

Tribulation, Tsunamis

And Global Travel

Luke 21:7-36

In Matthew 24 we get to see the Tribulation from Christ's perspective. What will the end of days be like? Jesus tells us--

Matthew 24:22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

The devastation of the earthquake and tsunami in December 2004—gave us a **tiny** insight into what the world will be like at the end of the age.

Once again the eyes of the world have been drawn to one event—so big that it has touched us as a planet with a glimpse of **the end of the world**.

Even secular writers and news reporters have used words such as “apocalyptic” and of ‘biblical proportions” as they tried to describe the devastation and death they were witnessing. Some have even began to talk about what if there was a catastrophe so big, so deadly that it could wipe out life on our planet--an asteroid, a comet, a complete climactic shift away from a life sustaining world. In other words—people are briefly thinking and talking about—**the End of the World**.

The world ended for at least one hundred and fifty thousand people the Sunday after Christmas. We should think about that event before it gets crowded out of our minds by the next event.

The only difference between South East Asia's disaster and the description God gives is—the Tribulation will have at least **20,000 times as many deaths**.

Don't miss these numbers—they are staggering to our human minds.

- The world has over six billion people alive today.
- God's Word says that more than half of the population of planet earth will perish in the Great Tribulation. Most scholars believe this occurs in the second half which lasts for 3 ½ years.
- So three plus billion people perish in 42 months or 3 ½ years.

- Would that be equivalent to an event as big and deadly as this recent tsunami **daily** for three and a half years? No an event like the tsunami each day would not be big enough to equal the death toll of the Tribulation. For 150,000 to die a day for 42 months only equals 189 million deaths.
- If half the world's population were to die by quake and tsunami in 42 months— ***there would need to be one each hour, 16 hours per day, for three and one half years.***
- That will be more bodies to bury than we can even imagine. That is what Jesus warns about when the end of the world comes. So that naturally makes us ask— is it possible to know when **the world will end?** Yes.

The best selling, widest distributed book of all time is the key.

God has spoken.

His words are recorded.

His Book, the Bible is the only book--of any religion of any peoples on Earth that has prophecy.

This book is unique in that God has mapped out specific events in the future. Only the Living and True God of Heaven and Earth has ever dared to say, "Let me tell you the future". In fact, He said that was the way you could know that He was real, and that you and I could place our faith and trust in Him.

This morning may I introduce you to the God who can be trusted. The God who has proven that He alone is God?

Why do Bible believing saints LOVE prophecy? Open with me to Isaiah 41.23 and see what the Lord has said.

PROPHECY IS THE TEST TO SHOW WHO IS GOD.

1. ONLY GOD ACCURATELY KNOWS THE FUTURE.

Isaiah 41:23 ***Show the things that are to come hereafter, That we may know that you are gods; Yes, do good or do evil, That we may be dismayed and see it together.***

2. PROPHECY PROVES GOD IS REAL.

Isaiah 42:5-9 ***Thus says God the Lord, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: 6 "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, 7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. 8 I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. 9 Behold, the former things have***

*come to pass, And new things I declare; **Before they spring forth I tell you of them.***"

3. PROPHECY PROVES GOD IS RELIABLE.

Isaiah 46:9-10 *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 **Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'***

4. PROPHECY REVEALS TO US THE GOD WE CAN TRUST.

Isaiah 48:3-5 ***"I have declared the former things from the beginning;** They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass. 5 **Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you,** Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, And my carved image and my molded image Have commanded them.'*

Isaiah 48:12-13 *"Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last. 13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; **When I call to them, They stand up together.***

5. TRUSTING GOD DETERMINES OUR ETERNAL DESTINY.

Isaiah 48:17-18, 22 *Thus says the Lord, **your Redeemer,** The Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, Who teaches you to profit, **Who leads you by the way you should go.** 18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! **Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.** 22 "There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."*

PROPHECY IS THE KEY.

Almost a third of this book is prophetic. Scholars who have given their lives in study have tabulated the exact details of this book. One man, J. Barton Payne, spent his life categorizing every verse of the Bible. Here is what he found:

- There are 31,103 verses in the Bible. Old Testament HAS 23,210 AND New Testament HAS 7,914.
- Of these 8,352 contain prophecies. That is 27% of the Bible.

So, of all those thousands of verses—which one explains **the end of the world?** Here is one that will stop you in your tracks. Open with me to Daniel 12.

Daniel 12:4 ***"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."***

Two phrases at the end should jump out at us.

