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*presents*

# Asian Tsunamis of 2004 and Endtime Christianity

by Tom Stewart

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the Beginnings of Sorrows" (Mark 13:8).

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### **Preface**

*What does God have to do to get our attention?* Shouldn't our contact with God through the overwhelming evidence of His Creation be sufficient *already* to alert us to the presence of a "faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19)? "19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of Him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20). The High and Lofty One has created man and endowed him with the Godlike capacity of freely choosing or rejecting the Everlasting God. "So God created man in His Own image, in the image of God created He him" (Genesis 1:27). But, man in his headiness and highmindedness has taken the jewel of his Moral Agency and through his intellect has produced religion, science, art, and achievements that seek to dethrone the Almighty. "21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:21-22). The Living God has been amazingly longsuffering with us, and instead of immediately blotting out mankind, "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). Unwilling that "any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9), God Only Wise has provided mankind with an Infallible Record of His Love and "His wonderful works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:8) in that God has "spoken unto us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). The Good News has been proclaimed throughout the world that the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)-- that God has freely given Himself to the world through His Son that we should be saved, sanctified, and glorified. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Has mankind been grateful for the "Grace of God that bringeth Salvation" (Titus 2:11)? Sadly *not*, for these nearly two millennia since the birth of the LORD Jesus Christ, *only* a third of the world even *claims* to be Christian, and the fastest growing segment of the religion of the world is Islam:

It has been projected by United States statisticians, David Barrett and Todd Johnson, in "World Christian Trends: AD 30 - AD 2200" (2001) that of the 6.28 billion people in the world, 33% claim to be Christian (2.1 billion) and 20% profess Islam (1.3 billion); however, Islam's annual growth rate is 2.1%, while Christianity's growth is 1.3%--

compared to the world's population growth rate of 1.2%.

Of that third of humanity that professes Christianity, what part are actually saved? "17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:17-18). And, how can any honestly profess to know Jesus Christ as LORD and Saviour, unless they presently and actively obey Him? "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4). The Eternal Son of God has promised us that He is coming back soon, i.e., "I come quickly" (Revelation 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20)-- and, *He is coming soon*-- but, will you be as a Wise Virgin and be in a state of readiness to enter into the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? "1 Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the Marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 25:1-13). [See also our article, "A Tale of Ten Virgins" ---<http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html>, for the connection of Christ's Matthew 25:1-13 parable to His Soon Coming and Rapture of His Watching and Waiting Saints.] In *Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible* (1706-1721), Matthew Henry (1662-1714) comments on Matthew 25:5:

The bridegroom tarried, that is, he did not come out so soon as they expected. What we look for as certain, we are apt to think is very near; many in the apostles' times imagined that the day of the Lord was at hand, but it is not so. Christ, as to us, seems to tarry, and yet really does not, Hab. ii. 3. ["For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Habakkuk 2:3).] There is good reason for the Bridegroom's tarrying; there are many intermediate counsels and purposes to be accomplished, the elect must all be called in, God's patience must be manifested, and the saints' patience tried, the harvest of the earth must be ripened, and so must the harvest of heaven too. But though Christ tarry past our time, he will not tarry past the due time.

Are you as "he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments" (Revelation 16:15) clean, walking without known sin to be thus accounted worthy to escape, or will you foolishly console yourself that your professed faith in Christ is sufficient to cancel out your present walk of disobedience? "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

### **The Day of Their Calamity**

This brings us to the events of December 26th 2004, where an undersea earthquake with a magnitude of 9.0 occurred in the Indian Ocean off the western coast of northern Sumatra and Indonesia, thus generating a series of tsunamis, whose massive, 50 foot (15 meter) high waves devastated Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and other coastal nations over the next seven hours, killing more than 150,000-- with a greater death toll feared for those missing never to be found and those who would become casualties of disease and starvation. "7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the Beginning of Sorrows [Greek, *odin*, pain of childbirth, travail pain]" (Matthew 24:7-8). The total energy of the tsunami waves has been estimated by the Tsunami Society to be about five megatons of TNT, which is more than the twice the total explosive energy used during World War 2 (including the two atomic bombs). "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Psalm 62:11). In terms of lives lost, the earthquake is one of the ten worst in history, while the tsunami itself is the worst in recorded history. "Thou hast made the Earth to tremble" (Psalm 60:2). Tsunamis are rare to the Indian Ocean. Minutes before the tsunami struck, the sea temporarily receded, stranding fish on the beach. This attracted curious children, who began to collect the fish, but were then surprised and overcome by the fury of the tsunami. One-third of the tsunami victims appear to be children, because they were least able to resist the surging waters. "Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). The death toll of Indonesia alone has been more than 100,000, and hundreds of foreign tourists have also been officially reported as dead, while thousands are still unaccounted for. Such a high casualty rate among foreign nationals is not unexpected, since a large part of the tourists vacationed at beachfront

hotels and bungalows, spending their time on the beaches and in the water swimming, boating, scuba diving, snorkeling, etc. on this day after Christmas, Sunday morning. "For He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof" (Psalm 107:25).

