



**WELCOME
TO
BIBLE HOUSE
OF
GRACE**

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Earthquakes and the Earth Trembled

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Earthquakes and the Earth Trembled.

Topics:

- A key to understanding symbolic language.
- What earthquakes symbolise.
- The earth reeled; the foundations of the mountains trembled.
- The land tottered and trembled.
- The earth split apart, shaken like a drunken man.
- You will be visited by the LORD with thunder and an earthquake.
- Mountains were quaking, and hills moved to and fro.
- The LORD utters his voice, and the heavens and the earth quake.
- His voice shook the earth, now he will shake earth and the heavens.
- A great earthquake, the sun became black, and the moon like blood.

A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE

Many times, Bible writers very skilfully and very beautifully use figurative language and colourful exaggerations and overstatements:

1

- To amplify the story and the battle.
- To magnify the message, the moral and the teaching.
- To dramatize the event in focus.
- To highlight God's power and glory.

THE MEANING OF EARTHQUAKE

The word earthquake here comes from the Greek word (seismos and seio), it refers to a turmoil, uproar, tempest and gale of the air or to a quaking, rocking, shaking, and vibrating sideways to and fro of the ground. Figuratively, it carries the idea of throwing into terror and fear.

WHAT EARTHQUAKES SYMBOLISE

Depending on the context, earthquakes can signify any of the following:

- Literal earthquakes and other natural disasters (i.e., famines and pestilence, etc.), that affects large parts of the earth and brings extreme suffering, grief and sorrow to multitudes of people.
- The enormous, magnitude, horror, and dread of a battle, and the extreme destruction, massacres, and loss of war, brings between nations and countries.

- Massive changes, brought about by great political revolts, or by political powers, governments, kings, presidents, princes, rulers, commanders, and leaders in high positions of authority and influence coming to ruin.
- The collapse of our worldwide system of finance and oppressive credit system (totally opposed to the heart of God) and the breakdown of the world's global trade and commercialism.
- False religious teachers who have global positions of influence power and authority over a world-wide following, either being brought down from their positions of leadership or brought to utter ruin.
- The extraordinary manifestation of God's awesome power, voice, and presence, and extreme confusion, turmoil, disorder, distress, in the world, and commotion in civil affairs amongst kingdoms and nations.
- The dread, panic, and terror the LORD struck into the hearts of Israel's enemies as He went before His people.

STATEMENTS THAT CAN BE USED LITERALLY OR FIGURATIVELY

- **Psalm 68:7-8:** the earth quaked (shook in KJV), the heavens dropped (poured down rain in KJV) at God's presence and of Sinai being moved at His presence when Israel was in the wilderness.
- **Isaiah 64:3:** when Israel was not looking for God, He did awesome things (terrible things in KJV) and came down, and the mountains quaked (flowed down in KJV) at His presence.
- **Habakkuk: 3:6:** when God stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook (drove asunder in KJV) the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low (did bow in KJV).

2

These verses show that the following words and statements can be used literally or figuratively.

- Trembled, earthquakes and the earth.
- Mountains quaked (shook and flowed down in KJV).
- Mountains moved and were scattered.
- The heavens dropped (poured down rain in KJV).
- The everlasting hills sank low (did bow in KJV).

THE EARTH REELED AND ROCKED

2 SAMUEL 22:8-16

- **2 Samuel 22:8-16:** "Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations of the heavens trembled and quaked, because he was angry. ⁹ Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. ¹⁰ He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. ¹¹ He rode on a cherub and flew; he was seen on the wings of the wind. ¹² He made darkness around him his canopy, thick clouds, a gathering of water. ¹³ Out of the brightness before him coals of fire flamed forth. ¹⁴ The LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice. ¹⁵ And he sent out arrows and scattered them; lightning, and routed them. ¹⁶ Then the channels of the sea were seen; the foundations of the world were laid bare, at the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

Here the writer is using biblical lofty language to depict the enormous horror terror and bloodshed of the battle on earth.

The heavens trembled, and the earth shook: refer to the day when the LORD delivered David from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. David's armies were much smaller than the armies of his enemy, but the writer pictures God as a fierce warrior riding on a Cherub fighting for Israel.

The heavens trembled, the sun and moon are darkened and the earth shook; and similar statements like it are often used to describe the enormity of the battle. The battle is so great, the fear so intense, the destruction so enormous and the thousands of human bodies that are left on the surface of the earth for birds to feast on is so vast that the only way to describe the alarm, panic, terror, horror and magnitude of the battle and the widespread destruction of the land and its cities is to say, "The heavens trembled, and the earth shook out of its place."

