

Christchurch Earthquake - how should we respond?

The incredible event of the Christchurch earthquake has left New Zealanders in shock. When we see the images and hear the stories on TV over this past week it's almost inconceivable.

Then to see the amazing outpouring of caring people arising to console and help is overwhelming.

Apart from all that compassion, goodwill and the heroes who have risen to the moment, how are we to respond to such a tragedy? It is not a time for judgmental cliques, saying that it happened because of the wickedness of that city, or it's the result of the Wizards spells etc., but it is a time for reflection. I was pleased that our Prime Minister announced a time for national silence to pray and reflect. There has been and will be many voices following this event, but silent reflection has great value. The Biblical Psalms records the word "Selah" 72 times. The word is not easy to define, however, most commentators agree that it means a time to pause and consider. After every statement and event the Psalmist is saying "pause and consider" - SELAH!

We may never have an answer to our "why"; in that amazing Biblical book of Job, he never got an answer to his heart rendering questions, but God did draw near, showed His presence and spoke, Job responded -- Job 42:5 *"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You."*

Was God the author of this earthquake? Was it, as is often said, an act of God?

Reflecting in the Word of God, the Bible, on this should help us to get a God centred view of this question.

There was one time in 1 Kings 19: 11 where the Bible says, "..... but the Lord was not in the earthquake." This was a time when the Lord wanted to speak to Elijah, He told him, "Go stand on the mountain so you can hear My voice." First, there came a strong wind, but the Lord did not speak through the wind; there was an earthquake, but the Lord did not speak through the earthquake; there was a fire, but the Lord did not speak in the fire; after all this the Lord spoke through a still small voice. I believe God is speaking to all of us in New Zealand --- are we able to hear that still small voice?

Earthquakes, storms and fires can be natural disasters that we have little control of; they are not always a judgment from God.

In Luke 13: 4 Jesus says, *"Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no;"*

It was chance that those eighteen had the tower fall on them; they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Actually, Jesus may have meant they all should be judged, because He goes on to say, *"but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."* God will move in judgment.

Of course Jesus warned us that in the end time there will be an increase of earthquakes. See Luke 21: 11.

See Chart:

Number of EQuakes over 4.5 magnituded: 2000AD - 22,256; 2004AD - 31,194; 2008 - 31,777

Deaths thru' EQuakes: 2000AD - 231; 2004AD - 228,802; 2008AD - 88,011; 2010 - 226,215

Think on these serious scriptures:

Hebrews 12: 25-29 "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

Then we have those judgments in Revelation that are dispensed by Jesus (the Lamb that was slain) from the control room of heaven. See Rev. 6: 12; 11: 13; 16: 18.

11:13 reads, *"In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven."*

Re 16:18 *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.*

These events will come to pass.

Can God protect the godly in tumultuous times?

Nahum 1: 7 *The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.*

Psalm 50: 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

Psalm 91 Those who dwell in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Revelation 3: 10 Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

To become a stronghold in our lives, these verses must be prayed up to God and appropriated by faith.

There is a great angelic conflict happening in the heavens between good and evil, between God and Satan. We have only a key-hole view into this scene.

Finally, 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that all enemies will be put under the feet of Jesus then the Fathers world will be ushered in where no enemies will intrude- God will be all and in all. What a day!

While we are still in this world we do experience sorrow; in those times, do we think God is unfair, why didn't He intervene?

See John 9: 2-3 *And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be declared in him.*

Is God at a distance when we go through trials? Remember, Jesus wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus.

He feels our pain. He came right into our world of suffering - He came, He comes.

Isa. 43: 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

- He sits beside us in the lowest point of our lives.

We are broken He is broken with us.

- We are despised and rejected.... He was despised and rejected.

He was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief.

- He will come even in our battle with sin.
- He descends into all our hells.
- Corrie ten Boom said from the depths of a Nazi death camp, "No matter how deep our darkness He is deeper still."
- He was gassed in the ovens of Auschwitz.
- He has turned the grave into a doorway that leads to the light.
- Now out of our suffering or tragedy a healing ointment can be produced to heal and comfort others who go through suffering and tragedy.

Don't waste your sorrows.

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