

The increase in number and intensity of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions continue to make media headlines around the world today. The Lord Jesus warned us this would be characteristic of the end times, although He never stated what the direct cause of these calamities would be.

However, elsewhere in Scripture, we are specifically told that violent shakings of the Earth's surface and eruptions are often direct interventions from the Hand of God Himself.

When used in this context, they are frequently connected to divine judgement on nations, cities, or individual people groups. Take for instance the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah recorded in Genesis.

A similar situation is recorded in Numbers, where the Lord caused the ground to open and swallow up Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their entire household for challenging the leadership of Moses and Aaron.

Again, Ezekiel describes the utter defeat of the invading armies of Gog and Magog by means of a killer quake, and John in Revelation speaks of similar catastrophic events.

But aside from divine judgement, phenomenon like these were also sent for the benefit of nations, cities, or people groups. In this case, they would confirm God's Word spoken by the Prophets or Apostles as authentic. Think of the incident in Exodus chapter nineteen where Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke and the whole mountain trembled greatly with the giving of the Law.

In addition, although less frequent, the Bible also mentions the Lord causing such natural events for the benefit of even a small number of individuals at a particular place and time.

We read in Acts sixteen that as Paul and Silas praised God in prison there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds loosed. The jailer's life was saved and those of his household as a result.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, we are told a great earthquake occurred while Christ hung on the Cross and that when the centurion and those who were keeping watch over Jesus with him saw what had happened, they were filled with fear and confessed He was God's Son.

Last, there is also an isolated incident in the Old Testament where even a Fiery Prophet on the run was in need of some powerful displays of nature to confirm God's Word!