

Theological Reflection on the August 14, 2021 Earthquake in the Southwestern Part of  
Haiti

Theological Reflection written by:  
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On Saturday, August 14, 2021, my country, my beloved homeland and birthplace, Haiti suffered the second most devastating and deadly earthquake in its history as an independent nation since 1804. The deadliest earthquake in recording history hit Haiti on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 where more than 300,000 Haitian people lost their lives and countless number of others left injured, homeless and heart-broken. Again, another earthquake of 7.2 magnitude on the Richter scale ripped through our country in the morning of Saturday, August 14, 2021. This quake was also a deadly one where more than 2,100 lost their lives where thousands others are left amputated, physically and mentally paralyzed, impoverished, and homeless with no place to go and nothing to do.

As a man of GOD and as a local church pastor, I am compelled to produce a theological reflection on this event in order to explore what GOD has to say and what people have said about the role of GOD, if any, in all of this natural devastation and human losses of lives. It seems apparent that whenever something terrible happens to us, humans look for a scapegoat, usually GOD. There is no different in the case of seismic misfortunes that have plagued Haiti for the past decade or so. However, I do know that GOD' s goodness will never grow thin even in the darkest and terrible days of our lives (Lamentations 3: 22 & 23).

As Christians the occurrences and frequencies of devastating earthquakes and other natural disasters should not shake us in awe as the world experiences and tries to understand it. We know these events will occur. We have been forewarned about them. In Matthew 24: 7 & 8, Evangelist Matthew reported a statement of Jesus when some of His disciples wanted to know when the end would come. Jesus, instead of responding directly to His disciples' questions and to satisfy their curiosity, He gave them signs by which the world would know that the end is near. One of the foretelling signs that Jesus shared with them were the occurrences of earthquakes and other natural man-made disasters that will occur around the world. Jesus said that those events will be precursor signs of the beginning of the end times.

What does science say about earthquakes? Can they be prevented? Can they be forecast like any other natural disasters such as: hurricanes, tornadoes, twisters, etc.? Experts who are studying earthquake phenomena are called: Seismologists. They are Earth scientists, specialized in geophysics, who study the genesis and the propagation of seismic waves in geological materials. The fundamental work of a seismologist is to locate the source, the nature, and the size (magnitude) of these seismic events. In reality, do those seismic predictions help? Not really, especially in the case of Haiti. What we do know is that seismologists could not help us by foretelling or predicting those devastating and deadly quakes that hit Haiti in succession. What is definitely not helping is the diffusion of confusing seismic statistical data.

As Christians, we know earthquakes would happen but not in Haiti, especially in the frequency that quakes are occurring in Haiti. After only 11 years, we have had another deadly quake in our country. What is going on? Is GOD punishing Haitians for their practice of Voodoo like many think that is the case? What about other

religions that are being practiced inside the country besides Voodoo, such as: Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism, etc.? Should not the blame be shared among them, too? Not really! It is all about the Theodicy of GOD.

What is it, the Theodicy of GOD? Theodicy, in its most common form, is the attempt to answer the question of why a good GOD permits the manifestation of evil. In the case of occurrence and frequency of quakes into the world, the most common theodicy is *free will theodicy*, which lays the blame for all evil and some natural evil on humanity's misuse of its free will. However, in all of this devastation and abuse of the humankind's free will is the goodness of GOD. Why bad things happen to good people question will remain an unanswered question until GOD Himself is able or willing to answer it. How should we approach this question, though?

As Christians, what do we do when we see our fellowmen and fellowwomen suffer because of an act of evil caused by nature or humans? Such acts usually make good and bad people suffer evenly. What is the solution? How do we struggle with this type of quagmire as Christians? Jesus taught His disciples about the ministry of compassion, a divine act that surpasses the common human common sense. A story that is very relevant and telling in this reflection is the story of the 'Good Samaritan' told by Jesus on Luke 10: 25 – 37 (NRSV). In this story, a man of great wisdom and knowledge of the Jewish law (he was a lawyer) approached Jesus and said, "*What must I do to inherit eternal life? He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?'*" He answered, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.*" And He said to him,

*'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'*

*But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied,*

*'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? He said,*

*'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.' "*

I personally find the story of the 'Good Samaritan' told by Jesus to the Jewish scholar very appropriate and timely for a time such as this. Our fellow Haitian brothers and sisters are being hurt badly by the last quake, which put them on their knees while dealing with the terrible event of the assassination of their President **Jovenel Moise** on the night of July 6 going through July 7, 2021. If we are compelled by GOD to do one thing in this dire situation in Haiti is to show our Christian compassion to alleviate the pains and sufferings of our Haitian brothers and sisters living in Haiti at this time. They are our neighbors! Like uncle Mordochai said to his niece Esther, *"For it you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? (Esther*

4:14)” We must show concern and compassion like the ‘Good Samaritan’ did to the man who was in great difficulty fighting for his life.

For that purpose, we, at the Bethel Haitian Baptist Church, take charge in the campaign to show compassion to our brothers and sisters in Haiti by organizing the following activities to collect funds to bring financial relief to our brethren:

1. Collect monies from our congregation to assist survivors of the earthquake
2. Organize a Gospel concert to collect more funds to assist survivors of the earthquake
3. Post information on the BHBC Website to encourage the world to financially contribute to this just cause
4. Motivate people by word of mouth to financially contribute to advance and increase financial giving to this just cause

Use the following sources to contribute:

A. Cashapp or Zell your cash @ 973-202-8659

B. Mail your check to:

**Bethel Haitian Baptist Church**

320 Springdale Avenue

East Orange, NJ 07017

C. Go to the BHBC Website @ [www.bhbcusa.org](http://www.bhbcusa.org)

May GOD Almighty continue to bless you and open doors before you and your family as you open your hearts to let out GOD' s compassion to our brother and sister Haitians living in Haiti in this critical and needy time.

Peace, Shalom, Paix!  
In Jesus Christ' s Service!

AMEN!!!