Biblical language often uses extreme colorful exaggeration to highlight the story, the message, the moral, the teaching, God's power, or the event. Various visions picture God as a fierce warrior riding on a Cherub and fighting for Israel. Biblical lofty language is also used to describe the extreme victory of Israel's battles on earth especially when Israel's armies were much smaller than their enemy.

THE EARTH REELED; THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE MOUNTAINS TREMBLED AND QUAKED

PSALM 18:7-15

3

- **Psalm 18:7-15:** The earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. ⁸Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. ⁹He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. ¹⁰He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. ¹¹He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. ¹²Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. ¹³The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. ¹⁴And he sent out his arrows and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings and routed them. ¹⁵Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

These expressions of God's power are illustrative of the majesty, and the glory of God, and manifestations of the way He interposes on behalf of His people in answer to their prayer for protection from their enemies and victory over them in battle, as the following verse shows.

- And he (Moses) said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance." ¹⁰ And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. (Exodus 34:9-10).

THE LAND TOTTERED AND TREMBLED

PSALM 60:2

- **Psalm 60:2:** You have made the land to quake; you have torn it open; repair its breaches, for it totters (it shaketh in the KJV).

The statement, “you made the land to quake and totter,” can carry the idea that the earth around them did literally shake and tremble as it did at Mount Sinai when the LORD descended upon it, but in the context of this Psalm it more likely carries the figurative idea that all things were unsettled such as:

- Kings and priests being corrupt, some had been murdered and the worst of men had been put in office.
- The military power was weak, and its might before nations was broken.
- Civil authority had grown appalling and shameful through revolutions, rebellions, and challenges for power.
- The people were worshipping idols and indulging in gross wickedness.
- Those that had authority and power were perverting justice to their own advantage.
- The rich were oppressing the poor and helpless for their own gain.

As the earth cracks, and opens itself in rifts during violent earthquakes, so was the kingdom rent with strife and calamity. As a house in time of earthquakes is shaken and the walls begin to crack, and gape with threatening fractures so was it with the kingdom of Israel. David is not only aware that the kingdom is so far gone that it is shaking and tottering toward complete ruin if it is not soon restored and repaired, but also fully aware that Israel’s only hope to save the nation from utter destruction was God’s intervention.

THE EARTH SPLIT APART, SHAKEN LIKE A DRUNKEN MAN

ISAIAH 24:19-20

- **Isaiah 24:19-20:** The earth is utterly broken, the earth is split apart, the earth is violently shaken. ²⁰ The earth staggers like a drunken man; it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.

The words, “the earth is split apart, violently shaken and staggers like a drunken man,” does not mean the earth will be literally split apart and stagger like a drunken man, but signifies that there will be great political and governmental upheavals amongst the inhabitants of the earth.

YOU WILL BE VISITED BY THE LORD WITH THUNDER AND AN EARTHQUAKE

ISAIAH 29:6-8

- **Isaiah 29:6-8:** you (Jerusalem) (v1) will be visited by the LORD of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire. ⁷ And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel (Jerusalem) (v1), all that fight against her and her stronghold and distress her, shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.

Earthquakes in this context symbolise God’s awesome power and presence, and the enormity, magnitude, horror, and dread of a battle. It can also embrace God’s judgments manifested through natural disasters (i.e., famines and pestilence, etc.).

MOUNTAINS WERE QUAKING, AND HILLS MOVED TO AND FRO

JEREMIAH 4:23-24

- **Jeremiah 4:23–24:** I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. ²⁴ I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro.

The expression, “the heavens having no light, mountains quaking and hills moving to and fro,” is a graphic picture of the terror, strength and might of the armies of Babylon approaching Jerusalem and Judah. The destruction of Jerusalem and the land of Judah was so great that Jeremiah likens it to the earth when it was without form and void. Babylon burned Judah’s houses, destroyed the city and their farms, and pillaged the House of God of its treasures.

THE HEAVENS TREMBLE AND THE SUN AND MOON ARE DARKENED

JOEL 2:7-10

- **Joel 2:7–10:** Like warriors they charge; like soldiers they scale the wall. They march each on his way; they do not swerve from their paths. ⁸ They do not jostle one another; each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted. ⁹ They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls, they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief. ¹⁰ The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

God through Joel uses lofty language to depict the horror terror and bloodshed of the battle. The expression, “the heavens trembled, the sun and moon are darkened and the earth shook,” and similar statements like it are often used to describe the enormity of the battle. The battle is so great, the fear so intense, the destruction so enormous and the thousands of human bodies that are left on the surface of the earth for birds to feast on is so vast that the only way to describe the alarm, panic, terror, horror and magnitude of the battle and the widespread destruction of the land and its cities is to say, “The heavens trembled, and the earth shook out of its place.”

