



The
**PROPHETIC
CONDITIONS**
Series



EARTHQUAKES
and **VOLCANOES**
in Prophecy



ABOUT THE COVER

Earthquakes and volcanoes have become more frequent and intense, and this will continue. You need not be ignorant of why this is, and how God will use them for His purpose in the future.

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Why the PROPHETIC CONDITIONS Series?

Knowledge and technology are exploding, yet the world is drowning in a sea of problems! *Alcohol abuse* is on the rise. Vast regions of farmland are “dying of thirst” due to droughts and erratic *weather* patterns. The allure of *drugs* is fast seducing a younger generation that no longer knows how to be kids. *Crime* is more violent, more entrenched, more widespread than ever. *Immorality* is robbing families and youth of their innocence by “entertaining” sick, perverted, carnal desires. And the earth is choking in the *pollution* produced by humanity.

Why?

The *Prophetic Conditions Series* will report global trends and problems. It explains why humanity is deluged with such overwhelming—and insoluble—problems.

And points to mankind’s *only solution!*

Other prophetic conditions reports in the Series:

- *THE ALCOHOL EPIDEMIC*
- *The Tragedy of DRUG ABUSE*
- *What’s Wrong With THE WEATHER?*
- *The Worldwide CRIME WAVE*
- *This POLLUTED EARTH*
- *WITCHES, WIZARDS and SPIRITS: Grave and Growing Danger*
- *The IMMORALITY EXPLOSION!*
- *Out of the Ashes: THE RISE OF EUROPE*
- *A GENERATION OF PLEASURE SEEKERS*
- *THE EDUCATION CRISIS*
- *ABORTION – Woman’s Choice or Modern Holocaust?*
- *WHY THEY HATE US – Anti-Americanism on the Rise*
- *The New GAMBLING PLAGUE*
- *Assault on the FAMILY*

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EARTHQUAKES *and* VOLCANOES *in Prophecy*

Earthquakes and volcanic activity have become *regular* in the news. There is a reason! No longer can the earth be considered a rock-solid foundation to be taken for granted. Ominous danger lies within the earth's thin and fragile crust.

Throughout history, God has used earthquakes to serve His purpose. The Bible prophesies that the greatest period of earthquake activity in history lies just ahead. Here is why!

THE BIBLE speaks of “earthquakes in various places” at the end of the age. These are foretold for important reasons. You need to understand the causes behind earthquakes—and volcanoes. In fact, earthquakes and volcanoes will soon affect the security and stability of the whole world—including *your life*.

This report has been divided into three parts: (1) The Scientific Perspective, (2) How God Has Used Earthquakes, and (3) Great Earthquakes to Precede Christ's Return.

But first we must ask: Are earthquakes and volcanic activity on the rise—and if so, *why*? This is a subject of debate among scientists. Some assert that earthquakes are not increasing. J. Ramón Arrowsmith, a geologist, stated, “From our human perspective with our relatively short

and incomplete memories and better and better communications around the world, we hear about more earthquakes and it seems like they are more frequent...But this is probably not any indication of a global change in earthquake rate of significance” (*LiveScience*). Bob Holdsworth, an expert in tectonics, said that nothing strange is happening, declaring, “I can definitely tell you the world is not coming to an end” (*Associated Press*).

Other scientists say earthquakes *are* increasing. Stephen S. Gao, a geophysicist, stated, “relative to the 20-year period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, the Earth has been more active over the past 15 or so years...We still do not know the reason for this...” (*LiveScience*).

Which side is right? How can you *know*—and what does God say?

Jesus warned in Matthew 24 of signs that would precede His Return. The fifth trend He listed was that “there shall be...earthquakes, in diverse [various] places” (vs. 7). This says earthquakes would be scattered

here and there—but also means they would increase in both *frequency* and *intensity* as His Second Coming drew near (Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11).

Consider. Since earthquakes have existed throughout history, their mere *ongoing presence* could not indicate the time of the end. By all honest accounts, earthquakes are coming more often, and are more severe—and this *will* worsen. As you read, you will be left to believe scientists or God.

PART 1: THE SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

Scientists now better understand what makes up the earth's core, mantle, and crust. They have also learned of the mind-defying forces in dynamic motion at or near the earth's surface. Understanding the earth's interior has helped us to better understand earthquakes. These forces are unpredictable and carry the potential for enormous destruction.

The distance from the center of the earth—the core—to the surface is approximately 4,000 miles. The core

consists of superheated dense metallic compounds. The inner core is believed to be solid. The outer core is molten. Beyond the outer core lies the mantle, which is 1,800 miles thick and consists of semi-molten and semi-solid rock. Because of the soft consistency of the mantle, some refer to it as the “hot plastic layer” upon which the tectonic plates float.

Tectonic plates are the large semi-rigid slabs that form most of the earth’s crust. These plates may be thousands of miles wide, but only 3 to 45 miles thick. Consider this analogy: If the earth were the size of an apple, the thickness of the crust would be less than the thickness of the apple’s skin.

Tectonic plates also make up the earth’s surface. The visible surfaces of these plates are the landmasses known as continents. For most continents, such as Africa and the Americas, the boundary of the plate upon which they rest coincides with their own boundary or shoreline. At the edge of a tectonic plate, where it borders another plate, is an area of geologic activity. A visible fault line that gives evidence of the past geologic turbulence identifies these boundaries.

Africa is bordered by a fault system that travels along the Red Sea and Suez Canal in the northeast. This fault system continues within the main continental plate in eastern Africa. The western border of the African plate is located in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and is called the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. This ridge also marks the border of the South American plate to the west of the African plate. The ridge extends on to the North Pole, dividing the North American and the Eurasian plates, as well.

The Mid-Atlantic Ridge has formed because, as the plates separate, mol-

ten magma pushes up to the surface and “repairs the breach.” (This is one example of how the earth is self-sustaining.) The entire Mid-Atlantic Ridge extends 12,000 miles, from Antarctica to the North Pole.

When the movement of tectonic plates becomes restrained by irregular surfaces or friction, energy is stored, as the masses try to continue moving.

Earthquakes occur when this tension exceeds the strength of resistant rock masses at the edge of the affected plates. Some plates may move only an inch or so in a given year. Periods of *no* movement are interpreted as danger signals. When impeding formations block further movement, energy is being stored up for a powerful quake.

