

Earthquake!

Is the Alaska quake a sign?

Scripture: “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places” (Matt. 24:7, NKJV).

The only earthquake I’ve ever felt occurred June 10, 1987, just before Wednesday evening Bible class. It measured 5.0 on the Richter scale. At first, I thought a truck had veered off of the highway by the church building because I heard a deep rumble. Next thing I knew, I couldn’t keep my feet on the floor! I grabbed the desk and bookshelf in my office to keep myself from falling. In a few seconds, it was over.

The recent 7.0 quake in Anchorage, Alaska, caused untold damage, but no loss of human life as far as we know. Let’s be praying for those affected, and assist materially where we can.

In ancient times, God used earthquakes to communicate His displeasure. “You will be punished by the Lord of hosts with thunder and earthquake . . .” (Isa. 29:6). Earthquakes also signaled the awesome presence of the Lord, such as on Mt. Sinai (Exo. 19:18).

Jesus predicted that numerous signs, including earthquakes, would occur leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:7). Unfortunately, this passage has been abused to teach that earthquakes and the like are signs of the impending return of Jesus! To the contrary, Jesus taught that no one knows the day and hour of His return; everyday life will be going on as usual, “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Matt. 24:38). Both Paul and Peter said Jesus’ return will be “as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). Jesus Himself said, “if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matt, 24:43-44).

Earthquakes have been occurring all over the world for thousands of years. Since the Lord has not told us in His word that earthquakes today are signs of anything, we ought not to presume that they are. Jesus will return – that much is certain. Our job is not to try to figure out when, but to be ready always!

Song: “Living By Faith”

Prayer: “Kind Heavenly Father, we pray for those affected by the earthquake in Anchorage, and for others who have suffered from quakes in other places at other times. Help us to be sensitive to the suffering all around us, and to help where we can. Disasters remind us of the uncertainty and brevity of life, and we pray You will help us to be ready for the Lord to return or for our lives to end, whenever that may be. In Jesus’ name, Amen.