When God who has written the future wants us to know when the end is here He says these two events will be noticeable.

“...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

Running to and fro speaks of traveling. How has travel changed on this planet? Unless you take a long view, someone living today has no idea how close we are to the end. The pace of change is staggering. Think how much the world remained the same from Daniel's day to your great grandfather's day, consider this.

- ***Five thousand years ago NOAH*** built a boat and drifted around during the global flood.
- ***Three thousand years ago DAVID*** hired wooden boats, powered by wind to help bring special wood for the Temple. His son **SOLOMON** actually built and operated a fleet of wooden ships that sailed by wind power to carry on extensive trade with Africa, Europe, and parts of Asia. **JONAH** walked by foot to a port in Israel 2800 years ago and bought a ticket to sail to what is today Spain.
- ***Two thousand years ago***, the **APOSTLE PAUL** traveled around the Roman World on mapped out highways by foot, by horse and chariot, or aboard a wooden ship moved along by wind power caught in the sails.
- ***Five hundred years ago***, **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS** embarked for a journey across the Atlantic Ocean in search of a sea route to China. He also probably went to the dock on foot, and boarded a wooden ship not unlike that of David, Solomon, Jonah, and Paul's.
- ***Two hundred years ago***, **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** walked to a dock in America to board a wooden sailing vessel for his trip to France.
- ***Just over one hundred years ago*** things began to change abruptly. With the advent of steam man was no longer tied to animal power and wind power. With the steamship, the locomotive, the automobile, the airplane and so on—in just one generation the entire world changed!
- ***Today anyone can travel at 60MPH (car), most at 600 mph (plane), some at 1000 mph (military) and few at 25,000 mph (space)*** there are routine, scheduled flights of airliners that make the trip from any of the six inhabited continents to another continent in a few hours. ***Many shall run to and fro, and so we do without hardly a thought. No one in the history of this planet ever traveled like we who are alive today can travel. This is the time of the end of the world!***

Now the last half of that phrase, “***knowledge shall increase***”. That is almost an understatement when you think about life today.

- ***Five thousand years ago JOB*** cried for his words to be written on stone like the stone tablets God would later use to inscribe the Ten Commandments upon.
- ***Four Thousand years ago ABRAHAM*** lived and worked in Ur where commerce and literature was recorded on clay tablets by cuneiform.

- **Thirty-five hundred years ago MOSES** used scrolls to record the first five books of the Bible, most likely on papyri from Egypt.
- **Two Thousand years ago PAUL** sat and a scribe wrote his words on scrolls of parchment, animal skin and papyri.
- **One thousand years ago PAPER** appeared in China.
- **Five Hundred years ago the PRINTING PRESS** arrived.
- **Just over 50 years ago the COMPUTER** arrived—and nothing will ever be the same! For all of history up until our times individuals could only look at one book at a time, find what they needed and go on. Today we can search all the combined and collected google of knowledge contained in 19,100,000,000 pages in .42 seconds and see the results of all of them on our screen where ever we are.

Today, we sit atop a database containing what is arguably the sum total of the world's accumulated knowledge every time we sit down to browse the internet.

From wooden boats with sails to MP3's and DVD's that I can watch or create on the personal computer that can also be my phone, television, radio, stereo, workstation, word processor, electronic document file, movie studio, sound studio, telephone answering service, fax machine, copy machine and printer. And a million other things.

[Our] generation is unique in all human history. Never has humanity been forced to come to terms with so many issues simultaneously -- issues for which we have no historical precedent to use as a guide. The explosive growth of knowledge has us reeling from what humanist writer Alvin Toffler terms "future shock." It is only in this generation that last year's encyclopedia is about as useful as last month's newspaper. It has been said that the sum of human knowledge from the Flood to 1850 doubled once. It doubled again following World War II. The doubling of human knowledge increases exponentially.¹

When Daniel saw the end it was so overwhelming and incomprehensible, it made him sick. Look at Daniel 10: 14.

While in exile in Babylon, the prophet Daniel was given a vision of the future of Israel, up to the coming of the Messiah. Up to this point in the vision, those things that Daniel saw were relatively familiar, cities, events, people in a context that were not too far removed from his concept of reality. But then he was shown the things to come in the last days.

The angel told him in Daniel 10: 14 "Now I am come to make the understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for yet the vision is for many days."

