And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. Revelation 11:12 High and lifted up, shining in the light of Your glory; pour out Your power and love, as we sing: Holy, Holy, Holy.



Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad Baruch Shem k'vod malchutto, I'olam va'ed

Hear, O Israel: the LORD is our God. The LORD is One. Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.



1elation Part 2: The Two Witnesses...

³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. ⁶ These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. ⁸ And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. ⁹ Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. ¹⁰ And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

¹¹ Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. ¹³ In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

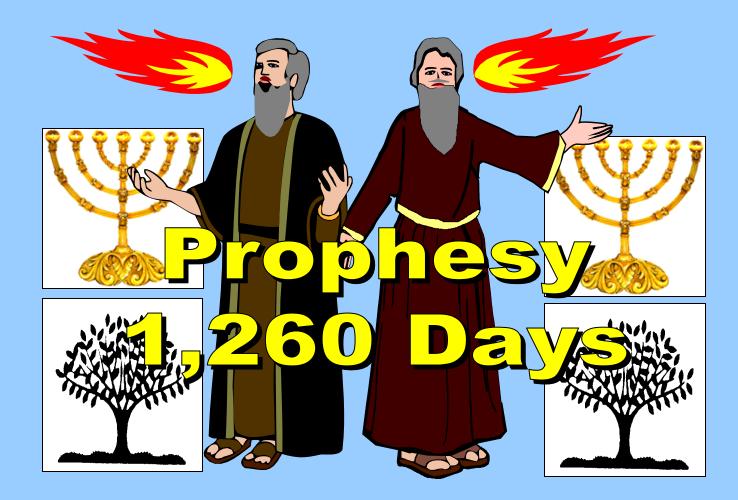
¹⁴ The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.





- This lesson may seem like taking a drink from a fire hose.
- Stop me, ask questions if needed.

³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. ⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.



- "I will give power…" God grants power to the two witnesses. God firmly in control. Nothing outside His knowledge or will.
- <u>Two = required # of witnesses</u> in the Law. (Deut 17:6, Matt 18:16) to <u>make a conviction</u>. *(world soon convicted* of sin) God follows His Law!
- 1,260 days...again, how many ways can you say 3½ years?? (42 months X 30 days = 1,260)
- **Sackcloth** related to Hebrew custom during <u>mourning</u>. Familiar OT concepts here. (Mourning over lost condition of mankind)

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." (v.4) <u>obvious reference</u> to OT **Zechariah 4**:

² And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. ³ Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left."...¹¹ Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" ¹²..."What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?"...

¹³ Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." ¹⁴ So he said, "These are the <u>two anointed ones</u>, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." (selected verses)

- Zechariah part of "Apocalyptic Triangle
- Like John, Zechariah had multiple visions. Zechariah 4 correlates with two witnesses in Revelation 11.
- BIG QUESTION who (or what) are the two witnesses? (lampstand and oil in a moment)
- As always, speculation and <u>human opinion</u> abound.



Some ideas for **Zechariah** passage:

- Two individuals, Joshua (High Priest), and Zerubbabel (Governor), representing dual roles of Messiah (Priest + King)
- At time Zechariah written, these individuals responsible for rebuilding Temple.
- Some Jews speculate <u>two Messiahs</u>, Messiah ben Joseph, Messiah ben David

- Some speculate <u>not two persons</u>, **but two things**, or two groups.
- Remember two is <u>required number of witnesses</u> for conviction
- These two witnesses in Revelation chapter 11 represent witnesses who will <u>convict</u> prior to judgment.

- Some say two witnesses here
 OT + NT witness of Yeshua,
 together Light to entire world.
- Others say Jews and Gentiles, Jewish and Gentile believers.
- no lack of creative artwork to describe passage visually.



This artist portrays the two witnesses as two literal human beings (May be most popular theory)



An interesting thought...

¹⁵ Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹⁶ "As for you, son of man, take a stick" for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.' ¹⁷ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand. (Ezekiel 37:15-17)



Judah: Jews Ephraim: "fullness of Gentiles" (Genesis 48, Romans 11) Combined, "one new man" (Ephesians 2-3)

The Two Witnesses

Olive Tree = Israel "Two Sticks" of Ezekiel 37 Two Houses of Israel Restored - Judah and Ephraim (Jew and Gentile) reunited into one united Israel of God

The Holy Spirit

Branch of

Ephraim

(Gentiles)

Branch of Judah (Jews)

> ["melo_haGoyim"] Witnesses Light of the World Vine and the Branches

- If Two Branches (Judah + Ephraim) of Ezekiel 37 are indeed the Two Witnesses in Revelation 11, opens door for some thought provoking (<u>admittedly</u> <u>unconventional</u>) options.
- Perhaps, as commonly thought, Two Witnesses are <u>not</u> <u>two individuals</u> (more on their speculated identity later), but instead <u>two "branches" of one Truth</u>, Judah and Ephraim – essentially believing Jews and believing Gentiles, restored previously divided <u>houses of Israel</u> <u>into one Israel of God</u>.