A worldwide network of seismographs (instruments that detect tremors) detects about a million small earthquakes per year. According to records since 1900, the U.S. Geological Survey expects about 18 major earthquakes (7.0-7.9-magnitude) and one great earthquake (8.0 or higher) every year. Moderate earthquakes, such as the January 1994 quake of Northridge, California, that registered 6.8 on the Richter scale, and the 1995 quake in Kobe, Japan, that registered 6.9, occur about 20 times per year.

In the past 500 years, quakes of every size have claimed several mil-

lion lives worldwide. The danger is now greater than ever, since the population has dramatically increased during the last two centuries. In addition, some of the world’s most earthquake-prone regions have become the most densely populated.

Beyond death and destruction, earthquakes invite famine and disease, with displaced people forced to go without food and sanitation. And this says nothing about the incredible economic hardship caused by earthquakes, including joblessness—but costing from millions to billions of dollars in damage overall.

The Pacific Rim has long been the most volatile region for earthquakes. It accounts for 90% of the world’s earthquakes. Several thousand small to moderate quakes occur each year around the west coasts of North and South America, at the eastern flank of the Pacific Rim. Southeastern Asian countries and many island nations in the region are also experiencing heightened seismic activity. Each year, Japan alone is shaken by more than 1,500 seismic occurrences (*The World Factbook*).

The formation of the Andes Mountain range in South America has resulted from the ocean plate wedging beneath the continental plate and pushing the continental plate upward, forming

the higher elevations. Catastrophic volcanoes formed some of the mountain formations of this range, adding more landmass. By contrast, the trough beyond the shoreline is one of the deepest in the world (4,400 feet), due to the sunken Pacific plate!

Volatile Earthquakes

In Chile, high in the Andes, a terrible series of earthquakes began on May 21, 1960. The following day, a quake registered

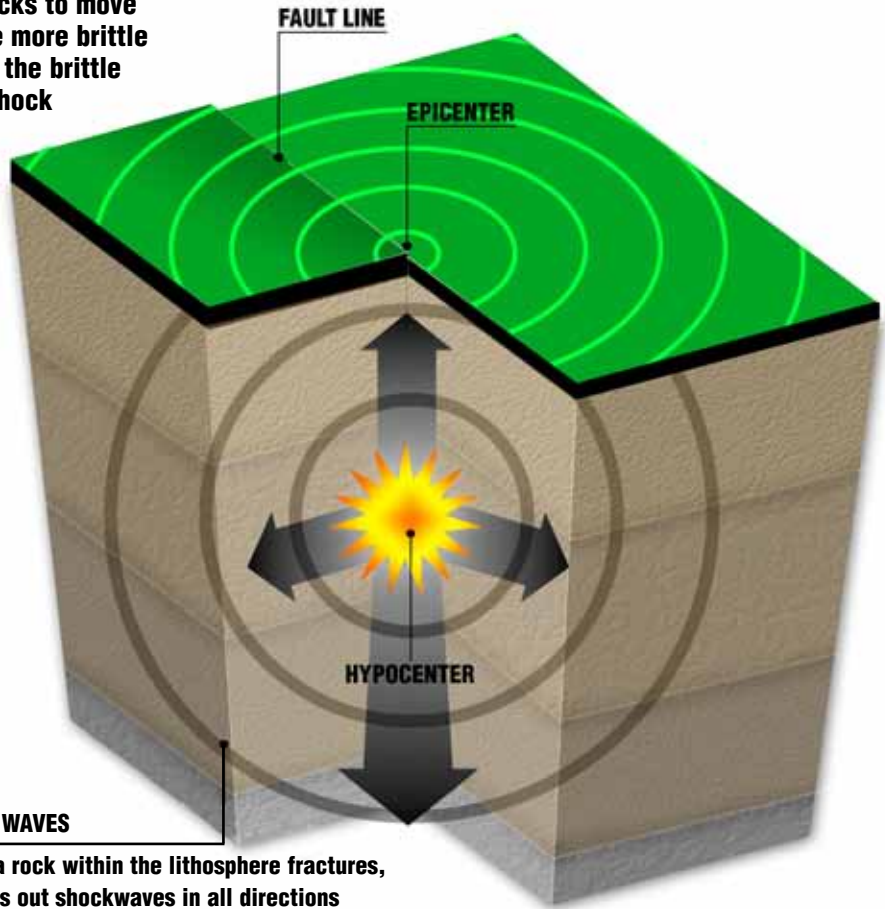
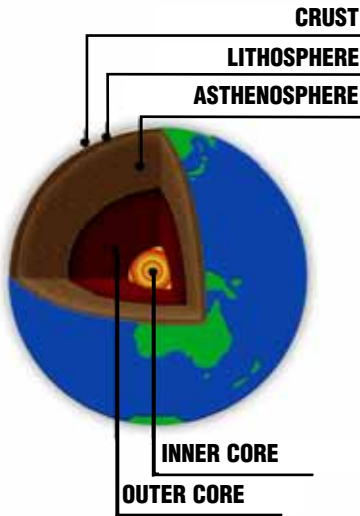


■ 1989 LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE: Los Gatos, Calif.

PHOTO: U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BEHIND EARTHQUAKES

Earthquakes occur because, within the earth's asthenosphere, stress causes the semiplastic rocks to move very slowly. This builds up strain within the more brittle rocks of the lithosphere above. Eventually, the brittle rocks break and the stress is released as shock waves. Earthquakes can take place at the depths of 450 miles (720 km). Those that have effects on the surface usually occur no deeper than 45 miles (70 km).

