

May 2011

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Are the Wheels Coming Off the World?

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

--Matt 24:32-34

Obviously, the world didn't come to a violent end on May 21 as Harold Camping, the inveterate preacher-prognosticator had warned. But, with respect to the latest Middle East uprisings (dubbed *the Arab Spring*), coupled with freakish earthquakes, fires, floods, tornadoes, and collapsing financial systems—just in the first five months of 2011—who is it who believes all is well on planet earth?

According to *Wikipedia*, the March 11, 2011 Tōhoku earthquake, was a magnitude 9.0 undersea mega-thrust earthquake. “It was... one of the five most powerful earthquakes in the world overall since modern record-keeping began in 1900.”

“The earthquake triggered extremely destructive tsunami waves... that struck Japan, in some cases traveling up to six miles inland. In addition to loss of life and destruction of infrastructure, the tsunami caused a number of nuclear accidents... [including a] 12 mile evacuation zone around the Fukushima I Nuclear Power Plant. The overall cost could exceed \$300 billion, making it the most expensive natural disaster on record.”¹

The United States, too, has recently experienced both the vagaries and the wrath of “mother nature.” In Texas, a winter wildfire season brought on by a record drought, extended well into spring. “The percentage of exceptional drought in the state was the highest since the United States Drought Monitor began tracking the data in 2000.”²

In neighboring states, flooding has been the cause of recent widespread suffering and severe economic damage. Mountain snow-packs hammered by unrelenting spring rains produced record floods along the Mississippi River Valley and neighboring river deltas destroying homes, businesses, and vital food crops.

But, more frightful than droughts and floods are tornados, especially so, an extremely large and violent tornado outbreak that occurred from April 25-28, 2011. Known as the 2011 Super Outbreak, it was the most extensive tornado storm system in U.S. history according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Storms leaving catastrophic destruction in their wake, especially across the state of Alabama, swept through the Southern, Midwestern, and Northeastern sections of the United States.³

Then, on May 22, a mile-wide category 5 tornado with winds recorded at more than 200 miles per hour ripped through Joplin, Missouri taking at least 139 lives and injuring more than 900 others. It was the deadliest storm recorded since 1947. Preliminary reports for tornados so far for the year total 1,333. For comparison, the usual yearly total is 1,274.

But, if 89-year-old Harold Camping only needed the sky to fall to persuade others that the end was near, perhaps he gained a following when flocks of dead birds began falling from the skies this spring in Arkansas, East Texas, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana and elsewhere around the world (not to mention tons of dead fish washing up on beaches from Connecticut to California). It's enough to make anyone jump to conclusions concerning end time events. Even a broadcaster not known to be "religious," recently quipped, "It seems the wheels are coming off the world."

Nearly three-thousand years ago, Isaiah prophesied that in the last days, "the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard..." (Isa 24:20). Indeed, it appears our planet is in the grip of increasingly destructive forces resulting in economic upheaval, famine, and death. Concurrently, as Jesus said would be the case immediately prior to his return to earth, nation is rising against nation, bringing about new military alliances and power structures.

So, why is the world appearing to unravel? One reason may be that iniquity is abounding and the love of many is growing cold (Matt 24:12). More so, the world is deceived and is unwittingly involved in a scheme designed to preempt a super coronation that will take place on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. On a day certain, Israel's *kinsman redeemer* is coming to take possession of what is legally and justly His. Pity the world leaders who try to block Messiah's triumphal return.

Unfortunately, one of those leaders currently headed down a very dangerous path is President Barack Hussein Obama. In a shocking new foreign policy declaration on May 19, Mr. Obama called for Israel to deal away a substantial portion of its inheritance, including one-half of Jerusalem, its capitol city. Here is what author-commentator Hal Lindsey said of Mr. Obama's policy statement:

"House Speaker John Boehner invited Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to address a joint session of Congress on May 24. Fearing that the Israeli leader might outline a bold new peace initiative in the Middle East -- and put the Palestinians, the Europeans, and the Administration in a box -- the President decided to deliver his own major foreign policy address the day before Netanyahu was scheduled to visit the White House..."

"...The President broke with 60 years of bi-partisan tradition and did something no previous President had done. (Of course, we DID vote for "change," didn't we?) He laid down specific parameters for the talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis. He demanded that the Israelis withdraw to the "1967 borders." Never mind that there's no such thing as "1967 borders." Technically, those are the 1949 armistice lines. But that's a ticky-tack detail in the President's mind.

He also slyly mentioned that the new Palestinian state needs to be "contiguous." That means the two parts need to be touching or connected physically. What the President doesn't realize (or maybe he does) is that he has now moved the goal line in the eyes and minds of the Palestinians. What they had once thought to be the best they could ever hope for now appears, if the President is heeded, to be the new "starting point" for future negotiations."⁴

For certain, Israel is a more reliable time piece for determining when *summer is nigh* than are earthquakes and floods. And, certainly, there will continue to be oddballs that set dates for the Second Coming and oddballs (scoffers) who say He isn't coming soon. But both forget that Jesus said, "I come at an hour such as ye think not..." (Matt 24:44)

Yet, who is to say that many of the recent natural and geo-political "happenings" are not in fact, the "birth pains" that Jesus told us to watch for. If the pains are indeed labor contractions, is it not reasonable and advisable to look for Messiah sooner rather than later?

Rick Forcier

¹ wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_T%C5%8Dhoku_earthquake_and_tsunami

² "Texas drought worst in recent history," *ConnectAmarillo.com*, May 5, 2011.

³ "April 2011 tornado information," NOAA. USA.gov. May 9, 2011, www.noaanews.noaa.gov/april_2011_tornado_info

⁴ The Hal Lindsey Report: www.hallindsey.com/ 5-27-2011