- Then *groups* of people, rather than two individuals.
- Considering remaining text in Revelation, would mean whole groups spared initially from death at hands of the AC, but killed later, eventually rising 3½ days later!
- Also means groups empowered to do remarkable things in witnessing ministry, similar to what Moses and Elijah did (more on this in a moment).
- Hmmm....interesting, <u>but also speculation</u>!



- Whether individuals, or whole groups, olive oil in Zechariah 4 (and other places) consistently reference to Holy Spirit.
- Holy Spirit *enables* human believers, always. None of God's work is done without the Holy Spirit.



• Ultimately, in Zechariah, not so much identity of two witnesses that matters, as much as the "bottom line" message itself:

NOT BY NOR BY BUT BY MY SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY **ZECHARIAH 4:6**

- Since Zechariah 4 obviously tied to Revelation 11, **debate continues** regarding identity of witnesses (*both passages*).
- Nothing happens by man's power or authority, but only by God's Spirit. Critical lesson for all believers, critical understanding in Revelation.
- In Revelation 11, given "clues" used to speculate about these identities.
- Will look at next several verses before doing more of that....

⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

- Human flame throwers!
- <u>Fire symbol for judgment</u>. Earth will be consumed by fire, destroyed then re-created in perfection.
- Those who want to harm witnesses will <u>die by fire</u>.
 Whether literal or spiritual (or both) <u>difficult to discern</u>.
- Seems unlikely, but nothing out of range of possibility how God will fulfill this (ultimate destination of unbelievers is Lake of Fire).

- Prophet Elijah able to bring fire from heaven by power of God's Spirit (1 Kings 18:38) [keep Elijah in mind for a moment!]
- The False Prophet apparently also has this ability (Revelation 13:13) so may not be so far-fetched.



⁶ These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.



- More interesting powers. May serve as clues for "identity speculation."
- Witnesses able to "shut heaven," stop rainfall, adding to horrid environmental conditions.
- <u>Who able to do this</u>? ELIJAH. (God's power, not human ability. Zechariah 4: "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD!")

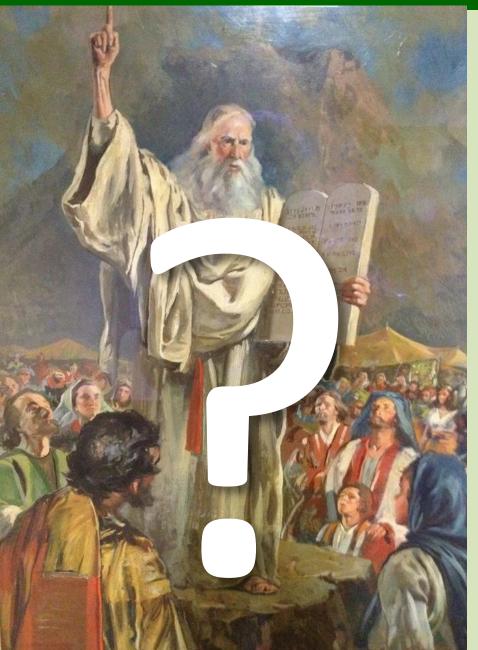


- Don't know if **strictly on Israel**, or entire world.
- Witnesses <u>seem to be in Israel</u>, specifically Jerusalem (verse 8). If groups, not just individuals, could be everywhere (as in previous speculation).
- Food shortages, famines, disease, etc.
- Many will die, and all will want to rid world of these witnesses. (For message, and for results of their powers.)
- Passage seems to indicate NO RAIN for entire time of their prophesying (3½ years)

- Also power to turn water into blood.
- **MOSES** did this (God's power) Plagues of Egypt

Clues given:
1) Two, seem to be <u>human</u>, with supernatural powers
2) Able to kill enemies (those who would harm them)
3) Can "shut the heavens" (no rain, Elijah)
4) Can turn water into blood (Moses)

- <u>Elijah and Moses come to mind immediately</u> as potential identities of two witness (*if individuals*).
- These two appeared with Yeshua at His "transfiguration" "Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, <u>Moses and Elijah</u> appeared to them, talking with Him. (Matthew 17:1-3)
- For these reasons, commentators lean toward <u>speculating</u> <u>identities</u> of two witnesses as Elijah and Moses.