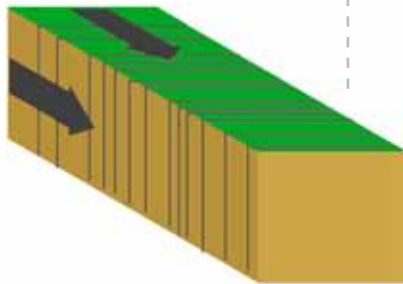


SHOCK WAVES

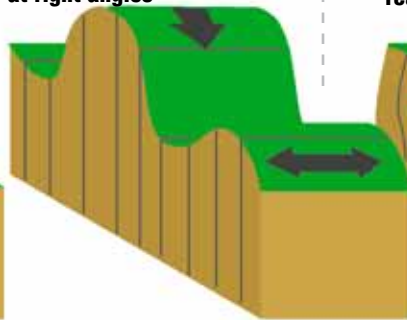
When a rock within the lithosphere fractures, it sends out shockwaves in all directions

Three types of shock waves:

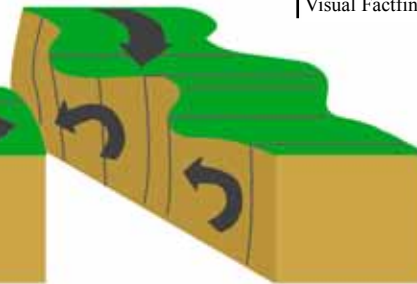
Primary (P) waves:
Waves compress and expand rock, causing back and forth movement in the same direction as the waves



Secondary (S) waves:
Waves cause rock to shake back and forth at right angles

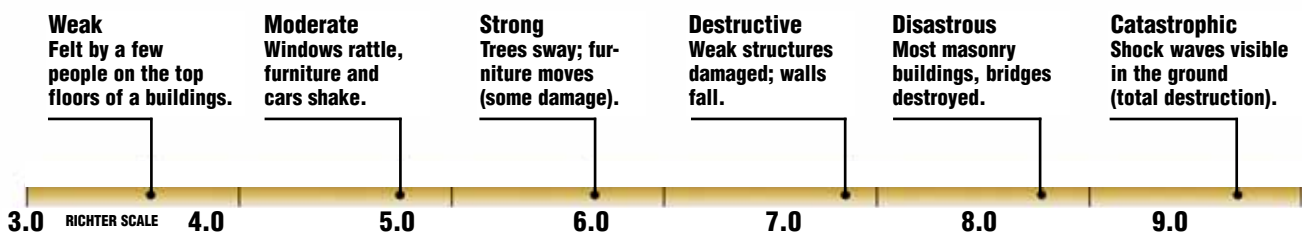


Surface waves:
Involves rolling motion causing two kinds of waves that reach the surface



Source: The Kingfisher Visual Factfinder, KRT

Measuring the intensity of an earthquake:



9.5 on the *moment magnitude scale* (explained later)—the highest reading ever recorded.

The rippling effects of these earthquakes were enormous. New volcanoes and several older volcanoes were suddenly activated. Islands disappeared off the coast. A 25-mile strip of the coastal mountains (about two to three miles wide) suddenly dropped *1,000 feet*, finally wedging between two giant plates, now partially submerged in the Pacific Ocean. The resulting casualties reached nearly 5,000, as several mountain and coastal villages were severely hit.

The earthquakes generated seismic waves that sped across the Pacific at about 500 miles per hour. In some areas, the waves 150 feet and taller reached the shorelines. The main tsunami (another term for seismic waves) traveled more than 10,000 miles, and proved to be destructive wherever it hit. A tsunami warning was given in time for the evacuation of some of Japan's shorelines, saving thousands of lives when the destructive waves hit 22 hours later. This was the first time a tsunami striking Southeast Asia had ever originated as far away as South America.

In 1771, the highest known tsunami-generated waves reached 260 feet in Japan.

In 1883, a 120-foot tsunami hit the islands of northwestern Indonesia. This

resulted from an explosive volcanic eruption that decimated the mountain-island of Krakatau, and erased all life from many small islands. More than 36,000 lives were taken in Sumatra and Java alone.

Another tsunami hit the Philippines in 1976, killing over 5,000 people. Like most tsunamis, it too was caused by an earthquake. Tsunamis were erroneously called tidal waves, but tidal forces do not cause them. As shown earlier they result from underwater earthquakes or from volcanoes.

The strongest earthquake recorded in North America was centered near Anchorage, Alaska, in March 1964. It registered 8.5 on the Richter scale and 9.2 on the moment scale. It caused approximately 12,000 square miles of land southeast of Anchorage to rise about 7.5 feet. About 35,000 square miles to the northwest *dropped* about 5 feet. The damage from this quake was enormous, yet only 131 died, since most damage occurred in sparsely populated areas.

In 1976, there was a tremendous loss of life from earthquakes. In Guatemala, 23,000 died and a million were left homeless. However, in China, the Tang Shan quake, near Peking, claimed an unbelievable 655,000 lives!

In 1974, another quake of similar proportions could have been as lethal, but local farmers recognized that a

normal well began yielding artesian water (water under sudden pressure). Past experience had revealed this as one of the indicators of an imminent quake. The local populace sounded the warning and an evacuation took place in Haich'eng, China, saving many thousands of lives (*Powers of Nature*, Tom Melham, 1978, p. 46).

Here are some examples of more recent devastating earthquakes: In May 2008, a 7.9-magnitude quake struck China, killing 69,000 people. In January 2010, an earthquake in Haiti destroyed much of the capital and killed about 230,000 people. There was also the immense and destructive 8.8-magnitude Chilean quake in February of 2010—the 5th largest since 1900.

Devastating Tsunamis

The most devastating tsunami in history occurred on December 26, 2004. It was triggered in the early hours of Sunday morning, just after dawn, by an earthquake that registered 9.15 on the moment scale. The epicenter was on the ocean floor about 150 miles west of Sumatra. About 18 minutes later, the island's northwest coast was hit; more than 180,000 were left dead or missing. However, Sumatra's long span served to shield other Indonesian islands, the isthmus of Malaysia, and Singapore from imminent and cataclysmic disaster.

Primarily spreading toward the northern sectors of the Bay of Bengal, the tsunami dispersed east, north and west from the earthquake's epicenter, striking 12 countries. The closest estimate of the dead and missing has surpassed 250,000, making this one of the costliest natural disasters in modern history.

The western shores of Thailand were affected, where thousands of vacationers were visiting from around the world. Other countries affected included Myanmar (Burma), Bangladesh, the eastern shoreline of India and Sri Lanka, which suffered unprecedented devastation.

In many areas, a second seismic wave proved to be more destructive than the first. This second wave

FREQUENCY OF EARTHQUAKES SINCE 1900

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that several million earthquakes occur in the world each year. Many go undetected because they hit remote areas or have very small magnitudes. The NEIC* now locates about 50 earthquakes each day, or about 20,000 a year.

