

Jesus Explains The End of the World Luke 21:7-36

All of the excitement about the great quake of 2004 is slowly moving away from the headlines of the news reports. Our military will soon be wrapping up aid flights. For us thousands of miles from the epicenter of death and destruction, life is slowly getting back to fast paced and the hope that everything will stay normal in our lives.

Before the attention grabbing power of a disaster gets cleared out of our lives, like the debris left over from a disaster gets bulldozed out of the way in the cleanup—let's take one more look at that amazing event.

157,000 plus people died.

That means their world ended.

Before we looked at the end of THE world--Earth in Luke 21, think for a moment about **the end of YOUR world—you.**

What usually kills people? Have you thought about that? What are your probabilities of dying of a quake?

Globally, violence is a leading killer. It accounts for 14 percent of all deaths among males and 7 percent among females, according to a 2003 analysis by the World Health Organization. On an average day, 1,424 people are murdered. Somebody commits suicide every 40 seconds. But for us who are U.S. residents, this morning it is probably heart disease that will end your world. According to all the government agencies that tabulate death and diseases, this is our most likely cause of physical death of according the averages of the American population.

| Cause of Death | Lifetime Odds | For us |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Old age | 1-in 1.5 | 488 |
| Heart Disease | 1-in-5 | 175 |
| Cancer | 1-in-7 | 125 |
| Stroke | 1-in-23 | 38 |
| Accidental Injury | 1-in-36 | 24 |
| Motor Vehicle Accident* | 1-in-100 | 9 |
| Intentional Self-harm (suicide) | 1-in-121 | 7 |
| Falling Down | 1-in-246 | 4 |

| | | |
|--|----------------|-----|
| Assault by Firearm | 1-in-325 | 3 |
| Fire or Smoke | 1-in-1,116 | 1 |
| Natural Forces (heat, cold, storms, quakes, etc.) | 1-in-3,357 | 0.3 |
| Electrocution* | 1-in-5,000 | |
| Drowning | 1-in-8,942 | |
| Air Travel Accident* | 1-in-20,000 | |
| Flood* (included also in Natural Forces above) | 1-in-30,000 | |
| Legal Execution | 1-in-58,618 | |
| Tornado* (included also in Natural Forces above) | 1-in-60,000 | |
| Lightning Strike (included also in Natural Forces above) | 1-in-83,930 | |
| Snake, Bee or other Venomous Bite or Sting* | 1-in-100,000 | |
| Earthquake (included also in Natural Forces above) | 1-in-131,890 | |
| Dog Attack | 1-in-147,717 | |
| Asteroid Impact* | 1-in-200,000** | |
| Tsunami* | 1-in-500,000 | |
| Fireworks Discharge | 1-in-615,488 | |

** Perhaps 1-in-500,000

SOURCES: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC; American Cancer Society; National Safety Council; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; World Health Organization; USGS; Clark Chapman, SwRI; David Morrison, NASA; Michael Paine, Planetary Society Australian Volunteers

The devastation of the earthquake and tsunami three weeks ago today—have given us a *tiny* insight into what the world will be like at the end of the age.

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.

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. The reminder is priceless.

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

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! Look again 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.

It was not the Largest Quakes on Record

First of all, before we read Christ's words, remember that this quake was not the biggest, it was number four. But it is the most deadly of modern history. The quakes of 1957, 1960, and 1964 were larger.

| # | Date | Mw | Latitude | Longitude | Location | Casualties |
|----|------------------------------|-----|----------|-----------|---|------------|
| 1 | 22 May 1960 | 9.5 | 38.20 S | 72.60 W | Southern Chile | 9,500 |
| 2 | 28 March 1964 | 9.2 | 61.10 N | 147.50 W | Southern Alaska, U.S.A. | 131 |
| 3 | 9 March 1957 | 9.1 | 51.30 N | 175.80 W | Andreanof Islands, U.S.A. | - |
| 4 | 26 December 2004 | 9.0 | 03.29 N | 95.77 E | Sumatera-Andaman area | 1,00,000+ |
| 5 | 4 November 1952 | 9.0 | 52.75 N | 159.50 E | Kamchatka, Russia | - |
| 6 | 31 January 1906 | 8.8 | 01.00 N | 85.50 W | Off the coast of Ecuador | 1,500 |
| 7 | 4 February 1965 | 8.7 | 51.30 N | 178.60 W | Rat Islands, U.S.A. | - |
| 8 | 15 August 1950 | 8.6 | 28.50 N | 96.50 E | Indo-China Border region | 4,000+ |
| 9 | 3 February 1923 | 8.5 | 54.00 N | 161.00 E | Kamchatka | - |
| 10 | 1 February 1938 ¹ | 8.5 | 05.25 S | 130.50 E | Banda Sea, Indonesia | - |

It was not the Deadliest Quakes on Record

That largest and deadliest quake is in Revelation 16:20 at the end of the world.

Revelation 16:17-20 *Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, **such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.** 19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and **the cities of the nations fell.** And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then **every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.***

Listen to Newsweek Magazine: "**What was the most awesome about this quake?** Its biblical nature. Its biblical size. And that it spanned two continents. A large portion of the earth's crust—1,000 km (620 miles) in length by 100 km (62 miles) in width running from Western Sumatra to Myanmar—**moved.**"²

| Date | Location | Deaths | Magnitude |
|------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| January 23, 1556 | China, Shansi | 830,000 | Unknown |
| October 11, 1737 | India, Calcutta [*] | 300,000 | Unknown |
| July 27, 1976 | China, Tangshan | 255,000 ^{**} | 8.0 |
| August 9, 1138 | Syria, Aleppo | 230,000 | Unknown |
| May 22, 1927 | China, near Xining | 200,000 | 8.3 |

¹ <http://asc-india.org/gg/world10.htm>

² Newsweek, Web Exclusive, By Eric Pape, Updated: 10:12 p.m. ET Dec. 27, 2004. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6759529/site/newsweek/>.

