES?**

The final book of the Bible speaks of an earthquake even worse in the End Times.

The apostle John writes, "I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.

The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'" (Rev. 16:12-17).

In the same chapter, the apostle tells us that one out of every four people on the planet will die during this time of judgment, known as the "Great Tribulation."

If it happens in our lifetime, that would mean that upwards of 2 billion people will perish because they've repeatedly and callously rejected—and kept rejecting—God, His Word, His ways and His Messiah.

### **IS THERE ANY HOPE?**

These are sobering prophecies—we ignore them at our peril—but there is hope.

Let's start by asking two questions.

First, why does God send earthquakes?

Second, is there any hope?

The answers are interconnected.

God says through the Hebrew prophet Haggai, "For this is what the Lord of armies says: 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations'" (Hag. 2:6-7).

Then God speaks through the Hebrew prophet Amos, "For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among

all nations" (Amos 9:9).

God, in His mercy, vows to shake every nation. Why? To get people's attention, to persuade them to let go of every religion, philosophy or ideology other than faith in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to save them.

There are lots of examples in scripture, but here's one.

Remember what God did in the book of Acts?

"[A]bout midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!' And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the Word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household" (Acts 16:25-34).

This is one reason God sends earthquakes—to wake people up and draw them to Christ.

But there is a second reason: God also sends earthquakes to judge those who reject Him and stubbornly refuse to repent.

God told the prophet Isaiah, "Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity...Therefore, I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from

its place at the fury of the Lord of hosts in the day of His burning anger” (Isa. 13:11-13).

And Isaiah also wrote, “From the Lord of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, with whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire” (Isa. 29:6).

Judgment? Yes.

But also mercy.

This is why God sends earthquakes.

And the Scriptures are crystal clear—yes, there’s hope in this broken, chaotic world.

Every man, woman and child on earth has the opportunity right now to be adopted by God into His royal family, to have their sins forgiven and to spend eternity with God and with all believers.

As Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

But that hope is only available until we breathe our last breath on this earth—or until Christ actually comes back to judge the living and the dead.



So, as we experience one “birth pang” after another warning us that we are living in the “last days,” I encourage, today is the Day of Salvation.

Right now—not later—is the time to get right with God. {eoa}

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