

Zechariah 14:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

Analysis

And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal—the newly-created valley (from verse 4's splitting) provides escape route for the besieged. The destination Atsel (אֶצֶל, "Azal") is unknown geographically, mentioned nowhere else in Scripture. Some identify it with a place near Jerusalem; others see it as symbolic. The verb *venastem* (וַנִּסְתֶּם, "you shall flee") indicates urgent escape, God providing deliverance through geographic miracle.

"Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah"—historical reference to seismic event during Uzziah's reign (circa 760 BC), mentioned only here and Amos 1:1 ("two years before the earthquake"). This earthquake was so catastrophic it remained in collective memory for centuries. Josephus (Antiquities IX.10.4) claims it occurred when Uzziah usurped priestly prerogatives (2 Chronicles 26:16-21), splitting the temple mount. Whether historically verifiable or not, the comparison indicates the coming splitting will evoke the same terror and urgency as that legendary quake.

"And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee"—climactic declaration of Messiah's parousia. The sudden shift to second person ("with thee")

suggests Zechariah addresses the pre-incarnate Christ or shifts to direct address of God. Qedoshim (קְדוֹשִׁים, "saints/holy ones") refers to either angels (Deuteronomy 33:2, Jude 14) or glorified believers (1 Thessalonians 3:13, Revelation 19:14), likely both—Christ returns with heavenly armies.

Historical Context

Uzziah (Azariah) ruled Judah 792-740 BC, a prosperous period ended by his prideful presumption in entering the temple to burn incense, reserved for priests alone (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). God struck him with leprosy. The earthquake evidently occurred around this time, becoming proverbial for divine judgment. Amos, prophesying during Uzziah's reign, dated his ministry by it (Amos 1:1), indicating its significance. Zechariah uses this historical memory to help his audience grasp the coming cataclysm's magnitude. The saints accompanying Christ fulfill Daniel 7:13-14 (Son of Man coming with clouds) and Matthew 24:30-31 (angels gathering elect). Church age believers will return with Christ (Revelation 19:14), having been raptured earlier (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's provision of an escape route (the valley) demonstrate His care for His people even in apocalyptic judgment?
2. What does the historical earthquake in Uzziah's reign teach about God judging presumption and pride, even in otherwise successful leaders?
3. How should the promise that saints accompany Christ at His return shape your understanding of your future participation in His kingdom?

Interlinear Text

וְנִסְתָּם	גִּי	הָרִים	כִּי	יָגֵיעַ	גִּי	
And ye shall flee	for the valley	of the mountains	H3588	shall reach	for the valley	
H5127	H1516	H2022		H5060	H1516	
הָרִים	אֶל	אֶצֶל	וְנִסְתָּם	כְּאֵשׁ ר	וְנִסְתָּם	
of the mountains	H413	unto Azal	And ye shall flee	H834	And ye shall flee	
H2022		H682	H5127		H5127	
מִפְּנֵי י	הָרַעַשׁ	בַּיָּמִי	עֲזִיָּה	מֶלֶךְ	יְהוּדָה	וְבָא
from before	the earthquake	in the days	of Uzziah	king	of Judah	shall come
H6440	H7494	H3117	H5818	H4428	H3063	H935
וְהוּא	אֱלֹהֵי	כָּל	קֳדָשׁ יִם	עִמָּו:		
and the LORD	my God	H3605	and all the saints	H5973		
H3068	H430		H6918			

Additional Cross-References

Amos 1:1 (Kingdom): The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

Matthew 25:31 (Holy): When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

Matthew 16:27 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Isaiah 29:6 (References Lord): Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (Holy): To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Revelation 11:13 (References God): And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 20:4 (Kingdom): And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Psalms 96:13 (References Lord): Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 (References Lord): And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: