

Zechariah 14:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Analysis

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east—this is Scripture's most geographically specific prophecy of Christ's return. The Hebrew *ve-amdu raglav* (וַעֲמְדוּ רַגְלָיו, "his feet shall stand") indicates bodily, physical presence, not mere spiritual manifestation. The Mount of Olives was Jesus's frequent retreat during His earthly ministry (Luke 21:37), the site of His agony in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36), and the place of His ascension (Acts 1:9-12). Acts 1:11 promises He will return "in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven"—from the Mount of Olives He ascended; to the Mount of Olives He will return.

"The mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west"—unprecedented geological cataclysm at Messiah's touch. The verb *niv-qe'ah* (נִבְקָעָה, "shall split") describes violent tearing apart, creating **"a very great valley"** (*gey gedolah me'od*). Half the mountain moves north, half south, creating an east-west valley for escape (verse 5). This recalls Moses striking the rock for water (Exodus 17:6) and the Red Sea parting (Exodus 14:21-22)—God's power manifested through physical creation responding to His presence.

This cosmic upheaval signals new creation. When Christ first came, creation groaned (Romans 8:22); when He returns, creation is liberated (Romans 8:21). The splitting mountain demonstrates that Christ's kingdom isn't merely spiritual but encompasses physical reality—He makes all things new (Revelation 21:5).

Historical Context

The Mount of Olives rises east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley, approximately 2,700 feet elevation. It was historically significant: David fled over it weeping when Absalom rebelled (2 Samuel 15:30), Solomon built high places for foreign gods there (1 Kings 11:7), and Jesus delivered the Olivet Discourse there (Matthew 24). Jewish tradition expected Messiah to appear on the Mount of Olives, based on this Zechariah prophecy. The geographical specificity eliminates spiritualizing interpretations—this is literal, physical return to a specific location. Geologists note the Mount of Olives sits on a major fault line, making the prophecy geologically plausible as well as theologically certain.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does the specificity of Christ's return to the Mount of Olives teach about the physical, bodily nature of the second advent?
2. How does creation's response to Christ's presence (mountains splitting) demonstrate His lordship over all physical reality, not merely spiritual realms?
3. What significance does Jesus's ascension from and return to the same location hold for understanding redemptive history's continuity?

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and half	of it toward the south
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Zechariah 14:7 (Parallel theme): But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

Zechariah 4:7 (Parallel theme): Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

Habakkuk 3:6 (Parallel theme): He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.

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