

Volcanoes and Civilization

Commentary for April 19, 2010 — “The Mountains Shall Smoke”

This past week the Eyjafjallajökull (also spelled Eyjafjöll) volcano in Southern Iceland began an eruption spewing caustic ash into the air tens of thousands of feet over a wide area, with an ash cloud extending over much of Europe. Last erupting in the early 1820s, the volcano is 5,400 feet above sea level. The island of Iceland was created by volcanic activity.

The effect of this highly caustic glass-like silica ash is very destructive to engines, particularly jet engines, with the result that a large percentage of air traffic has been halted and planes grounded over many of the busiest air corridors in Western Europe. As the ash and particulates fall further east, upper wind patterns will disperse some of the ash around the world. It remains unknown how long flights may be effected, perhaps days, a week, maybe even longer. As of today's date the ash continues to spew forth from the volcano.

Man's Frailty

I minimized the impact of this volcanic event when I first heard of it until Ramona Martin recalled to my attention something that was so obviously true. She said, and I am paraphrasing: “God is reminding the world how frail we are.” Indeed! King David tells of man's weakness and even helplessness when man is compared to God:

“YHWH, what [is] man, that you take knowledge of him! [or] the son of man, that you make account of him! Man is like to vanity [like a breath]: his days [are] as a shadow that passes away. Bow you heavens, O YHWH, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.”

• *Psalm 144:3–5*

YHWH merely “touches” the mountains and they smoke. That is what the Icelandic volcano is doing, it is smoking and causing havoc in the world. This single volcano paralyzes an entire international industry and disrupts the plans of millions of people across Europe with world-wide impact — all with a single touch from God. Poetic language aside (and it may not be poetic!), God controls the physical realm actively, moment by moment.

Note the effects of this volcanic eruption as presented in the leading paragraphs from an Associated Press article “[Volcano Illustrates World's Interconnectedness](#)” (accessed April 16, 2010):

“A volcano erupts in Iceland, and the effects ripple around the globe: A mom in Romania frets about making her son's wedding in Texas. A florist in New York worries shipments won't arrive. Patients awaiting treatment in Nigeria have to wait another week for the doctors. The fallout from the ash cloud looming over Europe illustrates just how interconnected our world has become.”

Thousands of planes fly millions of passengers and tons of cargo each day, providing the economic lifeblood of nations and businesses. ... Tales of woe and inconvenience span every social level, from the Norwegian prime minister who got stuck in New York and had to govern using his iPad, to ordinary people who saved money for trips of a lifetime, then had to abandon those plans.

The eruption was a single act of nature, but it stopped the world in countless ways.

The article continues with specific problems of individuals caused by this eruption and the resulting flight cancellations. Our modern world today is indeed extremely interconnected. This one event dramatically shows how little we are in control, and that God has ultimate control of our lives and the lives of all human beings on earth today.

Psalms 104, also a Psalm of David,¹ with regard to creation:

“You send forth your spirit, they are created: and you renew the face of the earth. The glory of YHWH shall endure for ever [*olam*, for the age]: YHWH shall rejoice in his works. He looks on the earth, and it trembles [an earthquake]: he touches the hills [mountains], and they smoke.”

• *Psalm 104:30–32*

As Dr. Martin has explained, such physical events will increase as time goes on.

“For this past 500 years the earth has been relatively peaceful in nature without any of its previous traumas of earlier periods being repeated. True, we have had natural catastrophes, but they have been mild in comparison to those of former times. Indeed, it is prophesied that the time is soon coming when the earth again will commence (abruptly and out of the blue) its belching forth of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, extreme weather conditions, the like of which modern mankind has never seen.”

• [“Creation of Life in Contemporary Times”](#) (underlining mine, DWS)

“However, the time is soon coming when the earth will start ... its belching forth of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, extreme weather conditions the like of which modern mankind has never seen before. This is all prophesied in the Book of Revelation, and it is shown in this introductory judgment by a massive tsunami to hit the eastern Mediterranean as recorded in the ‘Damascus Phase’ prophecy of Zechariah [chapters] 9 to 14.”

• [“The Damascus Phase of End-time Prophecy”](#)

The prophet Joel has words about what will occur just before “the day of the Lord”:

“And I will give miracles in the heavens above, and signs on the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. [As a result of the smoke] The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the day of Yahweh, the great and fearful day.

And it comes that everyone who shall call on the name of Yahweh shall escape, for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem, deliverance shall come to be, just as Yahweh says; and among the survivors are those whom Yahweh is calling.”

• *Joel 2:30–32 Concordant Version*

God actively rules His creation through Christ. They are present and active in the world with the goal (which shall be achieved) of the salvation of the entire human race, past, present, and future. God is beginning to remind everyone that He exists and He is in charge. He will begin to re-insert Himself into the psyche and minds of every human being. He is making His presence known again so that identifiable prophesied events can begin to take place.

While the day of YHWH is still several decades away and many events must occur first, remember the tagline from a Bible radio show: “God is on His throne, and prayer changes things.”

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1. See Dr. Martin’s article [“Creation of Life in Contemporary Times”](#) where the evidence for David’s authorship of this Psalms 103–106 is explained.