- However, verse in Hebrews
 <u>complicates</u> this: And as it is
 appointed for men to die once, but after
 this the judgment..." (Hebrews 9:27).
- Elijah did not die. Taken to heaven in whirlwind. But <u>Moses did die</u> (Deut 34:5).
- Moses cannot die 2nd time (both witnesses die). Would seem to remove Moses from speculation.

- <u>God's word cannot lie</u>, but **He can override** His own Word if He chooses.
- Also, some believe translation of Moses' death is incorrect, and that God took him much like Elijah.
- WE DON'T KNOW! But logical identity of one witness still Moses, due to plagues and turning water into blood. (And that he appeared at transfiguration)

- Some speculate Elijah and Enoch, only two who did not die.
- "snatched away" or, "raptured!"
- Others think Zerubbabel and Joshua from Zechariah, or others, including John the Baptist, or other wild guesses.
- And some = witnesses not persons but groups of persons, or even something entirely <u>spiritual</u>. (Difficult to justify, since passage so detail-specific!)



- Bottom line: does not matter who they are.
- What they <u>do</u>, what they <u>say</u>, and <u>what happens to</u> <u>them</u> is **what matters** (just like in Zechariah)
- We know what they will do: will witness and prophesy, boldly proclaiming truth of God to lost. (Convict of sin prior to judgment)
- Given divine powers/protection 3½ years, during which will be <u>no rain</u>, may bring plagues on earth or turn water into blood whenever they choose. No wonder world wants them gone!

COMMENTARY: There is a great deal of difference of opinion as to the identity of the two witnesses. They are introduced to us without any suggestion as to who they are. ... If the identity of these two was essential for the understanding of this book, I think there would have been some indication given about their persons. It is always in these areas that the sensational preachers concentrate. They can tell you what the seven thunders said (John was told not to write it down, and he didn't), and they can tell you the names of these two witnesses. ...

Those who have espoused the historical view of Revelation have named such men as John Huss, Pope Sylvester, Waldenson, and the two Testaments. You can see that you could come up with almost anything from that viewpoint. Men who hold the futurist view—which is the view I hold are not in complete agreement as to who they are. [some] say they are Enoch and Elijah. ... [others state] they are Moses and Elijah. William Newell does a very smart thing he does not even attempt to identify them. There is also the possibility that they are two unknown witnesses—that is, they have had no previous existence, and they have not yet appeared on the scene. (McGee)

"...and to strike <u>the earth</u> with all plagues, as often as they desire." frightening thought!

- Don't hear much about this but apparently two witnesses have <u>unlimited powers</u> to "urge" people to salvation through very difficult <u>times of untold</u> <u>plagues</u> (not mentioned here). (entire earth)
- Bible plagues generally for purposes of judgment (and warning of coming ultimate judgement)

- Exodus 7 12: 10 Plagues of Egypt: 1) Water to blood, 2) Frogs, 3) Gnats, 4) Flies, 5) Sickness of Livestock, 6) Boils, 7) Hail, 8) Locusts, 9) Darkness, 10) Death of Firstborn
- Numbers 12:9-10 Leprosy, against Miriam
- Amos 4:10 Plagues "similar to Egypt"
- Deuteronomy 28:59 "fearful plagues...harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses."
- Deuteronomy 32:24 "...wasting famine, consuming pestilence and deadly plague; fangs of wild beasts, venom of vipers..."

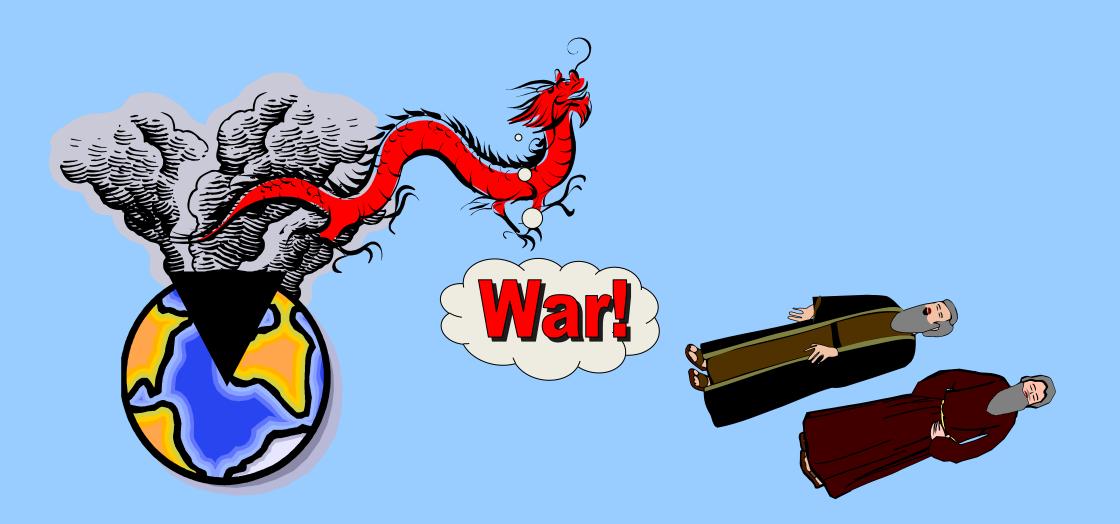
- 1 Chronicles 21:12 David's 3 choices of plagues for his disobedience (3 years of famine, 3 months of sword of your enemies, or 3 days of severe plague)
- Ezekiel 5:16-17 "famine, wild beasts, pestilence and sword" (judgment on Judah)
- Revelation 6:8 "sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts" (4th seal, 4th Horseman)
- Zechariah 14:12 "people will become like walking corpses, their flesh rotting away. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths."

Just a sample of plagues brought by God (on His people, and on world at large).

What will it be like when two witnesses have power to bring ANY sort of plague upon the earth, <u>as many as they wish</u>?

We cannot imagine the horrors of this time.

⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.⁸ And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.





- NOTE!! <u>witnesses</u> protected until FINISHED with Godordained service. <u>Good reminder</u>! *Immortal until work for God is finished. SO ARE WE!*
- Who/what is *"beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit?"* Chapter 13 references beast from sea, and beast from land. ID as antichrist. False Proper. Are either beast from abyss? Don't know. Some see Satan (dragon), others a "demon beas.
- "And hey had as king over them the <u>angel of the bottomless pit</u>, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon." (Rev 9:11)

- Jewish law requires bodies buried within 24 hours. <u>Jews</u> generally don't embalm, quick burial critical.
- Not burying witnesses huge sign of disrespect.
- John makes sure we know what city this is. "Spiritually" = Sodom and Egypt. Both judged evil.
- Sodom = immorality, sexual perversion. Egypt = worldly (materialistic), pagan. = <u>world without God</u>. World LOST.

- Final ID = "city where our Lord was crucified." No question = <u>Jerusalem</u>.
- May indicate witnesses <u>confined to Jerusalem only</u>.
- "Sodom" and "Egypt" defines <u>spiritual condition</u>; Jerusalem references its <u>physical</u> location.
- At this time, Jerusalem <u>will not be acting much like a</u> "<u>holy city</u>." Even today = wicked city, like every other city.
- Speculation death of witnesses signifies end of preaching the Word of God in the world.

⁹ Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. ¹⁰ And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.



- *"peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations"* = EVERYONE
- People everywhere will SEE bodies. How? Not possible 50 yrs ago. Satellite television, 24/7 instant news coverage. Could not be fulfilled any other time, <u>until now</u>. Whole world sees same image same time.
- Not allowing burial of bodies, leaving to rot in streets, testimony to man's completely evil state.
- COMMENTATOR: "Now comes the real revelation of the heart of man: glee – horrid, insane, inhuman, hellish, ghoulish glee!" (Newell)

- "Those who dwell on the earth" 2X here = lost (also indication trials they brought were across entire earth, not just Jerusalem.)
- Only mention in NT of any kind of celebration or sending gifts. Witnesses kept lost ("inhabitants of the earth") from enjoying their sins.
- Lost world celebrates, good riddance to "party poopers," don't have to fear them any longer.
- Historically, possible to <u>silence messengers</u> of God's Word.
 NOT possible to silence God's Word!

Very interesting **OT passage may predict** this event. When first written, prophetic of destruction of Jerusalem and slaughter by Nebuchadnezzar. May have <u>double fulfillment</u>...(common in prophecy)

"O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; Your holy temple they have defiled; **Psalm** They have laid Jerusalem in heaps. 79:1-3 The dead bodies of Your servants They have given as food for the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth. Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem, And there was no one to bury them."

