

2593 - Why So Many Earthquakes?

the question

Many countries have had earthquakes, such as Turkey, Mexico, Taiwan, Japan, etc. Does this mean anything (from an Islamic point of view)?

Summary of answer

The earthquakes that are happening these days are among the signs which Allah uses to frighten His slaves. All the earthquakes and other things which happen and cause harm and injury to people are because of shirk and sins.

Detailed answer

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Allah is the All-Wise in all that He legislates and commands

Allah is the All-Wise, All-Knowing in all that He wills and decrees, and He is the All-Wise, All-Knowing in all that He legislates and commands. He creates and decrees whatever signs He wills, to frighten His slaves and remind them of their obligations and duties towards Him, and to warn them against associating anything in worship with Him, going against His commands and doing that which He has forbidden. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

- “And We sent not the signs except to warn” [al-Isra 17:59]

- “We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Quran) is the truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?” [Fussilat 41:53]
- “Say: ‘He has power to send torment on you from above or from under your feet, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, and make you to taste the violence of one another.’” [al-An’am 6:65]

Al-Bukhari narrated in his Sahih from Jabir ibn ‘Abd-Allah (may Allah be pleased with him) that when the verse (interpretation of the meaning) “Say: ‘He has power to send torment on you from above” was revealed, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “A’udhu bi wajhika (I seek refuge in Your Face””; “or from under your feet”, he said, “A’udhu bi wajhika (I seek refuge in Your Face).” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 5/193)

(Abu’l-Shaykh al-Isbahani narrated from Mujahid concerning the Tafsir of this ayah, “Say: ‘He has power to send torment on you from above”: (this means) al-Sayhah (the shout or tumult), stones and strong wind; “or from under your feet”, (means) earthquakes and being swallowed up by the earth.)

Earthquakes are signs from Allah

Undoubtedly the [earthquakes](#) that are happening these days are among the signs which Allah uses to frighten His slaves. All the [earthquakes](#) and other things which happen and cause harm and injury to people are because of shirk and sins, as Allah says (interpretation of the meanings):

- “And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much” [al-Shura 42:30]
- “Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah, but whatever of evil befalls you, is from yourself” [al-Nisa 4:79]

And Allah said concerning the nations of the past:

- “So We punished each (of them) for his sins, of them were some on whom We sent Hasib (a violent wind with shower of stones) [as on the people of Lut (Lot)], and of them were some who were overtaken by As-Saihah [torment awful cry, (as Thamud or Shu‘ayb’s people)], and of them were some whom We caused the earth to swallow [as Qarun (Korah)], and of them were some whom We drowned [as the people of Nuh (Noah), or Fir‘aun (Pharaoh) and his people]. It was not Allah Who wronged them, but they wronged themselves” [al-‘Ankabut 29:40]

What to do at times of earthquakes

What Muslims and others who are accountable and of sound mind must do is repent to Allah, adhere firmly to His Religion and avoid all that He has forbidden of Shirk and sin, so that they may be safe and attain salvation from all evils in this world and the next, and so that Allah will ward off from them all harm, and bless them with all good. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

- “And if the people of the towns had believed and had the Taqwa (piety), certainly, We should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they belied (the Messengers). So We took them (with punishment) for what they used to earn (polytheism and crimes).” [al-A‘raf 7:96]

And Allah says concerning the People of the Book (interpretation of the meaning):

- “And if only they had acted according to the Tawrah (Torah), the Injil (Gospel), and what has (now) been sent down to them from their Lord (the Quran), they would surely, have gotten provision from above them and from underneath their feet” [al-Maidah 5:66].

And Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

- “Did the people of the towns then feel secure against the coming of Our punishment by night while they were asleep? Or, did the people of the towns then feel secure against the coming of Our punishment in the forenoon while they were playing? Did

they then feel secure against the Plan of Allah? None feels secure from the Plan of Allah except the people who are the losers.” [al-A’raf 7:97-99]

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah sometimes gives the earth permission to breathe, which is when major earthquakes happen; this makes people feel scared, so they repent, give up sins, pray to Allah and feel regret [for their sins]. When there had been an earthquake, some of the Salaf said: your Lord is warning you. When Madinah was struck by an earthquake, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with you) addressed the people and said: if there is another earthquake, I will not stay here with you.”

And there are many similar reports from the Salaf.

Our response when there is an [earthquake](#) or some other sign such as an eclipse, strong winds or floods, should be to hasten to repent to Allah and pray to Him for safety, and to remember Him much and seek His forgiveness, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said when there was an eclipse: “If you see anything like that, hasten to remember Him, call on Him and seek His forgiveness.” (Part of an agreed-upon hadith narrated by al-Bukhari (2/30) and Muslim (2/628))

It is also mustahabb (recommended, encouraged) to show compassion to the poor and needy, and to give charity to them, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“Show mercy, you will be shown mercy.” (Narrated by Imam Ahmad, 2/165)

“Those who are merciful will be shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Have mercy on those who are on earth, and the One Who is in heaven will show mercy to you.” (Narrated by Abu Dawud (13/285), al-Tirmidhi (6/43)).

“Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari (5/75), Muslim (4/1809))

It was reported that when there was an [earthquake](#), `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz (may Allah have mercy on him) would write to his governors telling them to give in charity.

One of the things which will help to keep people safe and sound is if the authorities impose an immediate crack-down on the foolish elements in society, forcing them to behave and applying the laws of Shari`ah to them, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The believers, men and women, are Awliya (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma`ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islam has forbidden); they perform As-Salah (Iqamat-as-Salah), and give the Zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise” [al-Tawbah 9:71]

“Verily, Allah will help those who help His (Cause). Truly, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty. Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) enjoin Iqamat-as-Salah [i.e. to perform the five compulsory congregational Salah (prayers) (the males in mosques)], to pay the Zakah and they enjoin Al-Ma`ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do), and forbid Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism and all that Islam has forbidden) [i.e. they make the Quran as the law of their country in all the spheres of life]. And with Allah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures).” [al-Hajj 22:40-41]

“And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him.” [al-Talaq 65:2-3]

And there are many verses on this topic.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever meets the needs of his brother, Allah will meet his needs.” (Agreed upon; al-Bukhaari, 3/98; Muslim, 4/1996)

And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever relieves a believer of some of the distress of this world, Allah will relieve him of some of the distress of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever makes things easier for one who is suffering hardship, Allah will make things easier for him in this world and in the Hereafter. Whoever conceals a Muslim’s faults, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah will help a person so long as he helps his brother.” (Narrated by Muslim, 4/2074) And there are many hadiths on this topic.

Allah is the One Whom we ask to reform the affairs of all the Muslims and to bless them with proper understanding of Islam and help them to adhere steadfastly to it and repent to Allah from all their sins. We ask Him to reform all those who are in authority over the Muslims’ affairs and to support the Truth and eradicate falsehood through them, and to help them to rule the people according to the laws of Shari`ah, and to protect them and all the Muslims from misguidance and temptation and the tricks of the Shaytan, for He is Able to do all that.

And Allah knows best.