On January 7th 2005, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell described the devastation he saw in Indonesia's Aceh province: "With respect to what I've seen in the course of my career, I've been in war and I've been in a number of hurricanes, tornadoes and other relief operations but I have never seen anything like this." Powell added, "Only by seeing it on the ground can you really appreciate what it must have been like on that terrible day." "The LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet" (Nahum 1:3). A day later, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan viewed much of the same area. "I have never seen such utter destruction mile after mile," he said, after a helicopter flight over Indonesia's Sumatra island. In amazement, Annan remarked, "You wonder where are the people? What has happened to them?" "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39). Such utter devastation has been witnessed by the relief workers of the crewmembers of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, whose SH-60 Seahawk helicopters were the first element of the world's relief effort to reach the remote areas of northern Sumatra, that Commander Jon Baca stated, "The destruction is biblical in proportion. The pictures I've seen on the news cannot capture what it looks like. Whole towns and villages for miles down the coast have been completely washed away. Only the naked eye can consume the scene for what has happened." "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6). To this statement of Amos, *Matthew Henry's Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible* (1706-1721), comments:

The evil of sin is from ourselves; it is our own doing. But the evil of trouble, personal or public, is from God, and is his doing; whoever are the instruments, God is the principal agent. Out of his mouth both evil and good proceed. This consideration, that, whatever evil is in the city, the Lord has done it, should engage us patiently to bear our share in public calamities and to study to answer God's intention in them.

Epidemics are feared from the lack of sanitation and fresh drinking water, which has been contaminated by seawater. Farmland may also be poisoned for years from the layer of salt deposited by the waves. The Maldives archipelago nation has had many of its 1,200 low-lying islands literally wiped off the map. "God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psalm 75:7). Enough of a shift of the Earth's mass from the earthquake took place on December 26th that even the Earth's rotation was slightly altered-- theoretically shortening the length of a day by three microseconds-- and causing a wobble on the Earth's axis by up to an inch (2.54 centimeters). "21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the Earth? 22 It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the Earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: 23 That bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the Earth as vanity. 24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the Earth: and He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble" (Isaiah 40:21-24). [See our article, "For the Elect's Sake: Or, That a Merciful God Will Shorten the Tribulation Week" ---<http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Timeline/For.the.Elects.Sake.html>, for a discussion of: (1) Joshua's Long Day, where God miraculously caused the Earth to stop spinning, (2) Hezekiah's Sundial, where God miraculously reversed the rotation of the Earth, and (3) the upcoming 4th Trumpet Judgment, where God will miraculously speed up the rotation of the Earth! (Remember, even *this* earthquake of 2004 has been said by scientists to have theoretically shortened the length of a day-- at least, for a while.)]

### **Why Hath the LORD Done Thus?**

A word of stern caution to those Professed Christians, who view the Asian tsunamis as *simply or only* a judgment against Islam (one of the most rapidly growing religions in the world), or Hinduism (the world's third largest religion), or Buddhism (the fourth largest religion in the world), i.e., "1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matthew 7:1-2).

A Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka had barely survived the tsunami himself. Increasingly, he was approached with questions from the people in Sri Lanka, demanding why God had allowed such a calamity, which had tested their religious beliefs to the limit. But, in particular, why did so many children have to die? He answered that it is man's fault, that nature has turned against man, because it was antagonized by his immoral behaviour. He counseled survivors to the control of the mind and the distancing of oneself from the material world according to the teachings of his Lord Buddha, as the key to enduring this tragedy, which had befallen them.

This Buddhist monk is correct about man's immoral behaviour and love of materialism, but unless we become a New Creature in the Son of God, Who is the LORD Jesus Christ, then we cannot endure this life or eternity to come, for without Christ, we already are abiding in the Wrath of God. "He that believeth on the Son hath Everlasting Life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). True Religion is embodied in the Person of the LORD Jesus Christ, Who is the Narrow Way, i.e., "strait [Greek, *stenos*, narrow] is the gate, and narrow [Greek, *thlibo*, a compressed way] is the way, which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). A True Christian, in all his simplicity, *already* has the answer for the question of the troubled Buddhist, for Jesus Christ *is* the embodiment of *all* of our answer, because Jesus is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life: [and] no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Jesus]" (John 14:6).

