Thousands of people have lost their lives are many more remain missing after an earthquake measuring around 8.9 on the Richter Scale triggered a tsunami which devastated parts of Japan on Friday night. The earthquake, the fifth most powerful measured since records began, had already caused much destruction before a wall of water swept through major towns along Japan's coastline. In scenes reminiscent of the
Asian tsunami
that devastated the coastlines of around a dozen countries in December 2004, entire communities have been wiped off the map by 20 foot waves travelling at fantastic speeds. The government has declared a state of emergency as the nation struggles to come to terms with the sheer scale of the disaster.

Quote: *"Even for a country used to earthquakes, this one was of horrific proportions because of the tsunami that crashed ashore, swallowing everything in its path as it surged several kilometers inland before retreating. The apocalyptic images on Japanese TV of powerful, debris-filled waves, uncontrolled fires and a ship caught in a massive whirlpool resembled scenes from a Hollywood disaster movie.*

Unfortunately this is no disaster movie, and our hearts go out to all of those who have been caught up in these terrible events. But as the article correctly states, these events are indeed apocalyptic in their proportion. For the word apocalypse simply means the 'revealing' of something that was hitherto hidden, and it is used to describe John's book of the “
revelation of Jesus Christ
”. It is from John's vivid description of the events that are to unfold shortly before Christ's 'revelation' from heaven that people have come to associate the word 'apocalypse' with cataclysmic disasters. And there may be some justification for men doing that. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself prophesied that during the time of the end, natural disasters would increase dramatically. The following portion is taken from Luke's Gospel, but it could have as easily been taken from any headline of any national newspaper over the past few days.

Luke 21:25-26
And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven

shall be shaken.

Earthquakes seem to have a special significance in relation to fulfilled prophecy throughout the Scriptures. There was an earthquake at Christ's crucifixion (Matthew 27:51), an earthquake at Christ's resurrection (Matthew 28:2), and the Bible also mentions an earthquake in relation to Christ's Second Coming (Zechariah 14:4). The book of Revelation also goes further again, mentioning earthquakes in relation to the judgement of this world. After the opening of the sixth seal, John foresees a great earthquake which causes men to cry out for fear in the knowledge that the day of God's judgement has come (Revelation 6:16-17). Revelation also mentions another earthquake, “such as was not since men were upon the earth”, and records that “the cities of the nations fell
” (Revelation 16:19). If we think that the worst has passed, we are sadly mistaken.

As Christians, we do not desire these days, nor does the Lord. We are not doom-sayers who delight in other people's misfortune. God is not responsible for these recent disasters. But they are a direct result of the effect that Adam's sin has had upon this fallen world, and they are a warning to the rest of us of the importance of having God's salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ said concerning the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were they greater sinners than the rest of those in Jerusalem that these things should happen to them? No. But the warning is there. “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”, Luke 13:5. The Lord does not desire the death of any, nor does He have pleasure in the death of the wicked. If you are not yet saved, let these events serve as a warning to you. The time of God's judgement is drawing near. But the Lord is “ longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance
”, 2nd Peter 3:9. Jesus Christ gave His life for you. He bore God's judgement for your sin upon the cross of Calvary. And all who put their trust in Him shall have everlasting life (John 3:16). Turn away from your sin, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

Ezekiel 33:11
Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

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