Types of quakes	Magnitude	Average Annually
Great	8.0 plus	1
Major	7-7.9	18
Strong	6-6.9	120
Moderate	5-5.9	800
Light	4-4.9	6,200 (estimated)
Minor	3-3.9	49,000 (estimated)
Very Minor	Less than 3.0	Magnitude 2 - 3: about 1,000 per day Magnitude 1 - 2: about 8,000 per day

SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey;
*National Earthquake Information Center

drowned thousands of injured and helpless victims who had narrowly managed to survive the first wave.

The total destruction along the seacoasts was almost unparalleled in history—and all resulting from an earthquake that caused the seafloor to lift, and displaced billions of tons of water. The PBS television program NOVA calculated that the resulting release of energy was equivalent to 23,000 Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs (“Wave that Shook the World”)! And the earthquake that triggered this tsunami was the second most powerful quake ever recorded by seismograph.

Nearly a year later, on October 8, 2005, a major earthquake hit Pakistan. Its epicenter was in the Pakistan region of Kashmir, a disputed territory which also borders Xinjiang, Tibet and India. The quake registered 7.6 on the moment magnitude scale. By the end of 2005, the Pakistani government’s official death toll approached 90,000, with other estimates exceeding 100,000. Most of the affected areas were in mountainous regions, where access was impeded by landslides, which blocked roads. An estimated 3.3 million were left homeless, with relief efforts continuing for several months.

Measurement of Earthquakes

Dr. Charles Richter, seismologist at Cal Tech, first developed the Richter scale in 1935. While not a precise measure of earthquake energy, the Richter scale provides a rough comparison of earthquakes. The scale is open-ended in that very small earthquakes may register as minus numbers, and no maximum limit exists. So far, no earthquakes have registered above 9, although the 1960 Chilean quake came close.

The Richter scale is *logarithmic*. This means that, for each unit jump (such as from 6.0 to 7.0 on the scale), the seismic wave amplitude increases 10 times over, and the *energy* of the quake actually increases 30 times. This same comparison would apply from a 7.0 to an 8.0 on the scale—a 10-fold increase in seismic wave amplitude and a 30-fold increase in energy level. But, from 6.0 to 8.0 there would be a 100-



■ 1989 LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE: Cars are crushed in downtown San Francisco.
PHOTO: U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

fold increase in seismic amplitude and a 900-fold increase in energy level.

In a 1978 interview, Dr. Richter explained the scale, expressing his surprise that it worked as well as it did. He indicated that it was based on an assumption that could not possibly be true—that one could compare earthquakes merely by multiplying some arithmetical factor. He emphasized that every quake was unique and that two magnitude 6.5 tremors could release appreciably different amounts of energy (Ibid., p. 19).

Seismologists today generally use an improved and updated scale along with the Richter scale. The newer scale is called the *moment magnitude scale*. The moment magnitude is determined by the area of the fissure of the quake and the amount of displacement of the relative plates.

The moment magnitude of the 1906 San Francisco quake would be 7.6; the Alaskan quake of 1964 would be 9.2; the 1995 Kobe, Japan quake would be 7.0.

The three quakes listed would have registered on the Richter scale as 8.3, 8.5, and 6.9, respectively.

Often, publications differ with each other on the magnitude of the same earthquake. Sometimes these

contradictions derive from confusion as to which scale was used to report the quake.

Secondary Effects

Just as energy levels of earthquakes can vary, so can the after-effects. On May 31, 1970, a minor earthquake (about 4 or less on the Richter scale) in Peru triggered avalanches and mudflows. The mudflows buried the town of Yungay, killing over 18,000. The overall death toll in Peru from major quakes that struck that same day was 66,000.

The same was true for the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. As devastating as it was, more were killed in the resulting fires than by the quake itself. Since death and destruction can be an indirect result of a quake, neither the Richter scale nor the moment magnitude scale can factor in all the secondary destruction.

Another indirect effect of the 1906 quake (and most quakes) is that water-saturated sandy soil becomes like quicksand and foundations of homes and buildings give way, leading to the damage or collapse of many structures.

Earthquakes do not produce volcanoes. But in regions where volcanoes exist, they are indications of imminent

THE LINK BETWEEN EARTHQUAKES AND VOLCANOES

Earthquakes and volcanoes are related—both geologically and in Scripture. Their internal forces are shared and their effects are similar. When earthquakes are mentioned in prophecy, volcanoes are sometimes referenced. The devastation of both is beyond comparison to anything in nature.

A volcano is a crack, or vent, in the surface of the earth—the crust. Beneath the crack is a cavity. Over time, melted rock—magma—fills this area, called a magma chamber or reservoir, and causes pressure to build. The volcano, which may form over thousands of years or very suddenly, then becomes a path for magma to push its way to the surface. An eruption is the releasing of pressure.

Scientists believe that over 3,000 volcanoes have erupted in the last 50 years. There are around 50 to 70 active volcanoes in the world today, existing in various states of activity. Some are slowly spewing lava, while others are quietly building, or rebuilding, pressure. Actually, if a volcano is leaking lava slowly, it is considered “safe.” The danger arises when pressure builds enough for a large, violent eruption. Depending on the makeup of the volcano, eruptions vary from slow lava flows to massive explosions.

The 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens in the Western United States was an example of the latter type. It was one of the largest eruptions in modern times. The initial explosion that accompanied it changed the entire face of that mountain. The first explosion had the force of 24 megatons of thermal energy and flattened 230 square miles. Six-foot-thick trees as far as 15 miles

away were mowed down like grass!

Sometimes following the initial explosion, which can consist of steam, gas or magma, volcanoes spew what are called pyroclastic flows. Larger volcanoes, like Mount St. Helens, also experience pyroclastic surges. Both consist of hot ash, rock fragments and gas that can reach temperatures of 1500 degrees, and travel at an astonishing 150 miles per hour!

Surges carry more energy and are mostly rock fragments and super-heated gas. They move faster than flows, although both bring similar devastation.

St. Helens generated a series of pyroclastic flows that completely sterilized the soil for 6 square miles. Flows can continue for hours after the explosion.

Flows are generally followed by lahars. These are a combination of water, rock, sand and mud, which rushes down valleys leading away from volcanoes. Lahars move like rivers, and sometimes have enough force to uproot trees, tear houses from their foundations and rip bridges away from their supports. The lahar that followed the St. Helens eruption destroyed 27 bridges, 200 homes, 185 miles of roadway and 15 miles of railway.

