

“A Whole Lot of Shakin’ Going On!”

In August, the Caribbean nation of Haiti, on the shared island of Hispaniola, suffered yet another major earthquake. The 7.2 magnitude temblor caused a death toll of over 2,100 and left thousands homeless, among a desperately poor populace that has already had decades of humanitarian crises and now a high rate of COVID-19 cases.

This latest natural tragedy means that our planet has had over 40 catastrophic earthquakes, with a measured magnitude of 6 or higher – in this year alone. This all seems to fit with the prophetic words of Jesus, warning of end-time calamities of “famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (Matt. 24:7, NKJV).

John the Revelator prophetically saw a future time when a “great earthquake” occurred, which also involved celestial calamities involving our sun, moon and stars (Rev. 6:12-14). Then we are told of major seismic activity causing “every mountain and island” to be “moved out of its place.”

Understanding the End-Times

I suggest we all better understand the biblical end-times by knowing more the ultimate purpose for these celestial light-givers. Moses revealed in Genesis 1:14-16 (MEV) that in our Creator’s design, the sun, moon and stars, were made for signs and seasons.

“And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs to indicate seasons, and days, and years. Let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth.’ And it was so. God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night.

He made the stars also.”

In the progression of the created days related in Genesis, we understand the days were distinguished by the continuing sequence of light and darkness. “God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day” (Gen. 1:5). Creative changes occurred for the next five sets of “evening” and “morning,” as God uniquely formed each subsequent and significant day and filled it with growing features and living creatures.

On the sixth day, God created man and woman, as the last and highest order of His creation (Gen. 1:26-31). “Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them were finished” (2:1) and on the seventh day, God rested – not because He was tired but because His work was complete. The days would continue to perform and perfect what He had initiated and set in motion. The seven days became a week, and the weeks became months and the months became years.

Later, God would prescribe annual events of remembrance and celebration to prompt mankind to look back to His creative work and to worship Him as Creator. The seventh day was blessed by Him and set apart or “sanctified” as a weekly day of worship and remembrance (Gen. 2:2-3). It was to be a weekly gift from our Creator for physical rest, emotional renewal and spiritual reflection.

The Sequence of Sevens

As life was lived out in this significant sequence of sevens, mankind was taught to measure seasons by watching the moon’s appearance in the sky. They would come to know, by revelation from God, when to plant and when to harvest. Each of these important events was to include special offerings to God, the Giver and Sustainer of life.

After the Law of Moses was given, these followers of Yahweh were instructed to count months by lunar observation and the

years by a God-given calendar of seven months. Each set of seven months was observed with special spiritual and social celebration, along with a day dedicated to spiritual repentance and renewal.

In 2021, these fall festival events were celebrated by our Jewish friends on September 7 and 8 (Rosh Hashanah – The Feast of Trumpets) and will be celebrated September 16 (Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement).

The years were to be counted in cycles of seven, with each seventh year dedicated to God and no work allowed! The first six years were to be used as preparation for the seventh. After seven sets of seven years (49 years), an additional year of seven months was to be added and observed as “sanctified” or set apart to God.

This 50th year (the Year of Jubilee) was to be a total reset of economic order (Lev. 25:8-38). All debt was to be abolished, indentured servants or slaves were to be set free and land ownership was to revert to the family of the original owners.

Failure to keep this intended “sequence of sevens” and these specific observances over a period of hundreds of years brought God’s disfavor and judgment on the Jewish people. He allowed the Northern kingdom of Israel to be taken captive in the eighth century B.C. and assimilated into the Assyrian culture and its future. Later, the Southern kingdom of Judah was forcefully exported to Babylon (Persia) in the sixth century B.C.

But after 70 years in Babylonian captivity (one year for each Year of Jubilee they had not kept), they began to be allowed to return to their homeland and to rebuild their temple, cities and culture.

Much of the Old Testament is dedicated to warnings and responses to this tragic and significant “shake-up” of God’s

“chosen people.”

Are You “All Shook Up”?

Not only are earthquakes or shakings mentioned surrounding Christ’s death (Matt. 27:51), His resurrection (Matt. 28:2) and His future return (Matt. 24:29), the Bible goes on to tell us that the “last days” will culminate in a cataclysmic event on a global scale. It describes this event in terms of a great, unprecedented and massive earthquake.

“And there were noises and thundering and lightning and a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake, as had never occurred since men were on the earth” (Rev. 16:18).

However, as Jesus told the disciples when they inquired about the end-times, “the end is not yet” (Matt. 24:6). The eschatological realities we read of are nothing we can control, other than the preparation of our own hearts, with repentance and readiness and a firm, predetermined commitment to keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 12: 11, 17).

Our personal lives may experience certain earthquake-like shake-ups as well. Your marriage may be falling apart or your job has been eliminated due to COVID-19 or you may have received a very discouraging diagnosis of a life-threatening condition. Things may seem to be shattering all around us.

If that is you, please know that our great and merciful God will be with us in the middle of our personal shakings! Not only will He walk with us through that ultimate end-times trial, should it occur in our lifetimes when the last trumpet sounds but also in the present tense as well. God has promised to never leave us nor to forsake us. Look to Him! {eoa}

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