A story from the New Testament illustrates how the LORD Jesus was approached by those, who would gain His opinion of a current event, concerning Pilate's slaying of some Galileans as they worshipped in the Temple, i.e., "1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-3), to which Christ added His response to another calamity involving the deaths of eighteen from the collapse of a tower in Siloam, i.e., "4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:4-5). We must be careful *of our motivation* when we question the LORD concerning the "why" of the Asian tsunamis, for He may turn the tables and place *us* in the position of the ones in need of repentance, i.e., "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5).

John Gill (1697-1771) comments from *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament* (1809) on Luke 13:1:

These Galileans were very likely some of the followers of Judas Gaulonitis, or Judas of Galilee; see Acts 5:37 ["After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed" (Acts 5:37)], who endeavoured to draw off the Jews from the Roman government, and affirmed it was not lawful to give tribute to Caesar; at which Pilate being enraged, sent a band of soldiers, and slew these his followers; who were come up to the feast of the passover, as they were offering their sacrifices in the temple, and so mixed their blood with the blood of the passover lambs: this being lately done, some of the company spoke of it to Christ; very likely some of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom he had just now taxed as hypocrites; either to know his sense of Pilate's conduct, that should he condemn it as brutish and barbarous, they might accuse him to him; or should he approve of it, might traduce him, and bring him into contempt among the people; or to know his sentiments concerning the persons slain, whether or no they were not very wicked persons; and whether this was not a judgment upon them, to be put to death in such a manner, and at such a time and place, and which sense seems to be confirmed by Christ's answer.

Gill further comments on Luke 13:4:

There was a pool near Jerusalem, called the Pool of Siloam, ["And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing" (John 9:7)], near, or over which, was a tower built, which fell down and killed eighteen men; very likely as they were purifying themselves in the pool, and so was a case very much like the other, and might be a very late one: and this Christ the rather observes, and puts them in mind of, that they might see that not Galileans only, whom they had in great contempt, but even inhabitants of Jerusalem, died violent deaths, and came to untimely ends; and yet, as not in the former case, so neither in this was it to be concluded from hence, that they were sinners of a greater size, or their state worse than that of other men.

The question is not *if* God caused the Asian tsunamis; but, "*Why* hath the LORD done thus unto this land?" (1Kings 9:8). Be careful! Again, we need to be very circumspect in our questioning of the Almighty as to why He caused the Asian tsunamis, for He is a Sovereign God, and His "dominion is an Everlasting Dominion, and His Kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:34-35). However, since the Omnipotent God condescends to feed even the birds-- "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke 12:24)-- would He not also condescend to teach us why He hath done thus? "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). I offer for your consideration the following *four reasons why God caused the Asian tsunamis of 2004*: (1) to get the attention of the *entire* world, (2) to get us to think about what He wants done, (3) to get us to freely and actually

perform His Will, and (4) to encourage us that Jesus is coming soon to Rapture His Church.

### **To Get the Attention of the Entire World**

*To get the attention of the entire world* is manifestly the first and greatest design of the Almighty in causing the Asian tsunamis of 2004. "That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this" (Isaiah 41:20). These tsunamis will occupy the news copy of the world, as long as it serves the purpose of the Almighty, for He is capable of using the editorial policies of the mightiest of news syndicates, i.e., "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). Getting someone's attention is most difficult, as any advertiser can testify, but once Jehovah gains our attention, He can then conduct business with us. "1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I" (Exodus 3:1-4).

Man was certainly contributory in the circumstances of the tragedy of the Asian tsunamis, in that he:

- (1) dynamited many of the coastal reefs in the tsunami effected areas to facilitate South Asian shipping, thereby stripping the coasts of protection against the killer waves of a tsunami,
- (2) removed protective coastal dunes and mangroves for economic purposes, and
- (3) built buildings and structures along the coastal areas.

The use-and-replenishing of the Earth is a tender balance of man's God-given necessity of dominion over the Earth, i.e., "And God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth" (Genesis 1:26), and his ecologic stewardship over the planet, i.e., "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and *replenish* the Earth, and subdue it: and have dominion" (Genesis 1:28). When man does not carefully balance or "walk before the LORD in the land of the living" (Psalm 116:9), then God may very well use man's contributory actions to produce what the secular world calls a Natural Disaster. For want of better language, and the inability to explain them otherwise, even insurance companies classify such events as an "act of God." "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

Some may object that if God is so wise and so powerful, must He resort to such tactics, just to get our attention? Yes, for if the Creator has "all power" (Matthew 28:18) and is "only wise" (1Timothy 1:17), then *this must be* the most wise way, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19). The problem is *not* with God, but *the problem has been with man and his sin*. "Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). God is *not* to be faulted for man's disobedience, for no one could have done more to secure our obedience than our Faithful Creator, i.e., He gave our first parents:

- (1) Perfect Moral Likeness to Himself, when He "created man in His Own image" (Genesis 1:27),
- (2) Perfect Bodies, when He "breathed into [Adam's] nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7),
- (3) a Perfect Planet, when He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (Genesis 2:9),
- (4) Perfect Occupations, when He appointed Adam as the caretaker of the "Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15), and
- (5) Himself as Perfect Companionship, when He was "walking in the Garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8).

