

Major Earthquake In China

Last Monday, a 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck the city of Chengdu, China and is believed to have killed over 12,000 people with more than 18,000 missing. Online pictures depict the immense devastation, much of it affecting students and children. We will keep them in our prayers, hoping that no Christians perished and hoping that God will comfort those who lost loved ones.

Regrettably, some will use this occasion to try to teach false doctrine. During His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus warned, "*For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places*" (Matthew 24:7; cf. Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11). There is abundant historical evidence of earthquakes occurring before the destruction of Jerusalem: Crete (A.D. 46 or 47), Rome (A.D. 51), Apamea (A.D. 53), Laodicea (A.D. 60) and Campania (A.D. 62 or 63). The multiple signs included false Christs (Matthew 24:5; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8), wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9), persecutions (Matthew 24:9-10; Mark 13:9-13; Luke 21:12-19), false prophets (Matthew 24:11; Mark 13:22), the "*abomination of desolation*" (Matthew 24:14-15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20), people falling by the edge of the sword (Luke 21:24; Mark 13:19) and the "*times of the Gentiles*" (Luke 21:24). The Lord uses figurative language to depict the city's fall; similar language is used to foretell the judgment of nations (Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-27). Finally, in the parable of the fig tree (Matthew 24:32-33; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 24:29-31), if one would pay attentions to the signs, they could flee and be saved.

It is in contradiction to the truth and in very poor taste to use these types of tragedies to propagate erroneous theories of the end of the world. There has certainly been enough suffering. Let's not add to it by condemning people's souls to an eternity in hell by claiming that a made-up series of "end events" are just around the corner.

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