

## INTRODUCTION

One of my favorite quotes from Albert Einstein is, "A short pencil is better than a long memory." Apparently he believed this. In 1922, Albert Einstein was traveling in Tokyo. He didn't have any money to tip the bellboy for carrying his suitcase, so he pulled out his pencil and wrote out a bit of advice for a tip. He wrote in Hebrew: "A calm and modest life brings more happiness than the pursuit of success with constant restlessness." That hand-written note by Albert Einstein sold last October at an auction in Jerusalem for \$1.7 million. That advice is valuable because of the fame of the Nobel Prize Winner who wrote it.

Over the past eighteen months, we have been studying the advice the writer of Hebrews has been giving to these Hebrew Christians. These believers were facing persecution from without, and pressure from within. Their family members were trying to get them to leave this new Jesus-faith, and return to the old ways of the Old Covenant. The writer reminded them that Jesus is superior to anything or anyone in the Old Testament. Jesus is better than angels; better than prophets; better than Moses; better than the High Priest, and He is better than the sacrificial system of bulls and goats. By placing their faith in Jesus, they had a much better promise of eternal life.

In 1859 Charles Dickens published an historical novel entitled *A Tale of Two Cities*, about London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. The writer of Hebrews explains God's dealing with people as a Tale of Two Mountains. In the last passage we saw that Mt. Sinai where God gave the Law represents the Old Covenant. There was the terrifying sight of God coming down as fire, lightning, and thunder, shaking Mount Sinai. God said, "Stay away or you will die."

But there's another mountain, Mt. Zion, that represents the New Covenant. At Mount Sinai God came down as a fierce firestorm, but in the New Covenant, represented by Mount Zion, God came down in a tiny little baby named Jesus, who was full of grace and truth. On the day that the Law was given in Exodus 32, 3,000 people died. And the first time the Gospel was preached on the Day of Pentecost on Mount Zion, 3,000 people were saved! It's important to live your life on Mt. Zion, not on Mount Sinai.

In the passage before us, we find the last of five strong warnings in Hebrews. Let's review them: 1. Don't drift away from the Word! (2:1-4) 2. Don't harden your hearts! (3:7-8) 3. Don't turn back from the promise! (6:4-8) 4. Don't give up meeting together! (10:26-31) And in this passage we find 5. Don't reject God's warning! (12:25).

Hebrews 12:25-29 (CSB). "See to it that you do not reject the one who speaks. For if they did not escape when they rejected him who warned them on earth, even less will we if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven. His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' This expression, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what is not shaken might remain. Therefore,

since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."

In 1957, Jerry Lee Lewis recorded a hit song entitled, "Whole Lotta' Shakin' Goin' On." And in many ways that became a theme song for his troubled life. He was once a student at an Assemblies of God Bible College in Waxahachie, Texas. He was studying to go into the ministry. However, he was kicked out the Bible College when he played a hymn in chapel with a boogie-woogie beat. He married seven times, including once to his 13-year-old cousin.

Whole lotta' shakin' goin' on is a pretty good description of what's happening in the world today. There's a whole lotta' shakin' going on. But according to this passage of scripture, there's going to be a whole LOT more shaking going on and God is going to do the shaking. That's why we need to connect our lives to God's unshakable kingdom.

There is an internal shaking that comes from fear and anxiety. And there is an external shaking that occurs when things around us are falling apart. I want to point out three things about God's shaking and then I'll touch on our response to God's unshakable Kingdom.

## **1. GOD HAS APPOINTED A DAY FOR A FINAL SHAKING TO BRING THIS WORLD TO A CLOSE.**

"Yet once more I will shake [*seios*=seismic] not only the earth but also the heavens." (Haggai 2:6 CSB) The writer is referring to the violent shaking that took place when God came down on Mount Sinai. He quotes the prophet Haggai to basically say, "You ain't seen nothing yet!"

In 1987, there was a Baptist Church in Riverside, California, that invited Cindy and me out to visit them. They were looking for a new pastor and after praying about it, the search committee was unanimous that we should move to Riverside and become the pastor of Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church. We prayed about it for many weeks and just didn't get any liberty from the Lord to move from sweet home Alabama.

I remember the members of the committee showing us around and the discussion got around to earthquakes. They all agreed that minor earthquakes were a common occurrence in California. But then they laughed and said everyone in California is waiting for the "Biggun." I figured out they meant everyone was expecting one huge devastating earthquake at some time in the future and they had named it the "Biggun." I have to admit that this talk about earthquakes played a role in our decision to stay in Alabama. Of course, we're glad we did so we could eventually move to Tyler.