"3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and My vineyard. 4 What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" (Isaiah 5:3-4).

If sin is most often the occasion for God getting man's attention, then it would be reasonable that the Asian tsunamis would be the occasion for the unconverted world to reconsider their religious beliefs. "Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?" (Jeremiah 16:20). Is this deceptiveness from God that He would manufacture a

tsunami, only to offer Jesus Christ as the Hope of the World? No, God is a "God of Truth" (Deuteronomy 32:4), and He is justified in all of His Righteous Actions to stop the rebellion that has plagued the planet, since "that Old Serpent, which is the Devil" (Revelation 20:2) snared his first prey. "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all Whose works are Truth, and His ways Judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Daniel 4:37). Remember the sailors of the ship on which Jonah fled to Tarshish, in the opposite direction from Jehovah's appointed destination of Nineveh? Jonah was hounded by the LORD. "But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken" (Jonah 1:4). The pagan sailors used all their nautical skills to save themselves and the ship. "Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them" (Jonah 1:5). Upon finding that Jonah was the *cause* of their problem, Jonah tells them the way to save themselves-- cast him into the sea! "And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you" (Jonah 1:12). Though they still tried to save the ship without losing Jonah, they finally gave up and threw Jonah into the sea, with the *effect* that the sea became calm-- just as Jonah prophesied of his God. "So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging" (Jonah 1:15). God got the attention of these pagan mariners through this Natural Disaster, and then, He got the desired reaction. "Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows" (Jonah 1:16). Will God always use such means? No, but it is merciful, when He does. "Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds" (Psalm 36:5).

Does God only allow an Asian tsunami to get the attention of the unconverted world, or does He also use an Asian tsunami to communicate with the Christians, too? "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Bible Believing Christians died, at least by the hundreds, on December 26th 2004. Dr. Ian R. K. Paisley (1926- ) of the Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church of Belfast, Ulster Northern Ireland explained on Thursday night, January 6th 2004 that 850 members of a church in southern India, affiliated with his Free Presbyterian Church, perished in the Asian tsunami-- [http://www.ianpaisley.org/new\\_details.asp?ID=267](http://www.ianpaisley.org/new_details.asp?ID=267). He affirmed that more than 92,000 people in that area, also lost their lives, and added: "Hundreds and hundreds of children have been orphaned. Some so young they do not even know who their parents were." Donations for relief have been collected through the family of churches associated with the World Congress of Fundamentalists. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). We know that the tsunami has been "A Call to the Unconverted"-- to borrow a phrase from the Puritan preacher, Richard Baxter (1615-1691)-- but, it must also communicate to Bible Believing Christians that we must clean our own houses, if we hope to have any good effect upon the world for the LORD Jesus Christ. "17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1Peter 4:17-18). *It is much more appropriate that we would see this tsunami as "A Call to Reviving the Converted,"* for if we do not judge thus, God *must* deal with us. "31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1Corinthians 11:31-32). Spiritual Lethargy arises when we place more emphasis on separation from Biblically Unsound Christian Organizations than from separating from personal sin in *our* own lives, from placing more emphasis upon the Infallible Word of God than upon the Living Word occupying and sanctifying every part of *our* lives, from placing more emphasis upon saving the Lost from *his* sin than saving the Saved from *our* sinning. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14). Unless we can promote for ourselves a Primitive Christianity that seeks more than the "tradition of men" (Matthew 7:8; Colossians 2:8), whether it be a legalism of religious "holier than thou" (Isaiah 65:5) or the world's "philosophy and vain deceit" (Colossians 2:8), then the "Word of Christ [will not] dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16). It is not ours to ascertain the hearts of those 850, who perished-- for God knoweth-- instead, "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2Chronicles 7:14).

Both the Buddhist monk and Dr. Paisley mentioned the fact of the high death toll and orphaning of so many children in the Asian tsunami. Especially the children... why did God allow it?