Earthquakes also cause landslides. The one that followed the St. Helens eruption was the largest ever recorded. Some areas were buried in up to 600 feet of mud and debris!

The final fallout from an eruption is the ash cloud. A volcano can project ash over 12 miles above the opening in as little as 10 minutes. The ash cloud from St. Helens was deposited over 20,000 square miles. If the volcano is near a city, the



■ Sept. 30, 2001: Lava flow, Kilauea, Hawaii.

PHOTO: R. HOBLITT, U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, HAWAIIAN VOLCANO OBSERVATORY

weight of the ash particles is capable of collapsing buildings.

When factoring in all these after-effects, the danger and destruction that volcanoes can cause becomes evident. Today, scientific equipment can help predict them before they erupt. Obviously, this did not help the 57 who died at St. Helens, or the many thousands who died in historic eruptions like Pompeii and Krakatau.

Detection is done by checking the “heaving” of the land. This shows how much pressure is building in the magma chamber. An additional method is to record the frequency and intensity of earthquakes around the volcano. As the frequency increases, and earthquakes become centered on the volcano, conditions become ripe for an eruption.

This explains why earthquakes and volcanoes are so intrinsically linked. While the most powerful earthquakes are not the result of a volcano, all volcanic eruptions cause a series of smaller earthquakes.

In the case of St. Helens, a large earthquake triggered an already sensitive volcano to erupt. This is the danger in many volcano-sensitive areas throughout the world. Volcanoes sit silently building pressure until a nearby major earthquake becomes the catalyst for an eruption.

Another common type of volcano is located underwater. The floor of

the ocean is littered with this type of volcano. The Hawaiian Islands are a direct result of underwater eruptions. Tsunamis pose the greatest with these, and can move at speeds of up to 500 miles per hour.

As covered in this report, though tsunamis are commonly referred to as tidal waves, they are somewhat different. Volcanoes can also create these devastating waves. They usually result from underwater mudslides that follow the eruption.

One of the most devastating tsunamis in history was in 2004 in Indonesia. Caused by an earthquake, almost 300,000 people perished.

Following the eruption of the Indonesian volcano Tambora in 1815, many normally temperate areas experienced snow every month for a year, resulting in poor crop yields in places as far away as New England. It is thought that Tambora brought the Irish Potato Famine.

The 1883 explosion of Krakatau, also in Indonesia, was heard in Perth, Australia over 2,000 miles away! The eruption spewed ash 50 miles high, with the dust cloud repeatedly circling the Earth. The surrounding region experienced darkness for over two days.

Like many volcanoes, Krakatau is located in a region known as the “Ring of Fire.” The largest eruptions in history have occurred here. The

Ring of Fire consists of the western coasts of North and South America, the eastern coast of Asia and the islands of Southeast Asia.

Another volcano in this region, Mt. Pinatubo, erupted in June 1991. It displaced millions of Filipinos and devastated much farmland. The ash cloud from just this eruption lowered the average world temperature by almost two degrees Fahrenheit!

While these eruptions were large, there exists another volcano in North America that is relatively unknown. It is quietly building immense pressure and is waiting for the moment—or an earthquake—that will cause it to erupt. Yellowstone National Park’s scientists have said this volcano has the destructive power to make St. Helens “look like a sneeze.”

An awesome volcanic eruption in Iceland occurred in March 2010. It caused tremendous floods, but also brought fears that it would trigger a *second* volcano nearby to erupt, which would lead to catastrophic global climate changes.

As this age comes to a close, we will see more powerful earthquakes. They will awaken giant volcanoes like the one in Yellowstone. These will be the largest eruptions of all time. But earthquakes and volcanoes will not just alter the face of single mountains, they will actually alter the face of the whole earth. □





■ 1989 LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE: Bicycles are crushed by falling unreinforced brick facade, Santa Cruz, Calif.

PHOTO: U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

volcanic activity. Volcanic eruptions *can* cause earthquakes. As the fluid magma rises to the surface in a volcano eruption, the magma fractures rock masses and causes continuous tremors for hours or days at a time. Volcano-induced quakes were responsible for the disappearance of the massive face of Mount St. Helen in the 1980 eruption.

When touring Japan to learn of earthquake preparation techniques employed by the Japanese, a writer for *National Geographic* magazine gave an account of his experience in an earthquake simulator.

The simulator would begin with low to moderate tremors. In demonstrating more intense tremors, the motion would be vertical *and* lateral. At the most intense setting, not only was the writer unable to stand, he was

immediately thrown against the wall. (Emergency personnel have traditionally warned about flying glass fragments during an earthquake—another reason to take refuge under desks and strong tables away from windows and mirrors.)

As the writer emerged from the simulator, he was informed that he had failed the experiment. He failed to turn off the stove in the simulator and quickly grab the fire extinguisher, as instructed to do while he could still stand. He was told that, in a real earthquake, that mistake could have cost him his life in a blazing inferno (Ibid., p. 37).

The Tokyo quake of 1923 (8.3 on the Richter scale) shows the destructiveness of fire during an earthquake. This quake ripped through the city just as thousands of stoves were being lit

to prepare the noon meal. Many of the wooden buildings collapsed at once.

Strong winds mushroomed the uncontrolled fires that swept through the city for nearly two days. Some 40,000 victims crowded into a vacant 17-acre lot, finding themselves trapped between Tokyo's Sumida River and the advancing wall of fire. About 38,000 drowned or were burned there; another 20,000 died throughout Tokyo; 41,000 more died in Yokohama and other Japanese cities (Ibid.).

The Coming Quake

The San Andreas fault line extends from the gulf of Baja California, across much of southern and central California, where it again follows the coastline. This fault line is the boundary of the huge Pacific and North American plates. Much detailed study

of this fault system by geologists and seismologists has contributed greatly to understanding earthquakes.

Scientists can study the geologic history of such fault lines and determine the normal rate of slippage between tectonic plates and establish somewhat of a behavior pattern across hundreds of years. They can determine when a quake is due in a given area by the lack of recent slippage of the plates.

Scientists can identify *seismic gaps*, which are areas of the fault line that sustain the greatest strain. Scientists pay close attention to precursors like *seismic silence*—an absence of slippage. They also examine any recent absence of a major quake within a past span, where major quakes had historically followed a regular pattern.

