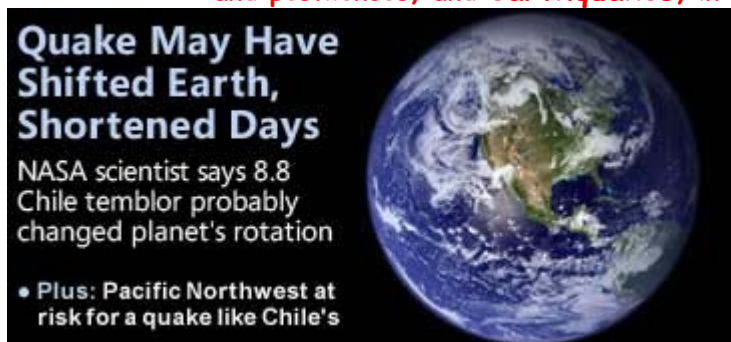


SIGNS IN THESE LAST DAYS

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places," Mt 24:7.



This view of Earth comes from NASA's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer aboard the Terra satellite

This picture comes from MSN'S Home Page and reports that a NASA scientist said the massive 8.8 earthquake on the nation of Chile may have changed the entire Earth's rotation. Further, the scientist went on to say that the earthquake may have shortened the length of days on our planet.

There's no panic here, but nothing perks up our ears like an earthquake - the nearer, the scarier. And, like earthquakes, every catastrophe that hits the earth, ought to stir our spirits to read the Bible and trust in the words of Jesus, again and again.

We are not that concerned about events on earth because we are ready. If an earthquake frightens us, at all; it's for those who are not ready to meet the Lord. For truly, God's word, the Bible, reigns as absolute truth in our hearts.

Being ready for His return means that we trust the Lord in all things. What He said, He will do. And what He said is all there in His written word. In the Matthew 24 discourse, Jesus explained that a few catastrophic events must precede His Second Coming. Thus, we are ready.

First, He tells us that no one knows the exact day of His return. "**But of that day and hour knoweth no man...**" verse 36. Then, Jesus repeats strong words of warning to us; warning us against deception. "**Take heed that no man deceive you,**" verse 4. Many signs (wars & earthquakes) and "**many false prophets shall (and have) deceive many,**" verse 11.

The warnings against deception - those events which must take place before His return, are: **1) "Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many wax cold," verse 12** (how's church service, lately?). **2) "The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached...for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come," verse 14.** And, **3) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light," verse 29.**

His teaching includes the **"fig tree;"** which we believe is the nation of Israel. She began **"putting forth leaves"** (v 32) in the late 1800's; with the United Nations recognizing Her sovereignty in 1948.

In verse 36, Jesus enforces the fact that we shouldn't get too excited over earthly events by telling us that only the Father knows the day. If only the Father knows, then "that day" is strengthened in more obscurity; certainly, more than man can figure out.

Then, His following words on the unfaithful servant ought to be a warning for everyone (v 45), as well. The **"servant"** follows what He said about **"that day"** and, we think, demands that all believers are kept on earth until His Second Coming.

To me, His coming **"as lightening out of the west"** (v 27), negates any secret rapture. We just can't find anyone "taken away" before the skies are parted; as explained in these words of Matthew 24.

Back to the earthquakes! And here, let's speculate, a bit. What if the Lord shortened the "end-time" days on earth by the utilization of earthquakes? How close are scientists when they think that the Chilean earthquake effected earth's axis, giving the planet earth a shortening-of-time effect?

Of course, the earth's effect was so short in time - nana-seconds - that it's almost immeasurable. But, think about it, if God did use earthquakes to **"shorten the days"** (Mt. 24::22) then, we are left with the horrible thought of more and more earthquakes to make the days even shorter. Ugh!

We don't think that God will use earthquakes to "shorten" these last days. Yet, when this last one hit - as with Haiti - a lot of people on earth had a thought of God run through their minds. We hope that the thought gets into their hearts.

When any catastrophe occurs, it is our prayer that all mankind will read and believe what Jesus said. Where else will we turn?