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6)

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Psalm 9:17)

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11)

"O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." (Habakkuk 3:2)

"Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." (Leviticus 26:42)

"Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock." (Ezekiel 36:37)

### **To Get Us to Think About What He Wants Done**

*To get us to think about what He wants done* must be the second design of the Almighty in causing the Asian tsunamis of 2004. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3). Yes, we may be called upon to think about things that we understand but poorly; but believe them nonetheless, when we exercise our feeble intellect, because they have been infallibly declared in the Pure Word of God, e.g., the Doctrine of the Trinity, where God is one, yet three, i.e., "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD [the Father], and His Spirit [the Holy Spirit], hath sent Me [the Son]" (Isaiah 48:16), or the Sovereignty of God coupled with the Free Will of man, i.e., Sovereignty says, "If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth" (2Timothy 2:25), while Free Will says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). [See our editorials, "St. Patrick: The Trinity and the Shamrock" ---[http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Fellowship/Edit\\_Trinity.and.Shamrock.html](http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Trinity.and.Shamrock.html), and "Why I Use the King James Version" ---[http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Fellowship/Edit\\_Thy\\_Word\\_Is\\_Truth.html](http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Thy_Word_Is_Truth.html), to illustrate the Doctrine of the Trinity and the concept of a *preserved* Bible that comforts us in the knowledge of His Sovereignty, when we are freely practicing His Divine Will.] It is not only spiritual and Christian, but logical, too, to think before we act, for understanding has always been a key component of Spirit filled action. "And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Exodus 31:3). Thinking is coupled to understanding, and the word "understanding" appears fifty-three times (KJV) in the divine book of wisdom, which is the Book of Proverbs, illustrating that the "Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding" (Isaiah 11:2) that abode upon the Son of Man, should rest upon us, as well. "17 That the God of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints" (Ephesians 1:17-18).

The conversion of the Apostle Paul is a classic example of how God expects His people to be thinking. "1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the LORD, [Saul the Persecutor is unwilling to think that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah.] went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this Way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven: 4 And he fell to the Earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? [Saul the Troubled began to think that Jesus might be Jehovah!] 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? [Saul the Timid was still unsure, if his fear that Jesus was the Messiah, was so.] And the LORD said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do? [Now Saul the Converted not only knew that Jesus is Jehovah, but he submitted himself to Jesus by asking the signature question that identifies a True Christian, 'LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?'] And the LORD said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. [Notice that Saul the Contemplator was given sufficient time to sit in the physical darkness and think.] 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the Earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the LORD in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, LORD. 11 And the LORD said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. [Saul the Hopeful could see the vision of Ananias coming to restore his sight, but still, he could only think and not see.] 13 Then Ananias answered, LORD, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy Saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy name. 15 But the LORD said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the

Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the LORD, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized [Now Saul the Thoughtfully Sighted could both think and see, remembering for the rest of his life the intense thoughts burnt into him during those three days.]" (Acts 9:1-18).

Who God has chosen to pen His Epistle to the Romans with its carefully crafted statements about the Gospel of God, He has used mightily to make other men think. What did the Apostle Paul infallibly record by inspiration? "1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For What Saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:1-3). On May 24th 1738, John Wesley was forced by the Almighty to think about the salvation of his own soul, when confronted with Martin Luther's famous *Preface to Romans* (1552) affixed to its *Commentary on Romans*-- and this was just a commentary introduction to the inspired work of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Luther wrote in his *Preface to Romans*: "Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times." Wesley then recounted,

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

Thus, the seeds for the great Wesleyan Revival were planted in the heart of John Wesley, who God would later use to rescue England from the onslaught of the humanistic French Revolution (1789-1799) just across the Channel. All because God made Saul of Tarsus to think, who in turn, made Martin Luther to think, who in turn, made John Wesley to think, who in turn, made me to think, who desires that you, dear reader, may also think. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2Timothy 2:2). [You are invited to read short biographical sketches of many of the great men of God-- including John Wesley, Charles H. Spurgeon, Charles G. Finney, D. L. Moody, George Mueller, Sir Robert Anderson, Andrew Murray, etc.-- of the Philadelphian Church from our article, "The Church of Philadelphia Hall of Fame" ---<http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Voice/Hall.of.Fame.html>.]

Concerning the need for intense thought to develop our understanding of God and His expectations of us, Charles G. Finney wrote in the Preface of his *Lectures on Systematic Theology* (1851):

I will not presume that I have satisfied others upon the points I have discussed, but I have succeeded at least in satisfying myself. I regard the assertion, that the doctrines of theology cannot preserve a logical consistency throughout, as both dangerous and ridiculous... I have written for those who are willing to take the trouble of thinking and of forming opinions of their own on theological questions. It has been no part of my aim to spare my pupils or any one else the trouble of intense thought... My brother, sister, friend--read, study, think, and read again. You were made to think. It will do you good to think; to develop your powers by study. God designed that religion should require thought, intense thought, and should thoroughly develop our powers of thought. The Bible itself is written in a style so condensed as to require much intense study. Many know nothing of the Bible or of religion, because they will not think and study. I do not pretend to so explain theology as to dispense with the labour of thinking. I have no ability and no wish to do so... But to all honest inquirers after truth I would say, hail! my brother! Let us be thorough. Truth shall do us good.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 1:18).