Such key precursors help scientists predict (with reasonable accuracy) the probability of a quake in a specific region. However, unlike weather forecasting, no specific date can be given—only the probability within a broad time frame of a decade or so.

Much research and time has been invested in the study of known and unknown precursors of earthquakes, but without consistent results. Yet, the inevitability of a major earthquake with massive destruction in populated areas of California is not science fiction, but a *scientific fact*. The idea that most of the southern California coastline could disappear into the ocean is more fiction than fact. But the probability of a *major* destructive earthquake along the San Andreas fault in the near future is extremely high!

The moderate earthquake of October 17, 1989, in the San Francisco Bay Area (causing the partial collapse of the upper deck of the massive Oakland Bay Bridge), registered 7.1 on the Richter scale. Suppose this quake had been 8.1—10 times the seismic amplitude and 30 times the energy—how much more destruction would have occurred? Would the death toll have been 10 times the 61 that actually perished in this quake? Or would it have been 100 times, or perhaps 1,000 times? The projected statistics of a

major quake in population centers are not pleasant to contemplate.

The quake of January 17, 1994, was another “moderate” quake, with the epicenter in Northridge, just north of Los Angeles. The freeway bridges and overpasses—built according to some of the highest standards in the world—buckled like toys. Here, the death toll was also relatively low—only 62—resulting mainly from collapsed apartment dwellings.

This quake registered 6.8 on the Richter scale. Suppose this quake had resulted from a 200-mile fissure in the San Andreas fault shifting more than thirty feet, producing a Richter magnitude of 8.8. That would be 100 times the seismic amplitude of the Northridge quake and 900 times the energy. This does not consider the area affected by the shock, which would be many hundreds of times greater! This type of quake may occur in the near future.

The Coming Quake: Science and Trembling on the California Earthquake Frontier, written by T.A. Heppenheimer, is not science fiction. Rather, Dr. Heppenheimer projects what could result if a major quake caused the fault line directly beneath downtown Los Angeles to break open. He estimates that 33,000 of the 700,000 buildings in the city would be destroyed. Another 22,000 would need major repair.

Concerning the impact of a future major quake upon metro Los Angeles, he writes, “While damage to homes will rank as the most serious threat to personal safety, the general collapse of the freeway system will stand as the next major problem.” The collapse of bridges and overpasses of the freeways, as well as railroads will complete “the near-isolation of Los Angeles [from] the rest of the country” (pp. 197-198, 200). Heppenheimer stresses, “Water systems will present overwhelming problems. These may take the most deadly form imaginable: the failure of a major dam...If you drive north on Interstate 5...an immense flat-topped embankment of earth can be seen...This is Castaic Dam. It holds

350,000 acre-feet of water, enough to flood fifty square miles to a depth of ten feet...Now proceed farther along I-5...to...Pyramid Dam, nearly four hundred feet tall...179,000 acre-feet of water...And still farther back in the hills...Bouquet Canyon, the site of another major dam...” (pp. 200-201).

“Across vast areas, then, people will be left without lights. There will be no radio or television, except for battery-operated portables. There will be cold, as well as dark; most home-heating systems rely on electricity... Refrigerators will be out as well as kitchen ranges...And on top of all these hardships, there will be major fire hazards” (p. 205).

Heppenheimer then summarizes the disaster: “The Big One, in short, will overwhelm existing abilities to cope with disaster. There will be not one, but a combination of large-scale losses, any of which by itself could cripple the region: breakdown of the freeways, blockage of the railroads, overload of the phone system, widespread damage to the sewer system, disruption of the water supply, severe shortages of electric power, and substantial fire hazards from petroleum and natural-gas pipelines. All these together will strain the region’s emergency services well beyond the point of breakdown. It will be several days, at least, before the main aftershocks cease to rumble, the freeways are cleared, and a semblance of power is restored, and the people who need help can begin to see the assurance that it is at hand” (p. 206).

All the while, as California awaits the “Big One,” earthquakes continue to occur around the world in various places. Some take a heavy toll, like the one in western Turkey in August 1999, which claimed over 17,000 lives, or the one in India in January 2001, which killed about 20,000.

For an extensive listing of some of the major earthquakes of recent years, you may wish to consult *The World Almanac 2002*. Also, websites such as the one sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey (earthquake.usgs.gov) provide much information about earthquakes, including the most recent

quakes of the last 30 days—world-wide.

PART 2: HOW GOD HAS USED EARTHQUAKES

God has used earthquakes in more ways than realized. His Word shows that He uses earthquakes to:

- (1) Reveal His presence.
- (2) Show His deliverance.
- (3) Show His wrath.
- (4) Indicate His unfolding Plan.
- (5) Announce Christ's Return.
- (6) Accompany prophetic events.
- (7) Reshape the earth's surface.

Earthquakes Resulting From God's Presence

The Bible reveals that the presence of God can cause the earth to tremble. He uses such upheaval to send a powerful message: "Tremble, you earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob" (Psa. 114:7).

Not only can the earth tremble and quake at God's presence, but volcanoes erupt as well: "The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt [lava-producing volcanoes]..." (Nah. 1:5). On this same theme: "He looks on the earth, and it trembles: He touches the hills, and they smoke" (104:32).

God can and does manifest Himself in other ways, according to the needs

of a given situation. The account of Elijah reveals that God's presence need not always be accompanied by earthquakes or other physical events, but can be manifested in a "*still, small voice*" (I Kgs. 19:9-18).

There was also a thunderous trembling when God gave the Ten Commandments: "And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off" (Ex. 20:18).

Verse 20 focuses on the key reason: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that *His fear may be before your faces*, that you sin not."

Exodus 19:18 shows what had happened: "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, *and the whole mount quaked greatly.*" God's presence generated an earthquake and likely volcanic activity! He used His power over the elements to get Israel's undivided attention.

Moses' response indicated that the message came through, loud and clear: "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. 12:21). If Moses, who

had communed with God, responded this way, imagine the response of the others—especially wide-eyed children.