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|-------------------|---------------|---------|------------------|
| December 22, 856 | Iran, Damghan | 200,000 | Unknown |
| December 16, 1920 | China, Gansu | 200,000 | 8.6 ³ |

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.

Pray

This passage we just read was Christ's reply to His disciples' questions about the future. This chapter is also called "The Olivet Discourse," the greatest prophetic sermon Jesus ever preached. Since Luke wrote with the Gentile reader in mind, he didn't record some of the strong Jewish parts of the sermon. What he records are the essential truths that we must consider and apply.

Remember that Israel and the Church are two separate and distinct parts of God's plan—don't confuse them.

Remember Luke 21 was written to explain to the Jews and the Nation of Israel what God has planned for them. Notice as I read that he message is to people living in Jerusalem, Judea and about Israel. Jesus is not talking about the future of His Church but the destiny of His chosen people of Promise. Jesus wouldn't be giving signs for His Coming for His Bride, for that can occur at any time and no signs need precede it (Jewish Wedding customs in Matthew 25, as well as 1 Corinthians 15:51–58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). Remember that God's Word says, "For the Jews require a sign" (1 Corinthians 1:22); but we Christ's Church have been instructed that we are not to look for any signs but for our Savior (Phil. 3:20–21). Luke 21 is an inside look at a stage of God's program called "the Tribulation". This period is when God pours out His wrath on the nations of the world. Most prophetic scholars believe that the Tribulation begins after Christ comes in the air and takes His church to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11). The Tribulation ends at Christ's Return in glory to the earth, when He crushes His foes and establishes His kingdom (Rev. 19:1–20:6).

We can learn from Christ's description of the Age (Luke 21:8–19)

³ http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:1xD0r-IUttkJ:www.disasterrelief.org/Library/WorldDis/wde1_txt.html+deadliest+earthquakes&hl=en

The dangers Jesus warned of are what His church has faced from the beginning. There have always been deceiving teachers, persecution, and disasters. But what He says is that each of these areas will increase and intensify as Christ's Coming draws near.

- **There will be religious deception** (Luke 21:8). "Be not deceived!" is Christ's admonition to us, and we must take it to heart. Jesus is warning that even God's people will be in danger of being deceived. Satan has always been a counterfeiter. He has led people astray for centuries. His plan is to deceive minds and blind hearts (2 Cor. 4:1–6; 11:1–4, 13–15). Deception

Of course it includes the originators or propagators of all the false cults which have arisen throughout the course of the age, beginning with the first century. We have witnessed the rise of many in the last hundred years, especially those with the label, "Made in America," like Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Christian Science, and others. These are outwardly Christian in language and activity but their basic message is anti-christian, rejecting the true Christ. Any person or organization which purports to be Christian in its outward aspects, but whose message is actually opposed to Christian faith is an antichrist. It is the rise of these groups our Lord predicts. What a peril to faith they have proved to be⁴.

- **There will also be global distress** (Luke 21:9–11). "Be not anxious!" is Christ's admonition to us, and we must take it to heart. Sometimes you find people keeping track of the earthquakes that have occurred in recent years. Others list all the wars and attempted invasions. They seem to overlook the fact that Jesus said that wars, earthquakes, pestilences, and famines by themselves are not signs of His soon return. These things have been going on throughout the history of the world. The disasters will just get closer and stronger as His coming draws near.
- **There will be religious persecution, public (Luke 21:12–15) and personal (Luke 21:16–19)**. "Be not afraid!" is Christ's admonition to us, and we must take it to heart. Jesus always promised that His children would suffer (John 15:18–16:4, 32–33), and Paul said it is part of being a believer (2 Tim. 3:12). But the persecution in the end times will be part of a final holocaust and countless multitudes (Revelation 7:9–14) will give their lives for Christ.
- **There are no signs for Christ's Coming for His Bride, the Church**. The events Jesus describes in Luke 21 are not signs of His soon return. All of these problems have been going on for centuries. However, as the coming of the Lord draws near, these things will multiply and intensify. All believers, no matter what their position may be on the timing of Christ's coming--need to heed His three admonitions: "Don't be deceived! Don't be afraid! Don't worry!"⁵

8 And He said: "Take heed that you **not be deceived**. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them.

⁴ Quoted from Ray Steadman <http://pbc.org/dp/stedman/olivet/oliv02.html>

⁵ Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

I will—Know God's Word so I won't be deceived.

John 8:32 *And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

Acts 17:11 *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

9 But when you hear of wars and commotions, **do not be terrified**; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."

I will—Trust God's Promises so I won't live a fearful life.

2 Timothy 1:12-14 *For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. 13 Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.*

10 Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

11 And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences (**Grk. *limoi kai loimoi*** this is the literary device called paronomasia – words with similar sounds); and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

13 But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will **answer**;

I will—Speak for Jesus in any circumstance.

Acts 4:31 *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.*

Acts 5:20 *"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."*

15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

16 **You will be betrayed** even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.

I will—Purpose to never quit even when those closest to me fail me.

Mark 13:13 *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

"True believers are "are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation" (1 Pet. 1:5). The guarantee of our perseverance is built into the New Covenant promise. God says: "I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me" (Jer. 32:40). Those who do fall away from Christ give conclusive proof that they were never truly believers to begin with (1 John 2:19).⁶"

17 And **you will be hated** by all for My name's sake.

⁶ John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

I will—Expect that life will be hard and full of trials.

2 Timothy 3:12 *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

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