### **To Get Us to Freely and Actually Perform His Will**

*To get us to freely and actually perform His Will* must be the third design of the Almighty in causing the Asian tsunamis of 2004. "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). God wants more than doing the right thing. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (Romans 7:5). He wants right action, because our hearts are right with Him. "But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6). Even better still, right action with a right heart based upon careful and wise thought, would be most glorifying to God! "2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 3 In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2-3). No one has



ever been saved by keeping the Ceremonial Law or Civil Law of Old Testament Israel, for even the Old Testament Scriptures affirm, "The just shall live by his Faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). But, Modern Antinomians (Greek, *anti*, against; *nomos*, law) believe in freedom from the obligation to obey the Moral Law of Love, while still claiming to be saved—but, their grace "is no more Grace" (Romans 11:6), for God only helps us to obey and not ignore the Law of Love. "Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law" (Romans 3:31). We have no better than an Antinomian Faith, if we do not actually have a "Faith which *worketh* by Love" (Galatians 5:6).

"Willingness to obey Christ is to be a Christian," said Charles G. Finney. "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10). When a Newly Awakened Sinner or an Attentive Saint has had his attention aroused by the Asian tsunamis, contemplated God's purpose for the tsunamis, and chosen to perform the Will of God *without duress or coercion*, then God has achieved His purpose in bringing to pass such horrendous events. "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made Heaven, and Earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:7). What about those who cling still to their sin, even after experiencing or viewing the tsunami or its aftermath? Either God is hardening their heart to achieve their repentance, e.g., King Nebuchadnezzar: "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto Heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, Whose dominion is an Everlasting Dominion, and His Kingdom is from generation to generation" (Daniel 4:34), or God is hardening their hearts to finally judge and damn them, e.g., Pharaoh: "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?" (Exodus 5:2). Though a willing heart is essential to be accepted with God, He still demands the actual doing of His Will, when and where we have the opportunity, if we are to continue in that State of Acceptance. "11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. 12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2Corinthians 8:11-12).

Performing the Will of God has always been the issue between God and man; and, whenever God has *strangely warmed* a heart, the Will of God will most definitely be done, e.g., "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: *whose heart the LORD opened*, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul" (Acts 16:14). Wherever a True Saint goes, you will find the Will of God sought and done. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) was the impassioned plea of the Philippian jailer to his prisoners, Paul and Silas. The Judge of All the Earth had just shaken the jail house with a Natural Disaster, i.e., "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed" (Acts 16:26). The Roman soldier feared that his life was forfeit, because the inmates had most probably fled from his custody. He already had heard Paul and Silas testify of Christ through their jail house singing, i.e., "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). Paul and Silas pointed the Gospel Gun and pulled the trigger, when they informed the Philippian Jailer as how to perform the Will of God in getting saved. "And they said, Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). This Gentile quickly demonstrated that he had been born into the family of God, e.g., he took home his prisoners Paul and Silas, his whole family listened to their preaching and also believed, they tended to their wounds, they all received baptism, and they fellowshiped around a decent meal. Praise God! "32 And they spake unto him the Word of the LORD, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16:32-34).

What exactly does God expect us to do? "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Since the hardest part of finding the Will of God for your life *is* a Fully Submitted Will, then the rest, by comparison, is easy. "2 But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:2-3). Christian Liberty is the freedom to do as we ought, not as we please. "1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). A Hungry Heart is always looking for the Will of God to do; therefore, the following list must be *only* a specimen of what God expects us to do:

- (1) *Seek* the interests of God and His Kingdom first, when deciding upon *any* course of action, i.e., "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33),
- (2) *Seek*, secondarily, the good of every man his neighbour, as much, but no more than you must naturally seek your own good, i.e., "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39),