As we shall see in a minute, this planet has experienced thousands of earthquakes, but according to the Bible, there really will be a final "Biggun." But it won't just happen in California. It will be an event that affects the whole planet—and even the heavens.

This final cataclysmic event is called "The Day of the Lord" in the Bible. That phrase appears 238 times in the Bible. The Day of the Lord isn't a twenty-four hour period of time. It is a series

of end-time events. The word "day" is used much like we would say, "We live in a day of political unrest."

Let's read about this final shaking from the Old Testament and the New Testament. God spoke through the prophet Isaiah saying, "Look, the day of the Lord is coming— cruel, with rage and burning anger—to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners...Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will shake from its foundations at the wrath of the Lord of Armies, on the day of his burning anger." (Isaiah 13:9, 13 CSB)

In Mark Jesus described this same event at the end of the world, as we know it. Jesus said, "But in those days, after that tribulation: The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken." (Mark 13:24-25 CSB) John describes this end-time earthquake in Revelation 6 when the sixth seal was broken—a massive earthquake affected the earth and the sky.

Now before you start suffering from end-of-world anxieties, let me remind you I believe the Bible teaches that the church, the Bride of Christ, will be taken to the Fathers house BEFORE the time of Great Tribulation. I discuss this fully in my book, *Revelation: God's Final Word*.

But knowing we won't be here for this final shaking, shouldn't just make us feel safe and lazy. Instead it should drive us with urgency and fervency to share the good news with everyone we can so they can come to Christ and be a part of the Church, before the Final Shaking

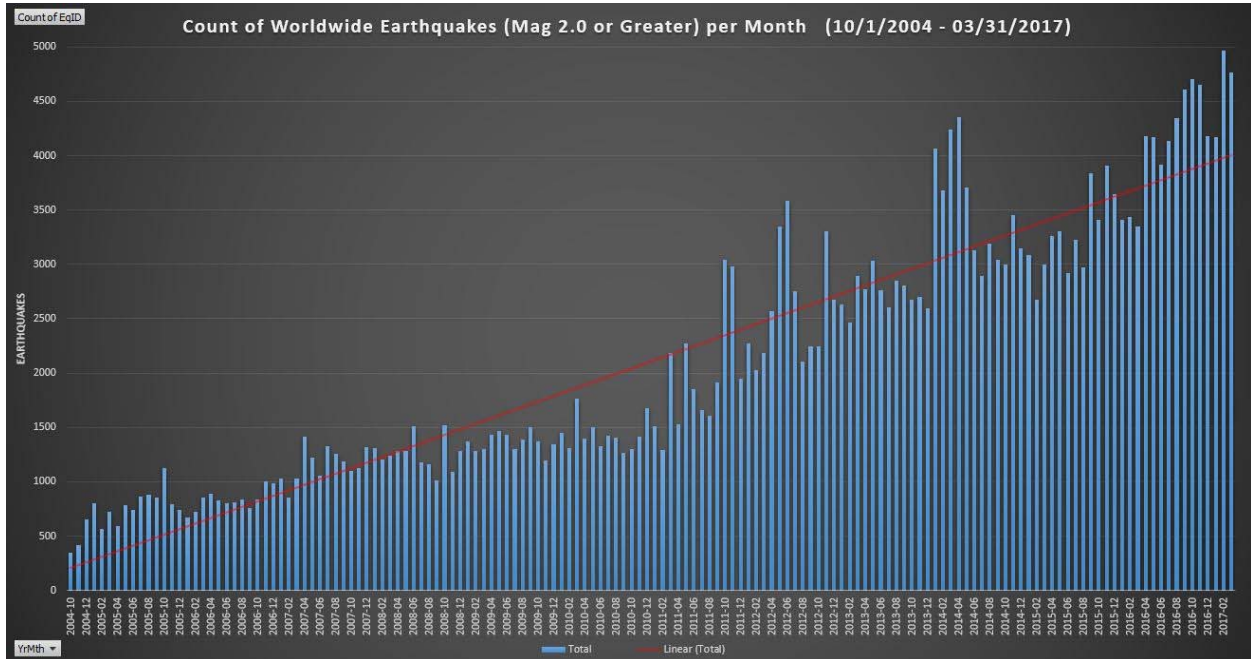
## **2. UNTIL THEN THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE OF EARTHQUAKES AND NATURAL CALAMITIES.**

Before this final shaking that will mark the end of the world as we know it, there will be a series of smaller earthquakes and natural disasters that Jesus compares to a woman having labor pains.