¹ The Omega Letter Intelligence Digest Vol. 14 Issue: 1, Friday, November 01, 2002 , Special Report Reason Six - The Explosion of Knowledge. *The Omega Letter is published daily by Jack Kinsella at: www.omegaletter.com.*
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Daniel was so staggered by what he saw it made him faint, verse 18 records that 'one like the appearance of a man' touched him, and strengthened him, so that he could go on.

Daniel tried to describe those things he saw using terminology that made sense to him, but it comes to us as a series of baffling symbols, images and beasts. The things he saw terrified him.

Because the visions were so completely removed from his understanding of reality, he was unable to describe them in terms that even he was able to comprehend. And so it remained, for thousands of years.

Great Bible commentators like Calvin and Luther did not even attempt to interpret the books of Daniel, or the Revelation, for that matter, saying they were allegorical or symbolic books.

Matthew Henry, writing in the 18th century, did not fare much better. Even commentators on these books in the early 20th century admitted they had trouble fitting the pieces together.

After all, they dealt with a restored Israel, a revived Roman empire, and a one world government. Such things were deemed to be impossible, therefore to be interpreted as allegories.

The revealing angel understood what Daniel did not.²

Now as we turn to Luke 21, fast forward in your minds to the day after Christmas. I was sitting at my computer. As I awaited a document printing I turned to Google News. All of a sudden the earthquake reports began to stream in.

- A quake, rather large struck Sumatra.
- Then some people may have died, and on it went until the greatest disaster of this generation, which is still unfolding, began to be understood.

Did you catch that all of us online Sunday **saw** that quake within minutes of it striking? Seismic stations picked up the magnitude of the event, and news stations spread the word electronically at the speed of light. **That is knowledge increased!** Think about it.

Three minutes.

That is how long the ground shook, the earth quaked--and then the sea began to roar. We know now that a minimum of 150,000 immortal souls perished because of the waves and quakes. The energy unleashed was staggering. But the reminder is priceless.

Jesus warned us that life is fragile, death is inevitable—but only He is the answer.

² The Omega Letter Intelligence Digest, Vol. 20 Issue: 23, Friday, May 23, 2003, Confessions of A Techno-Junkie. *The Omega Letter is published daily by Jack Kinsella at: www.omegaletter.com.*

Are you ready to meet Jesus?

The Christmas Quake of 2004 will go down in history as another gracious reminder from the Lord of what we are really here on earth to do—seek God!

We all have heard the reports about how the power of this quake triggered one of the worst tsunamis in history. The event also made our planet “vibrate”. Here is what the head of Italy’s National Geophysics Institute reported.

The earth wobbled on its axis and the regional map of south Asia was permanently altered. The island of Sumatra moved 100 feet. Time stood still for three microseconds. The impact of the 500 mile-per-hour waves was equal to one million atom bombs.

Open with me to the “gentile version” of Christ's sermon on the End of the World. Matthew and Mark record these words, and John writes a 22 chapter expansion on this sermon called the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

But Luke 21 records an amazing version of Christ's words that are just right for us to reflect upon at the start this New Year.

The Waves Roared

What caught my attention as I watched the news over and over again replaying that tsunami was what one survivor reported. He said that they were drawn to the beach as the waters receded back so far that boulders the size of houses could be seen where the ocean had once stood. Then he heard it, like a roaring freight train—a wall of mud and water crashing towards him. His heart nearly stopped as he ran for his life and made it to a building where he climbed high enough to survive the waves of death.

Now, with that testimony of the waves roaring, follow along with me as we read Christ's sobering words about the end of the world, and then hear His commands to us who await His Coming! Luke 21: 7-36.

Posted on Wed, Jan. 12, 2005

Indonesia's tsunami death toll nears 210,000, according to document

By Tim Johnson
Knight Ridder Newspapers

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia - An official document posted here says that nearly 210,000 people in Indonesia are dead or missing from the Dec. 26 tsunami, a death toll that appears to be far higher than officials have reported publicly. Rescue workers think even that number may be low.

The larger Indonesia toll would bring the total of dead and missing from the tidal surge across the Indian Ocean to nearly 272,000, ranking the tsunami as the fifth or sixth deadliest natural disaster in about 250 years.

The new death toll came as Indonesian officials restricted the movements of foreign relief workers, U.N. employees and journalists in devastated north Sumatra, the Indonesian island that took the brunt of the tsunami's force, and said foreign military units would be allowed to work in the country for only a limited time.

Indonesia's vice president told the United States and other nations that have sent troops to deliver relief that their forces won't be permitted to remain in Sumatra longer than three months, and should leave as soon as their work is completed.

