

Sermon Notes

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3/20/11

**What
On Earth
Is
Happening?**





REFLECTIONS

*Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you."⁵ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many."⁶ "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."⁷ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places."⁸ "All these are the beginning of sorrows."
(Matthew 24:3-8 NKJ)*

It would seem that Jesus, as He taught His disciples, was looking forward in time and reading the headlines from our news agencies in 2011. He was, in fact, explaining to His disciples that at the end of the age there would be indicators that time was growing short and that His children must be prepared to discern the times and signs in order to avoid being deceived by the enemy and those who serve him either purposely or without knowing that their pursuits of power and wealth are playing into Satan's plan. As our world continues racing head-long toward judgment, Jesus tells us to not allow our hearts to be troubled. He is greater than any power on Earth and has promised that by being found in His provision for our redemption, we can be assured of life eternal with Him. So what in the world is happening? His Word has given us an explanation that these things must occur and the end is not yet.

When the earth shakes, volcanoes erupt and the oceans inundate the land as a result, we can reflect on the Scripture which hundreds of years ago prophesied such events. *The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly.*²⁰ *The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.* . (Isaiah 24:19-20NKJ) The prophet Isaiah was explaining the events leading up to God's day of judgment on His enemies. It is easy, in our time, to see his prophetic vision made clear as the Earth reels on its axis when the volcanoes explode, when the plates of the land masses collide with tremendous force resulting in such horrendous destruction. His picture of Earth as a drunkard staggering under the impact of the mighty forces inherent

in such a dynamic creation is a metaphor that today is well applied in the recent events of frightening power and destruction.

It is interesting that Jesus tells His disciples that they are not to be troubled in spirit and heart when these things take place, yet today we see much panic around the world. Being prepared physically and in our spiritual lives is what we should focus on during these times. How can we encourage others when we are troubled and lacking in faith in what the Scriptures tell us?

When we have been given such foresight into global events it would make sense to be prepared to accelerate our ministries to others even while we make provision for our families. We, too often, have depended on escaping such calamities rather than making preparation to live and minister as they occur. Joseph, when warned by God through Pharaoh's vision, prepared for the lean times by making provision during times of plenty. Ironically we, on the other hand, tend to spend times of plenty on our own pleasures and spend our resources frivolously rather than wisely and when a disaster strikes such as when a volcano erupts, we may find that resources disappear quickly and then find ourselves poorly equipped, or completely unable to deal with the aftermath of such events. We perhaps need to re-think our priorities.

No one but God knows when He will draw this age to a close so speculations that lead to lethargy are not useful when considering our obligation to minister to those around us. Would we not warn a nearby neighbor when their house is on fire? Would we not stop and render assistance to a victim of an accident? Times are perilous and many are needing God's children to direct them to the Prince of Peace. Are we prepared to do that? If our neighbor is hungry, are we able to help keep them fed, even for a short time?

Men have long argued whether or not the people of God will be caught away before hard times occur, yet history speaks clearly that hardships will happen to even the just. God always has taken His loved ones through the flood, through the fire, through the famines, and even through the times of war. Some were taken to heaven while others endured and survived. While we cannot know which outcome would be ours, we can know that in Christ we have eternal life. Let's not let the events of our time trouble us, rather let's be prepared to serve the Lord through whatever circumstances befall us. He who has promised eternal life is faithful. **Pastor Doug**