Jesus said, "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these events are the beginning of labor pains." (Matthew 24:7-8 CSB)

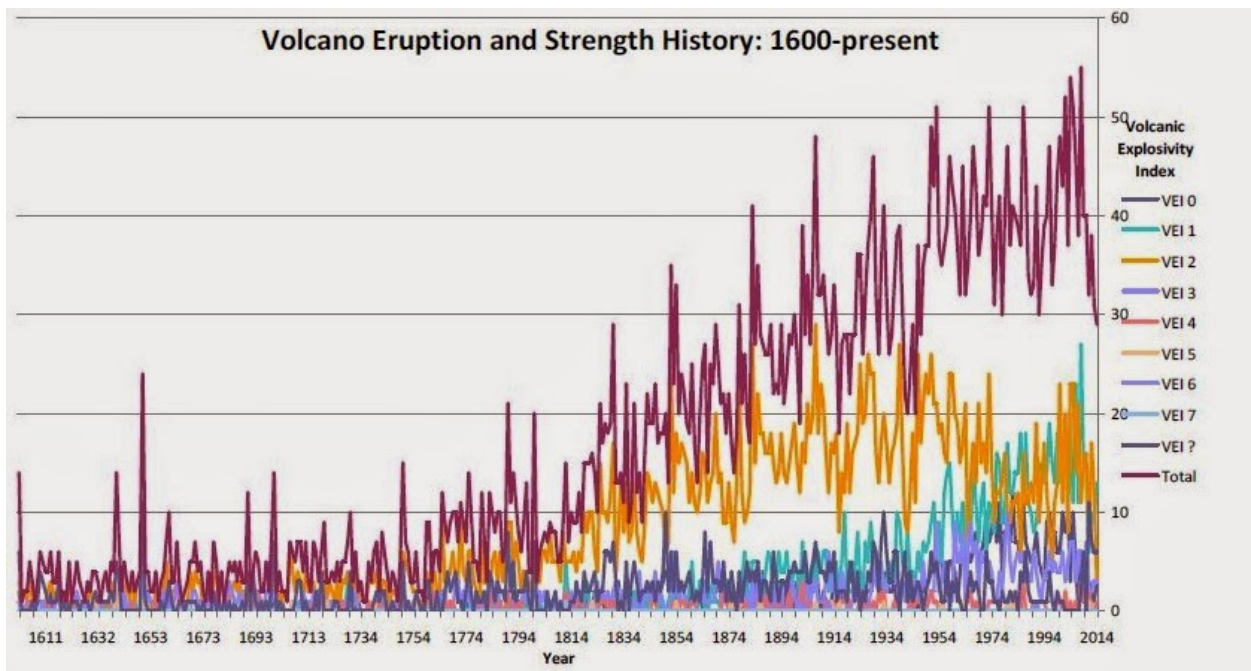
I'm not a doomsday prophet. I'm a good news preacher. But I do believe we are living in the last days. Based upon plenty of evidence, we can see the proof of what Jesus predicted. Let me show you a couple of charts.

First this chart shows the occurrences of global earthquakes that have a magnitude of 2.0 or more on the Richter scale. As you can see, there has been a dramatic increase from 2004 until 2017.



Data Source: [earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/search/](http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/search/) By: [ThunderingHeard.com](http://ThunderingHeard.com)

The second chart registers the number and strength of volcanic activity over the past four hundred years. As you can see, there is a dramatic increase in that as well.



Source: <http://twicefloes.com/forums/topic/volcanoes/#post-9582>

But for a moment, just ignore what Jesus said about earthquakes and natural disasters. He said these are like a woman who is going to deliver a baby. He compared them to contractions. Now, I'm certainly no expert of birth contractions, but I have witnessed the birth of my two daughters. Birth pains or contractions are God's ingenious way of letting a mother know her

baby in on the way. So, contractions increase in frequency and in intensity as the time nears for the birth. Even so, Jesus is saying these natural calamities will happen with more frequency and intensity as we approach the end of the world. But there's one other thing about birth pangs we don't want to miss. They lead up to something wonderful: The birth of a child. The labor may be painful, but it is full of hope. And once a mother holds that newborn, the joy of motherhood overshadows the pain of the delivery.