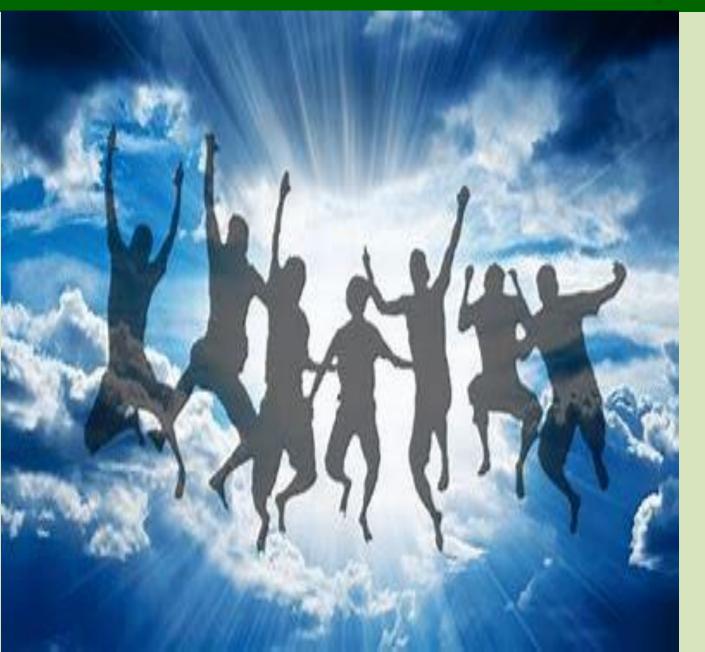
¹¹ Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.



- Two witnesses resurrected.
 <u>No question they were dead</u>.
 (Jesus waited 4 days to raise Lazarus...)
- "great fear fell on those who saw them" = <u>huge</u> <u>understatement</u>. Seen globally, cannot be denied.
- World-wide celebration is over.



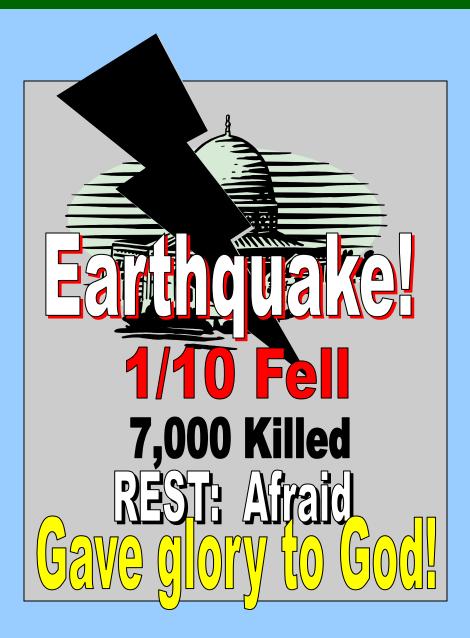
- Notice what witnesses hear: "come up here!" <u>Exactly</u> what John hears at beginning of ch 4. Witnesses "raptured," "caught up" from earth.
- If Elijah and Enoch, their second such trip!
- <u>Not just disappearance</u>. God enables people to physically see this happen real time. Cannot be denied. Whole world will see.



 Some speculate if two witnesses = groups instead of individuals, entire passage actually about believers and their "catching away" at the MID POINT of **Tribulation**. Timing of rapture debated hotly. Interesting thought.

¹³ In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴ The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.



2nd Woe: PAST 3rd Woe: Coming Quickly!

- Seems to be a literal, real earthquake
- May be limited to Jerusalem, as specific details given
- One tenth of city fell, 7,000 killed.
- One of earth's largest earthquake fault line <u>runs just east</u> of Jerusalem, into Jordan, called "Great Rift" valley. Seismically active. Coincidence? *We know better than that!*
- Everyone not killed terrified, **"give glory to God of heaven."** Doesn't mean they were saved. *May be momentary (temporary) reaction. Acknowledging God's doing.*

- Could also signal Israel's moment of national salvation (Zechariah 13: "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.")
- **"God of heaven"** distinguishes Yahweh from pagan gods. He is the One True God.
- "Second woe" now, finally, past –long and terrible! Lasted from herd of demonic horsemen through this earthquake, which ends the 6th trumpet judgment.

- <u>Third woe coming soon</u>, will usher in last set of judgments, Bowl Judgments, or Bowl (Vial) Plagues.
- No wonder angel said *"WOE, WOE, WOE..."*



Yevarekh-kha Adonai veyishmerekha May the LORD bless you and keep you

Ya'er Adonai pandv elekha vihunneka

May the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you

Yissa Adonaí panav elekha viyasem lekha shalom.

May the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