Accompanying God's Deliverance

In I Samuel 14:15, God was moved by the faith and courage of Jonathan and his armor-bearer and wrought a mighty deliverance: "And there was *trembling* in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth *quaked*: so it was a *very great trembling.*"

God intervened due to Jonathan's daring courage: "...it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few" (vs. 6). After sending the earthquake, which terrorized the Philistines, God caused the enemy to turn on each other, resulting in the deaths of thousands. The survivors fled.

Another earthquake, in Numbers 16:32, involved 250 Israelite leaders under Korah who rebelled against Moses. The result?: "And the Earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up [with their wives and children]..." Again, thousands died.

Other accounts of earthquakes accompanying God's deliverance occurred shortly after the beginning of the New Testament Church, in A.D. 31. The first account is Acts 4:29-31: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Your servants, that with all boldness they may speak Your Word, by stretching forth Your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Your holy Child [Servant] Jesus. And when they had prayed, *the place was shaken where they were assembled together*; and they were all filled with the Holy [Spirit], and they spoke the Word of God with boldness." The quake showed that He had heard and answered their prayer.

Another earthquake occurred when the apostle Paul was accompanied by Silas in the city of Philippi in Asia Minor. They had been illegally beaten and imprisoned. But God delivered them: "And suddenly there was a *great earthquake*, so that the foundations of



■ 1906 SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE
PHOTO: MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

the prison were *shaken*: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed" (Acts 16:26).

This miracle also resulted in the conversion of the prison keeper and his family.

A Result of God's Wrath

Psalm 18:7 briefly reveals this aspect of God's use of earthquakes: "Then the earth *shook* and *trembled*; the foundations also of the hills *moved* and were *shaken*, because *He was wrath*."

Also notice: "But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King: *at His wrath* the earth shall *tremble*, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation" (Jer. 10:10).

Many earthquakes prophesied for the end-time will carry this message. These involve, primarily, the major earthquakes listed in the book of Revelation. They will convey God's wrath to a world that refuses to heed His warnings and correction.

Earthquakes at Past Events in God's Plan

Earthquakes have also accompanied events in God's unfolding Plan. While theologians usually dismiss such miracles in Scripture, earthquakes have accompanied great events, such as Jesus' crucifixion: "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did *quake*, and the *rocks rent*" (Matt. 27:51).

Next is the result of this earthquake: "Now when 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" (vs. 54).

Another "great earthquake" accompanied Christ's resurrection, three full days later: "And, 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" (Matt. 28:2).

Certainly the earthquakes showed the utmost importance of Christ's death and resurrection.

Recall that an earthquake accompanied the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19:18). God's giving His Law to Israel was definitely a critical juncture in His Plan.

PART 3: GREAT EARTHQUAKES TO PRECEDE CHRIST'S RETURN

We have seen that God often uses earthquakes in the fulfillment of His Plan. The Bible prophesies that great earthquakes will soon strike earth for a great reason.

For 6,000 years, since the Garden of Eden, a rebellious humanity has rejected the Creator's instruction. He has patiently allowed this for His own great purpose. However, this is about to change. God will soon involve Himself in the affairs of this world in a way that He has *never* done before. Earthquakes will play a significant role in what is coming.

First, a probably smaller earthquake is referenced in Revelation 12, and involves the miraculous escape of God's Church to a Place of Safety as the Great Tribulation begins. An army pursuing the Church is destroyed. This passage carries similar wording to Numbers 16: "And the earth helped the woman [God's Church], and... opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood [obviously an army—similar to the Egyptian army pursuing Israel until the Red Sea swallowed it] which the dragon [the devil] cast out of his mouth" (Rev. 12:16).

The book of Revelation prophesies FIVE specific powerful earthquakes preceding and surrounding Christ's Return. There is strong indication that each of these earthquakes is unique, and that each occurs at a particular juncture of God's final prophetic timeline.

Revelation 6:12

This earthquake occurs after the Fifth Seal, upon the opening of the Sixth Seal. The terrible time of the Fifth Seal involves the military invasion and the captivity of the peoples of modern Israel. This includes the two and a half years of unparalleled suffering and tribulation—the worst time of suffering in all of history, to be brought upon

this generation. (Our book *America and Britain in Prophecy* explains the identity of these modern descendants of Israel, and much more about them.)

By its very timing and context, this earthquake proclaims the *end of the tribulation* and the *beginning of signs that appear in the heavens*.

Revelation 6:12 states, "And I beheld when He had opened the Sixth Seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood."

This event is also covered in Matthew 24:29: "Immediately *after the tribulation* of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be *shaken*."

Luke 21:25-26 describes this same event: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the *sea and the waves roaring* [including tsunamis]; *men's hearts failing them for fear*, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be *shaken*."

Yet the context of Revelation 6 reveals more about this earthquake: "*and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places*" (vs. 14).

This earthquake will be worldwide in scope. But all the topographical features of the earth will not necessarily be totally changed by one single, final earthquake. The process of altering the earth's surface appears to take place in stages. God could bring it about in such a way as to preserve life on the earth, with each of these five final earthquakes contributing to some aspect of this geological transformation.

If all the necessary topographical changes were a result of one final cataclysmic earthquake, it could threaten all life on Earth. Actually, only a tenth of humanity will survive into the Millennium, to begin the new civilization based on God's government.

Again, this earthquake announces the SIXTH SEAL—the *heavenly signs*. Though frightening, this seal quickly

passes, as people take this as an ominous sign of things *yet to come*.

Notice Isaiah's description of this time: "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty, *when He arises to shake terribly the earth*" (2:20-21). The above verses parallel Revelation 6:15-16. Physical possessions will be of no use to anyone not truly serving God.

Finally, notice Revelation 6:17, in which the people lament, "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Here the people terribly fear facing the One whom they have openly disobeyed. They dread facing His impending full wrath.

Revelation 8:5

As the SEVENTH SEAL is opened, seven angels stand before God and receive seven trumpets. Another angel took a censer "...and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an *earthquake*."

This earthquake represents the beginning of the *seven trumpet plagues*. This means the beginning of the fulfillment of the Seventh Seal and *the beginning of the Day of the Lord*.

Certain scriptures speak of the solemn gravity and horror of this time: "Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a *destruction* from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel 1:15).

Joel 2:31 shows the precise timing of this event: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, *before* the great and the terrible Day of the LORD come." This matches the sequence in Revelation, as the heavenly signs immediately precede the Day of the Lord—the Day of God's Wrath.