So, as we see the increase in all these things Jesus predicted, we shouldn't wring our hands or bite our fingernails. They are leading up to something wonderful. The blessed return of Jesus. We should be looking beyond the earthquakes and calamities and keep looking for the Blessed Hope and the Glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **3. WE CAN STAND IN CONFIDENCE BECAUSE WE ARE PART OF GOD'S UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM.**

I've said this before, but if you are getting your worldview from Fox News, CNN, or the Twitterverse, you are going to be left shaking in your boots or in your designer sandals. Everything seems to be shaking loose in Washington D.C. But I want to remind you that we don't pray, "Our Father who art in Washington." Every earthly king and every U.S. President will be a footnote in history. But God's kingdom shall never end. The Bible says in Philippians 3:20 (CSB) that "Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, The Lord Jesus Christ."

Think of some of the great kingdoms and civilizations of this world that have come and disappeared. There was the mighty Egyptian civilization and all that remains are a few stone pyramids in the desert. The mighty Babylonian and Persian empires are gone. The Greek and Roman Empires have vanished. There were the mighty Mayan and Inca civilizations on our hemisphere that thought they would last for thousands of years, and today their remains are obscured by jungles. And this brief American experiment of democracy will one day be an honorable mention on the list of this world's powers. Kingdoms come and kingdoms go. But there is one Kingdom that is eternal, The Kingdom of Heaven. There are over 100 occurrences of terms "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven" and "His Kingdom" in the New Testament.

One of my favorite sayings of Jesus about the Kingdom is found in Luke 12. Jesus said, "But seek his kingdom, and these things will be provided for you. Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:31-32 CSB)

You will recognize the phrase "seek his Kingdom" from Matthew 6:33. But in this passage Jesus mixes His metaphors to reveal the beauty of the Kingdom. He starts by saying, "don't be afraid, little flock." In that metaphor, we are the sheep and God is our Shepherd. Then it is the Father who gives us the Kingdom, so in addition to being the sheep of his flock, we are His children. Then Jesus employed the third metaphor—God is a King, and we are subjects of the King. But I love the part where Jesus tells us that God delights to give us the Kingdom.

So, we've noted the final shaking that will happen at the end of our world, as we know it. And we have noted that Jesus predicted before that final shaking, there would be a whole lotta' shakin' going on. But then, we are part of an unshakable Kingdom. So what should be our response to this powerful truth? Let me give you three responses we should make today.

### **A. Give thanks that I'm receiving God's unshakable Kingdom.**

The Bible says, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful." (Hebrews 12:28 CSB)

Notice the tense of the verb. We have already received it—but we are also continually receiving it. This Kingdom isn't something old and static. It is new and fresh every day. The Kingdom of God is the same as the Kingdom of Heaven. We are citizens of heaven NOW. And we are enjoying the benefits of being kingdom citizens.

This world, as we know it today, is only temporary. These buildings, hills, rivers, and valleys will all disappear someday. All the "things" we think are so important will be gone. Our computers, smart phones, flat screens, and pickup trucks will all vanish. Our homes and property will pass away. Only the things of heaven will endure. So be thankful for those things that will never disappear.

C.S. Lewis wrote this about heaven: "Heaven is reality itself. All that is fully real is Heavenly. For all that can be shaken will be shaken and only the unshakeable remains." (*The Great Divorce*)

And it's not enough to just be thankful. The Bible teaches that we should give thanks to the Lord for He is good. As I've said many times, there are terrible things that happen in this world every day. Not everything that happens is good. A lot of bad stuff is happening. But in the midst of all the bad things happening, you can still give thanks that God is good all the time and all the time God is good.

### **B. Worship and serve God with reverence and awe.**

The Bible says, "By it, [By this unshakable kingdom] we may serve [worship] God acceptably, with reverence and awe." (Hebrews 12:28 CSB) The word in this verse can be translated either worship or service, so we'll use both. The key is that we should never lose a sense of awe and wonder of God. Reverence is an attitude of ultimate respect. I believe reverence belongs ONLY to God. That's why I don't prefer the title "Reverend." You can call me irreverend if you like, because we should only show ultimate reverence to God. The word "awe" carries with it a sense of healthy fear. The Jews at Mount Sinai had a deathly fear of approaching that mountain where God came down in fire and lightning.

Throughout the Bible, it was a good thing when it was said that someone feared God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. But our fear is a loving fear. We don't live in terror of God because God's perfect love casts out all fear.