The chief of operations for the government's disaster-relief efforts here, Budi Atmadi Adiputro, said in a statement that it was

"necessary" for all foreigners in Aceh province, at the northern end of Sumatra, to provide authorities with details of "their current and planned activities as well as the exact locations those activities will be carried out."

The blunt comments seemed to end what had been tacit Indonesian acceptance of a foreign presence in an area that has been off limits to foreigners for years. But it wasn't clear that the comments would have any real impact on rescue efforts.

Few civilian relief workers seemed concerned that the restrictions would hurt their missions, and Indonesian officials promised quick approval for missions outside of Aceh's principal cities.

U.S. aircraft continued to fly relief missions, though helicopters from the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln had to refuel elsewhere after the Lincoln moved out of Indonesian waters after the Indonesian government refused permission for U.S. training flights over its territory.

Indonesia, which emerged from three decades of military dictatorship in 1998, remains strongly influenced by the armed forces, some of whose officers are discomfited by the sudden presence of foreigners in a conflict-ridden province that's the source of huge earnings from natural gas exports.

Human rights groups have long complained of the military's crackdown on separatists from the Free Aceh Movement, and the United States ended military exchanges over the issue during the Clinton administration. Tensions over the presence of foreign troops have been obvious for days, with U.S. Marines scaling back planned operations after the Indonesians objected to the Marines' carrying weapons on Indonesian territory.

Indonesian officials offered no explanation for the sharp rise in the number of dead and missing. Earlier this week, a Cabinet-level official put the toll in Aceh province at about 108,000, between those already buried and those known to be dead. Another 48,000 were missing, the official said.

But a chart posted at the entrance to the federal disaster-relief headquarters here offered different numbers.

Compiled by the Disaster Management Task Force for Aceh province, the document listed numbers of casualties by district in a variety of categories, including buried, known dead and missing.

The document gave the number of people known to have died in the disaster at 78,395 and said another 131,479 remained lost or missing. It said the information was current as of 9 p.m. Tuesday (9 a.m. EST Tuesday).

Asked about the document, an American working for the Indonesian government, Laura Worsley-Brown, said it was posted in response to reporters' inquiries about the numbers of dead and missing and was being offered in place of official statements.

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Those returning from the field said they weren't surprised by the new numbers. Dr. A. John Watson, the president of CARE Canada, cited the town of Calang, halfway between the provincial capital of Banda Aceh and Meulaboh, which is on the western coast, as "a really hard-hit case. Eight or nine thousand people in that town were wiped out. About 1,000 survived." He said he expected the final death toll to be "significantly higher."

The precise death toll is unlikely ever to be known. Thousands of people were washed to sea, and their bodies probably never will be recovered.

But the new figures rank the tsunami in the same category as a 1976 earthquake in China that killed at least 255,000 people. The worst natural disaster since 1750 is thought to have been a flood in China in 1939 that killed an estimated 3.7 million people.

The travel restrictions announced Wednesday apply to all foreigners, including "individuals, country representatives, United Nations agencies, NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), or media in Aceh province," the government statement said.

The government said it acted out of concern that insurgents of the Free Aceh Movement might undertake violent acts and said military escorts would be provided in certain cases.

But aid workers said authorities might fear that relief groups or journalists would help the insurgents, who've been fighting for independence for the province since 1976.

Alwi Shihab, a Cabinet-level appointee of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, declined to say what would occur to individuals or groups that didn't register.

"We are sure you are civilized persons and will comply with regulations for your own safety," Shihab said.

The announcement said foreigners were free to work in and around the two hardest-hit cities, Banda Aceh and Meulaboh, a city near the epicenter of the massive quake and tsunami. For other locations, foreigners must send a request to a team led by the Aceh regional police chief and await a decision.

"It will not take long," Shihab said. "It will be within hours, not days."

Aceh has been largely off-limits to foreigners since early 2003, when a cease-fire broke down and martial law was declared. Shihab noted that a lower-level emergency rule that permits restricted civil liberties remains in effect.

Reaction among foreign relief officials ranged from concern about security in the countryside to apprehension that the government may be allowing security concerns to trump humanitarian needs.

Most, however, appeared so intent on providing aid to as many as 650,000 displaced people in Aceh that they took the restrictions as simply another hurdle in an already difficult situation.³

³ <http://www.realcities.com/mld/kashington/10629822.htm?template=contentModules/printstory.jsp>