

Hand of God? Earthquake Strikes Same Day as Expected Hezbollah Attack on Israel

Some see God's divine intervention in an earthquake that struck southern Syria and Lebanon on the very day an attack by Iran and Hezbollah against Israel was anticipated.

Israel has been bracing for an attack by Iran and its proxy Hezbollah ever since the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran on July 31.

"Although the strike on Haniyeh was widely assumed to have been carried out by Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government made no claim of responsibility and said it would make no comment on the killing," Reuters reported.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Israel to expect "harsh punishment."

Some have felt the delay in a response may have been because the Islamic State wanted to wait for the Tisha B'Av, or the 9th of Av on the Jewish lunar calendar, which began on Monday evening and continued until nightfall on Tuesday.

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However, the Associated Press reported that a 5.5 magnitude earthquake struck the city of Hama at 11:56 p.m. local time Monday night. The official Syria state news outlet said it was a 4.8 magnitude quake. Aftershocks continued into Tuesday morning.

"In Damascus and Beirut – the capital of neighboring Lebanon, where the earthquake was also felt—residents descended to the

streets fearing a stronger quake that would collapse buildings,” according to the AP.

Duvi Honig, CEO of the Jewish Chamber of Commerce, authored an opinion piece for the Jerusalem Post, titled, “Heaven Sent: Is Lebanon’s Earthquake a Testament to Divine Protection?”

“In our collective memory, Tisha B’Av has always been a solemn day, marked by the destruction of the First and Second Temples. This year, however, the day bore witness to what many of us view as a modern-day miracle—a testament to divine intervention that could not have come at a more crucial time,” he wrote.

Dallas Theological Seminary professor Mark Hitchcock, explained on his weekly podcast “Marking the End Times” on Aug. 15, that the 9th of Av, which usually falls in early August on the Gregorian solar calendar, is the date Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. and the second temple was demolished by the Romans in A.D. 70.

So God was showing that His hand was behind the destruction to send a message to the Jewish people He was punishing them for their disobedience, Hitchcock said.

Later in 1492, on the 9th of Av, the Spanish king expelled the Jews from his realm, a place where they had been flourishing for over a thousand years.

Honig wrote in the Post that the earthquake that struck Lebanon and Syria, where Hezbollah is based, flipped the script on what Tisha B’Av has traditionally commemorated.

“It may have served as an unanticipated yet divine act that thwarted a grave threat against the Jewish nation,” he argued.

“Hezbollah, an established proxy of Iran, had been preparing to launch an attack on Israel—a direct affront planned

deliberately for Tisha B'Av. Many of the group's underground tunnels, teeming with armaments, may have been reduced to rubble by an act of God to protect His children, which could effectively halt Hezbollah's nefarious plan before it could materialize," Honig wrote.

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"It is hard to perceive it as mere coincidence that the earth shook on the very day Hezbollah had intended to send Israel into mourning once more. With tunnels collapsing and their arsenals buried, what could have been a devastating assault turned into a day of bewildering relief and gratitude," he said.

Honig concluded, "Tisha B'Av, usually a day of sorrow and reflection, was transformed into a moment where we could see the hand of God in action, turning our potential despair into potential reassurance."

Hitchcock agreed saying the timing of the earthquake likely encouraged Israelis and gave Hezbollah pause.

He saw it as an example of God, who is often operating behind the scenes in a less obvious way, showing His hand more openly.

"One thing is sure in all of this: God is in control of the time table and the scope of any attack by Iran and Hezbollah against Israel," Hitchcock said.

The Bible teaches that Iran will be involved in a major end-times battle against Israel.

Persia (modern day Iran) is specifically named as a nation that will attack Israel in the battle of Gog and Magog, which will include a coalition of other countries thought to include

present-day Russia and Turkey, among others. Both countries have come into alignment with Tehran in recent years.

Hitchcock exhorted, "We have to remember that whatever happens in the Middle East and in fact whatever happens in our lives, God has the last word."

This article originally appeared on The Western Journal, and is reposted with permission.

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