God created you and put you on this planet for a purpose. His purpose was to redeem you from destruction so that you can serve Him with gladness. First, are you thankful you're part of an unshakable kingdom? Second, are you worshipping and serving the Lord?

### **C. Submit myself to God's purifying fire.**

The Bible says, "For our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:29) This isn't just some final warning. Again, it is a reference to the fire of God that was displayed on Mount Sinai but remember, we're at Mount Zion. There are several references to God being like fire in the Bible. Here He is called a consuming fire. That's the kind of fire that burns UP. In Malachi 2 God is like a refiner's fire that BURNS OUT the impurities.

When you combine those two pictures, you arrive at a powerful truth. God's fire will destroy what it cannot purify; but it will purify what it cannot destroy.

So are you willing to submit yourself to God's fire? Try praying, "Father burn away everything in my life that is not pleasing to you. And Father, purify everything in me that is precious to you."

So, how does the Father go about subjecting us to His holy fire? Peter writes about enduring fiery trials. These daily trials and tribulations we face are God's way of putting us through the fire. Fire always tests the metal to see how pure it is.

This week we've been reading about Job's troubles in our Read through the Bible plan. The book of Job contains more questions than any book in the Bible. And most of the questions are unanswered. But hang in there with all the questions, because if you're on track reading with me, this is what we'll read Job explain this week, "Yet he knows the way I have taken, when he has tested me, I will emerge as pure gold." (Job 23:10 CSB)

God will be testing you this week or next week. It may seem like a fiery trial to you. But stay thankful that you are part of His unshakable kingdom. Worship and serve Him with reverence and awe. And don't give up on God's plan for your life, and you will emerge as pure gold.

### **CONCLUSION**

When the news reported that Billy Graham had died, Mike Huckabee said it was the ultimate fake news. Because he said, "Billy Graham is now more alive than any of us!"

Billy Graham's funeral was held on March 2. There were 1.1 million people who watched a live broadcast of it. Since then tens of millions have watched videos and specials about Billy Graham. He had planned his funeral years before and had wanted it to be his last crusade. That's why the speakers talked more about Jesus than about Billy Graham.

Just this past week Anne Graham Lotz reported that since her father's funeral, over 300,000 people have contacted the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to report that they have

accepted Christ. She said that not only was her dad's funeral his last crusade, but more people have been saved from his funeral service than in any of his crusades when he was alive.

So what was it about his life and message that has had such a deep impact on me and on millions of others? He was vitally connected to something eternal, something unshakable—the Kingdom of God. In a world where everything seems to be shaking loose, there is great value in connecting your life to the one thing in the Universe that is unshakable.

Do you realize that everything we think is "real" today, will one day be shaken loose and disappear? Gone. But those of us who are in God's unshakable Kingdom will outlive and outlast all these temporary things.

In 1911, poet J.T. Sutherland expressed it in these words: The stars shine over the earth, The stars shine over the sea, The stars look up to the Mighty God, The stars look down on me! The stars shall shine for a million years, For a million years and a day! But God and I shall live and love When the stars have passed away.

So, let's all give thanks that we're a part of God's eternal unshakable kingdom!



## OUTLINE

### 1. GOD HAS APPOINTED A DAY FOR A FINAL SHAKING TO BRING THIS WORLD TO A CLOSE.

"Look, the day of the Lord is coming— cruel, with rage and burning anger—to make the earth a desolation and to destroy its sinners...Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will shake from its foundations at the wrath of the Lord of Armies, on the day of his burning anger." *Isaiah 13:9, 13 CSB*

Jesus said, "But in those days, after that tribulation: The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken." *Mark 13:24-25 CSB*

### 2. UNTIL THEN THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE OF EARTHQUAKES AND NATURAL CALAMITIES.

Jesus said, "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these events are the beginning of labor pains." *Matthew 24:7-8 CSB*

### 3. WE CAN STAND IN CONFIDENCE BECAUSE WE ARE PART OF GOD'S UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM.

Jesus said, "But seek his kingdom, and these things will be provided for you. Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom." *Luke 12:31-32 CSB*

#### My Response:

#### A. Give thanks that I'm receiving God's unshakable Kingdom.

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful." *Hebrews 12:28 CSB*

#### B. Worship and serve God with reverence and awe.

"By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe." *Hebrews 12:28 CSB*

#### C. Submit myself to God's purifying fire.

"For our God is a consuming fire." *Hebrews 12:29*

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For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes



*David O. Dykes, Pastor  
Green Acres Baptist Church  
Tyler, Texas*

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