- (3) *Live* as if the Living Word Himself is abiding in you, i.e., "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4),
- (4) *Find* your consolation and solace in learning more and more of the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29),
- (5) *Endeavour* to find your approval foremost from the Master, i.e., "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2Timothy 2:15),
- (6) *Forsake* your attachment to any and all things that hinder or oppose your quest of becoming more like our LORD, i.e., "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1John 2:15),
- (7) *Be mindful* in prayer of all things that you can, for we are weak, but He is strong, i.e., "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6),
- (8) *Aim* at bringing as many as you can to Christ, i.e., "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15),
- (9) *Serve* your brother to build him up in the Most Holy Faith, i.e., "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2),
- (10) *Convert* as much of this world's wealth, as you reasonably can, into Heavenly Treasure, i.e., "Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:20),
- (11) *Look* more for what is "pleasing in His sight" (1John 3:22), than that which we are absolutely commanded to do, i.e., "Without Faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6),
- (12) *Study* to see how much you can make His Promises mean to you, and not how little, i.e., "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4),
- (13) *Find* the Providence in your circumstances, rather than the accident, and thereby understand how the Invisible God can lead you, i.e., "I being in the way, the LORD led me" (Genesis 24:27),
- (14) *Occupy* your heart and mind with the kind of music and hymns that encourage your Faith, i.e., "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD" (Ephesians 5:19),
- (15) *Oppose* evil wherever you can by promoting good, i.e., "They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is" (Psalm 38:20),
- (16) *Separate* yourself from accompanying those Professed Christians, who walk disobediently, i.e., "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2Thessalonians 3:6),
- (17) *Labour* to restore Fallen Brethren, as you would have done unto you, i.e., "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1),
- (18) *Curb* your tendency to defend yourself with a quick tongue that He may "set a watch, O LORD, before

[your] mouth; [to] keep the door of [your] lips" (Psalm 141:3), i.e., "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19),

- (19) *Give* all that you can to build His Kingdom, i.e., "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24),
- (20) *Aim* at nothing less than the Moral Perfection of Jesus Christ for yourself, i.e., "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) and "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14), and
- (21) *Persevere* in the fruit of the Spirit until the end, even as did our LORD, i.e., "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14) and "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

### **To Encourage Us That Jesus Is Coming Soon to Rapture His Church**

*To encourage us that Jesus is coming soon to Rapture His Church* must be the final design of the Almighty in causing the Asian tsunamis of 2004. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the Beginnings of Sorrows [Greek, *odin*, pain of childbirth, travail pain]" (Mark 13:8). [Please see our article "Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?" ---<http://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> for the Scriptural evidence that supports it.] It is no accident that nearly two millennia since the Head of our Church ascended back into Heaven, the Body of Christ is still waiting for the physical return of the LORD Jesus Christ to rule and reign upon the Planet Earth for a thousand years. "And the LORD direct your hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2Thessalonians 3:5). "Patient waiting," yes, that is a good way to put it, for the scoffers long ago have begun their Chorus of Ridicule, i.e., "*Where* is the promise of His Coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation" (2Peter 3:4). Though we may not have been given a specific day, when the LORD Jesus Christ will return, we are called hypocrites, if we do not have a sense of the nearness of the Soon Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the Earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" (Luke 12:56). We have *not* been given the right to plead that it has been "too long" since the LORD of the Lampstands told John the Beloved Apostle on the Isle of Patmos in 96 AD, "Behold, I come quickly [Greek, *tachu*, speedily, without delay]" (Revelation 3:11; 22:7,12, 20). "Too long" is *not* even a good argument, if it came from an Unbelieving Scoffer! "22 Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? 23 Tell them therefore, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. 24 For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. 25 For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the Word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD. 26 Again the Word of the LORD came to me, saying. 27 Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off" (Ezekiel 12:22-27).

If "looking for that Blessed Hope, and the Glorious Appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13) is a reproach, and if Jesus does not return as soon as our critics feel is appropriate, e.g., Hollywood's often mockery, depicting Christians holding signs that say "The End Is Near" or "Armageddon Is At Hand," then we will simply have to "go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:13). For the Sinner, the Second Coming of Jesus means their Judgment, so they do not look forward to His Return, and foolishly see His Tarrying as proof that He is not Coming. "20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: 21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, 22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? 23 Turn you at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My Words unto you. 24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all My Counsel, and would none of My reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me: 29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: 30 They would none of My Counsel: they despised all My reproof. 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own

way, and be filled with their own devices. 32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. 33 But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Proverbs 1:20-33).

The idea of the "Beginning(s) of Sorrows" (Matthew 24:8; Mark 13:8) is comparable to the contractions of a mother giving birth to a child, for the Greek word *odin*, means the pain of childbirth or travail pain. "For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22). If it is foolhardy for a young father-to-be *not* to have his wife's suitcase packed, a vehicle prepared to get his wife to the hospital, an obstetrician ready to deliver the baby, and a hospital prepared to receive the expectant mother, then would it not also be foolhardy for us-- the Endtime Christian-- not to be ready? "4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1Thessalonians 5:4, 6). Readiness for us-- the Endtime Christian-- means:

- (1) walking in no known sin, i.e., "Continue in the Grace of God" (Acts 13:43), "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him" (1John 3:6), and "Keep yourselves in the Love of God" (Jude 21), and
- (2) keeping firm hands on the plough of doing all the Will of God, i.e., "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). Worthiness for us-- the Endtime Christian-- means:

- (1) keeping a steady gaze upon Jesus, the Author of our Faith, i.e., "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of Our Faith" (Hebrews 12:2), and
- (2) abiding in Christ as the Worthy Lamb That Was Slain, i.e., "3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:3-7).