Revelation 11:13

This particular earthquake occurs after the *two witnesses* are resurrected. The timing of this earthquake is prior to

the time of the seventh trumpet—the Return of Christ, and the First Resurrection (I Cor. 15:51; I Thes. 4:16).

Notice Revelation 11:12-13: "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them [the two witnesses], Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a *great earthquake*, and the tenth part of the city [Jerusalem] fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

This earthquake appears to be centered mainly in the area of Jerusalem, but could still be worldwide in scope. It cannot be the same one described in Zechariah 14:4, because all nations will not yet have gathered for the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty (the time of the last plague, or sixth vial of wrath – Rev. 16:12-15).

This particular earthquake precedes and announces the pivotal event in mankind's history—Jesus Christ's Return.

Revelation 11:19

This earthquake occurs *after* the seventh trumpet has sounded (Rev. 11:15). This is the time of the Return of Christ, as expressed in the latter part of verse 15: "...and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and *He shall reign for ever and ever*."

Verse 19 states, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an *earthquake*, and great hail." This earthquake occurs immediately after the Return of Christ and the First Resurrection—it marks the fulfillment of these events.

Christ's Return brings the First Resurrection and makes every following event possible. Earthquakes before and after this event underscore its momentous importance in God's Plan. No other event bears such distinction.

This earthquake is also one that directly results from the *presence* of God. Jesus Christ will then be *present* on Earth as King—assuming rulership in glory over all nations.

At this event, the earth quakes with gladness, along with the whole creation: "Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the LORD; for He comes to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity" (Psa. 98:7-9).

Also read Romans 8:19: "For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." This event will fulfill the hope and expectations of the very creation—the Return of Christ along with all the other Sons of God in the First Resurrection.

Revelation 16:18

This is the final earthquake and will be the most powerful one ever to occur since man was created upon the earth. Verses 17-18 record, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 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."

This is the great earthquake in which the remaining topography of the earth is changed. Notice verse 20: "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

This earthquake appears to complete the process begun by the earthquake of Revelation 6:12-14, in which "every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

This is the same earthquake mentioned in Zechariah 14. It follows the time when all nations are gathered for battle at Armageddon, coinciding with the sixth vial of wrath of Revelation 16:12-15.

Zechariah 14:4 states, "And His [Christ's] feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is

before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”

Finally, verse 9 states, “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth...”

In summary of the earthquakes of Revelation listed above, note that voices, lightning, and thunder accompany the earthquake of Revelation 8:5 (at the beginning of the Day of the Lord), the earthquake of Revelation 11:19 (after the Return of Christ), and the final earthquake of Revelation 16:18 (at the end of the seven last plagues).

For audible voices to be heard in the midst of an earthquake, especially accompanied by lightning and thunder, they would have to be those of God’s mighty angels.

Notice Revelation 4:5: “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices...” A number of scriptures associate lightning with God’s throne in heaven.

God engraves these earthquakes with His “signature”—voices, lightnings, and thunder.

The prophets also spoke about the earthquakes of Revelation, especially the final, great one preceding Christ’s Return.

■ Isaiah 13:13: “Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger.”

■ Isaiah 24:19-20: “The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.”

■ Ezekiel 38:20: “...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, and every wall shall fall to the ground.”

■ Joel 3:16: “The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”

■ Haggai 2:6-7: “For thus says the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations [Jesus Christ] shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.”

Earthquakes Used to Reshape the Surface of the Earth

Extending beyond the immediate purpose of these five earthquakes of Revelation, they will also serve to reshape the earth’s surface. The God of all power, who formed the hills and mountains, will *reform* them and *reshape* the surface of this earth (Amos 4:13; Psa. 90:2).

Notice Isaiah 40:4-5: “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.”

These verses speak of dramatic changes in the earth’s surface. Vast mountain ranges will no longer exist. Any remaining mountains and hills will be used for a special purpose as God has appointed.

The highest “mountain” during the time of the millennium may be mentioned in Isaiah 2:2: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be *established in the top of the mountains*, and shall be *exalted above the hills*; and *all nations shall flow unto it*.”

Of course, this is symbolic, because it speaks of nations. This refers to Zion, the mountain and location of the temple from where Christ will reign.

Notice Ezekiel 40:2, which also refers to this mountain of the future: “In the visions of God brought He

me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a *very high mountain*...”

The scripture continues to give detailed descriptions of the temple of the Lord, which will be located upon this mountain.

The renewal of the surface of the earth will accommodate the vast number of human beings who will exist by the later stages of Christ’s Millennial rule and also the many billions who will come up later in the general resurrection—the White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11). A much larger population is possible once more usable land becomes available for farming and living.

Not only will mountain ranges be removed, more land will be reclaimed from the deserts and oceans. These changes in the topography of the earth will accommodate a change in the weather. It will become favorable, replacing the harsh, threatening, destructive weather patterns felt throughout history.

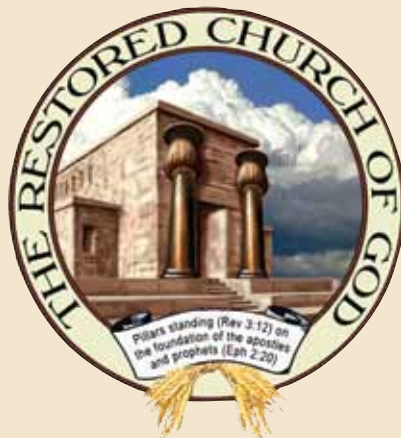
Without droughts and floods, and without the terrible extremes of temperature, precipitation and destruction from other elements in nature, farming will be more productive. Even the waters of the oceans will be healed and purified (Ezek. 47:8-10).

Earthquakes have been instrumental in serving God’s purpose in a number of ways. Indeed there is a purpose for every aspect of God’s creation: “To every thing there is a season, and a *time to every purpose* under the heaven” (Ecc. 3:1).

The good news beyond the depressing trends and statistics of this present world will eventually eclipse the human tragedies that occur in this age. Earthquakes will play a role in this transition that ends in peace, security and fulfillment for the survivors.

As frightening and destructive as they are, God will use earthquakes to reshape the earth’s surface, in preparation for the greatest time of peace and abundance that mankind has ever known.

While the world knows nothing of it, an incredible age of peace and abundance is coming soon! □



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