Doctor Avi Shapira, the chairman of the international steering committee for the preparation of earthquakes, has warned that Israel could face a humanitarian disaster on the scale of the one experienced in Haiti following the earthquake there. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians lost their lives when the temblor struck on the 13th of January, and many more remained trapped inside collapsed buildings, which included schools, hospitals and even the presidential palace was not spared. Thankfully there have been many miraculous stories of survival, of how children were rescued from the rubble many days after all hope of finding anyone alive should have gone. And a friend's granddaughter in my assembly, who is a missionary nurse to Haiti, told of how the missionary home that she worked in was completely untouched by the earthquake. Seismologists have stated that Israel is long overdue a major earthquake, and people like Doctor Shapira have warned that many of the buildings in the old city of Jerusalem could be completely destroyed should that happen any time soon. Major earthquakes have occurred along the Jordan rift valley roughly every 400 years , but the last one to hit the region was recorded way back in 1033AD, leaving some wondering whether the big one could be imminent.

Quote: *"Yaakov Bar-Lavi from the Survey of Israel center said that out of 650,000 structures in the country, there are 96,000 residential buildings which are in great danger of collapsing in case of a massive earthquake.*

Another interesting statement made during the discussion was the issue of identifying the remains of those caught up in the disaster. Following the earthquake the Haitian government ordered the mass burial of the dead in order to prevent the spread of disease through the many dead bodies which were being piled up along the roadsides. Ironically it was the Haitian voodoo priests
(Haiti is the voodoo capital of the world) who complained about this, insisting that everyone should have a dignified burial. But halachic law in Israel also prohibits mass burials, and the country would find itself unable to cope in dealing with the aftermath of such a disaster. Government ministers have called for body identification reserves to be made available in the event that a similar situation occurs in the Middle East.

Quote: *"Another topic which was raised during the discussion was the problem of identifying bodies. A ZAKA representative who recently returned from Haiti noted that Israel has no solution for the problem, which is mainly a halachic one seeing as it does not allow mass grave burials. Committee chairman MK David Azoulay (Shas) called at the end of the session to qualify body identification reserves for a mass disaster case such as the one in Haiti.*

The Bible does indeed describe a similar incident, which will require people to travel throughout the land of Israel, identifying bodies and burying the dead. I am not sure if halachic law prohibits mass burials for non-Jews. But in any case, following the Gog-Magog war as mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39, it will take Israel seven months to identify and bury the dead.

Ezekiel 39:14
And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search. And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamongog.

The book of Revelation also indicates that during the tribulation period, Israel and indeed the entire world, will experience catastrophic earthquakes which will devastate the planet. As I have said before, the earthquakes mentioned in Biblical prophecy are the only ones that will ever occur of which we know their death toll in advance. The Bible states that during the end time, several earthquakes will hit the Jordan valley, drastically changing the topography and claiming thousands of lives. Ironically, Bar-Lavi's estimate that around 7% of the buildings constructed in Israel will not survive an earthquake, is quite accurate. Revelation 11:13 states that 10% of the houses in Jerusalem will be destroyed, killing some 7000 people. Other great earthquakes are also to occur, one so great that it will destroy every major city in the entire world.

Revelation 16:18-20
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. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Some people say that earthquakes are 'acts of God', in the sense that they cannot be predicted and happen for no particular reason. They say the people of Haiti were unlucky and they just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Others say God was angry with the Haitians for their voodoo practices, and He sent the earthquake to punish them for their sins. Concerning the judgement of this world, the Scriptures definitely indicate that God is the originator of at least some earthquakes (Isaiah 2:19). There were also earthquakes at significant times during the life of Christ, at His crucifixion (Matthew 27:51) and at His resurrection (Matthew 28:2). I wouldn't say that God specifically sent the Haitian earthquake, or

the Asian Tsunami in 2004, but I would say that the wicked make their own judgement. Sinners may look at the earthquake as a judgement from God, as in the earthquake of Revelation 6:12-17, whereas believers will see it as a test of their faith. True believers will always experience God's hand of protection amid these trials, as we have witnessed in Haiti, and as described in the earthquake of Zechariah 14:4-5.

As you can see, even nature itself witnesses that the return of Christ is imminent. Not only does the Bible mention these killer earthquakes that are to come during the last days, but unbelieving scientists are actively preparing for their arrival. Will your heart fail you for looking on those things coming on the earth (Luke 21:26)? Or will your heart be safely trusting in your Creator and Saviour, the one who loves you and gave Himself for you? Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved (Acts 16:31).

Nahum 1:7
The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

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