All the pain of the delivery will be worth all the trouble of preparing for the birth. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21). Should the Endtime Christian be any different, if he knows that the Earth is about to deliver a miraculous child? The Nation Born in a Day is the salvation of Elect Israel *literally* at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, as predicted by Isaiah and yearned for by the Apostle Paul, i.e., "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1) and "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26). "7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in One Day? or shall a Nation Be Born At Once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. 14 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward His servants, and His indignation toward His enemies [Jehovah Jesus' Second Coming]" (Isaiah 66:7-14).

Further evidences and encouragements that Jesus is Coming Soon can only accumulate by the day, for certainly, every day that passes is only one day closer to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and our Rapture Home. "13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the Word of the LORD, that we which are alive and remain unto

the Coming of the LORD shall not prevent [Greek, *phthano*, precede] them which are asleep. 16 For the LORD Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1Thessalonians 4:13-18). The following list is *only* a specimen of the evidence that Jesus is Coming Soon, and is by no means complete:

- (1) Ancient Israel, which ceased to be a nation in the First Century AD, is a Modern Nation and back in the land since 1948, just as the prophetic Scriptures predicted, i.e., "32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree [symbol of the prosperity and security of Israel, i.e., 'But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it' (Micah 4:4)]; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matthew 24:32-34),
- (2) The European Union is increasingly becoming the de facto superstate of Europe-- "ever-deeper, ever-wider" fulfilling the prophetic description of the Revived Roman Empire of Nebuchadnezzar's image, i.e., "His legs of iron [Rome], his feet part of iron and part of clay [Revived Roman Empire]" (Daniel 2:33),
- (3) The Peoples Republic of China has all but become the new superpower that will march as the Kings of the East, i.e., "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared" (Revelation 16:12),
- (4) Mankind has possessed the capacity to destroy itself since the invention and proliferation of nuclear weapons, i.e., "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the Elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22),
- (5) Various technologies exist to implement the Mark of the Beast, i.e., "16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16-17),
- (6) The Internet and computer technology fulfills Daniel's prophecy of knowledge increasing, i.e., "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4),
- (7) The number and intensity of Natural Disasters are increasing, i.e., "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),
- (8) The Gospel has been preached worldwide, i.e., "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the End come" (Matthew 24:14),
- (9) Anti-Christian hatred is increasing, i.e., "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (Matthew 24:9),
- (10) There shall be a Falling Away From the Faith, i.e., "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a Falling Away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition" (2Thessalonians 2:3),
- (11) Wickedness will increase, i.e., "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12),
- (12) Violence and crime will be on the rise, i.e., "But as the days of Noe [!And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the Earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the Earth' (Genesis 6:13)] were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37),

- (13) Wars and civil unrest will increase, i.e., "6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matthew 24:6-7),
- (14) Disease, famine, and pestilence will increase, i.e., "there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matthew 24:7), and
- (15) World government has existed in the form of the United Nations since 1945, being necessary for such things as the Mark of the Beast, i.e., "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:17).

## Conclusion

Scripture infallibly certifies from the Pentecostal Sermon of the Apostle Peter that the *entire* Church Age has properly occurred in what the Scriptures calls "the Last Days" (Acts 2:16). "1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 And it shall come to pass in the Last Days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:1, 4, 14-18). Since Pentecost, we have been living and labouring in the Last Days; therefore, we need to learn Patience, so that we do not give up our Confidence-- when picked at by every little thing-- if the LORD does not immediately Return. "35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:35-36).

As the birth pangs increase in their rapidity and intensity, our excitement will only increase and grow, but it must be moderated with the knowledge that we have to keep our heads and do our job of *keep on keepin' on* until the LORD Returns for us. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). If we are not looking for Him to return, nothing will prove that He is coming, but if we look for Him, He shall "appear the Second Time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). The Law of *Love must be the rule of behaviour of the True Christian; therefore, where the opportunity affords itself to relieve the needs of the victims of the Asian tsunami, do so.* "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished" (Proverbs 17:5). The Godly Christian must look to the LORD with great assurance that come what may, the Almighty is on His Throne and will do what is wisest for us. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Though the Asian Tsunamis of 2004 have been a great calamity experienced by the world community, we, as Endtime Christians, should view them as a Clarion Call to revive or redouble our efforts to accomplish the Will of God in this world, before the LORD Jesus Soon Returns for us, for then we *will* "rest from [our] labours" (Revelation 14:13). Hallelujah!

Come quickly LORD Jesus!

Maranatha!