



August 28, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace."
Jeremiah 8:11

INFO

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"I Hope You Have Good Insurance."

That's probably one of the first responses from a neighbor of the people who lived in this **Rolling Hills Estates** home. On July 10 of this year, the supersaturation of the hillside soil led to a landslide that damaged or destroyed several homes. There has been more gradual slippage in this neighborhood since then, and this has caused disruption in water, gas and sewage services to residences in the area.

They thought they had all the "insurance" possible:

- Owning a substantial stock portfolio, as well as a healthy bank account, that enabled them to buy this prime property.
- Living within a gated community, which has its own security detail to enforce strict access rules; free of homeless people and low-income housing.
- Purchasing commercial insurance policies to cover every imaginable negative event that might conceivably happen on the property.

What more could they do to protect their investment?

Well, it turns out that this was the **wrong place to build**. Well-trained and well-paid engineers assured those who developed these Estates that the ground was solid and stable. Actually, however, there was a reason why no one had built there before. The land was more unstable than it looked.* It took the freakishly heavy rains of last summer to saturate the hillside soil enough to create destructive landslides.

The area may have been named "Rolling Hills" because of the gentle pattern of the landscape, but this title was also ironically prophetic – the hills actually roll.

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(Continued from other side)

You may be building a big and beautiful life, with a good career, a healthy family and a fine home in the best neighborhood. But it could all slip away tomorrow, and if you've built on the wrong foundation, you'll have nothing.

The New Testament Book of Hebrews is a review of the history of the Old Testament journey of God's people Israel, in the light of Christ's coming into the world. In chapter 11 the author summarizes the quest of Abraham for the Promised Land, the place to build his family's future:

By faith Abraham stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. . . .(verse 9)
[However] all of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them. (verses 13-16)

The author of Hebrews returns to this theme at the end of his Book by encouraging his Christian readers to remember the lesson:

Here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.
(Hebrews 13:14)

Whatever your earthly "estate" turns out to be, make sure you're investing in **the only secure eternal asset you can have**: that piece of heavenly property God has promised you through Christ. No slippage there, no fault lines, no surprise clauses in the insurance contract.

With earthly insurance, you can't win unless you lose. Heavenly insurance is win/win, because Jesus Christ has done all the losing.

Pastor George Van Alstine

*This LA Times article gives historical background on the area: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-07-17/construction-concerns-came-decades-before-rolling-hills-landslide>