Joel’s vision refers to the fierce armies of Babylon surrounding the walls and city of Jerusalem being so vast, powerful, and well organised for battle that nothing could stop them. God through Joel is using biblical lofty language to convey to the reader the magnitude and enormity of the awful events and the overwhelming killing, bloodshed and incalculable and gigantic number of deaths that will take place on the horrific day these armies attack Jerusalem.

THE LORD UTTERS HIS VOICE AND THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH SHAKE

JOEL 3:16-17

- **Joel 3:16-17:** The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel. ¹⁷ “So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it.

Zion is called God's Holy Mountain because God's Holy City Jerusalem sits on it. The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem is another way of saying, God fights for His people. The statement, "the sun and moon darkened and the earth quaking," carry the idea of the battle being horrific and enormously terrifying because of the enormous violence, bloodshed, and death. It is a picture of the LORD judging the nations that have come up against His people dwelling at Jerusalem.

HIS VOICE SHOOK THE EARTH, BUT NOW HE WILL SHAKE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS

HEBREWS 12:26-28

- **Hebrews 12:26-28:** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." (Heb. 12:26-28).

The words, "at that time his voice shook the earth," refer to the LORD speaking and giving Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and all the people of Israel standing in awesome fear because the whole mountain was wrapped in thick smoke and fire and trembled greatly because the LORD had descended on it (Exodus 19:18).

God will not only shake the earth, but also shake the heavens once more: the following are the two most common teachings to what this statement means:

1. God will literally shake the earth by earthquakes, floods, droughts, tsunamis, volcanos and meteors falling from the heavens destroying vast parts of the earth and such like things and shake the heavens by extremely violent winds and storms, thunder and lightning, and may include the devastating effect the green-house effect will have upon earth and meteors falling from the heavens and knocking out the world's satellite system of communication since all, of these have the potential to bring the world to ruin.
2. It is symbolic language that means God will bring to ruin those in positions of authority and power (i.e., kings, presidents, and leaders of nations and governments will topple) especially false religious teachers who have global positions of influence power and authority over a world-wide following.

It is very easy to harmonise these two different groups since if what is mentioned in first group comes to pass (and it surely will) what is mentioned in the second group will naturally follow and regardless of what order these events come to pass in the Bible in many other prophetic verses of Scripture proclaim they both will.

A GREAT EARTHQUAKE, THE SUN BECAME BLACK AND THE MOON LIKE BLOOD

REVELATION 6:12

- **Revelation 6:12:** When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood.

In the context of this chapter, earthquake denotes a violent shaking and agitation of the earth that brings about the following two important changes:

1. Opening chasms in the earth which not only cause buildings, houses, and temples to be thrown down and sinking hills and raising up the ocean from its bed, but also causes plains to rise-up and ponds and lakes to dry up or form where none existed and such like things.
2. Upheavals, commotions and radical changes in governments, civil affairs, our global system of trade and banking and oppressive system of excessive interest and credit.

All the symbols represented in this panoramic vision and the opening of this seal denote fearful alarm, dread, and breathtaking and bewildering changes. This and the following bold figurative descriptions signify great changes will happen, especially in the latter days and the end of the world as we know it. Whether a king or a noble, or powerful, or rich no one will escape the dread and terror that is to come.

God's righteous day of wrath will come, it could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace, until the great day of the LORD'S judgment comes. Whatever we may have to endure, the short persecution, contempt and scorn of man is better to bear, than the shame that is everlasting. No worldwide massive global catastrophe has been recorded in history that was caused by:

- The sun becoming black as sackcloth.
- The full moon becoming like blood.

The language is symbolic, earthquakes in this context signify massive terrors and changes will come upon earth.

The sun becoming black as sackcloth; signifies those in the highest positions of religious authority and power, such as the Vatican with its Popes and bishops, and false religious leaders that have global influence, but twist and distort the Gospel for their own gain (i.e., worldly riches and fame etc.), will come to ruin.

The moon becoming as blood; signifies those in the highest positions of secular authority and power, such as kings, and rulers of nations and countries etc., will come to ruin.

Conclusion of the literal application; the expression, "A great earthquake, the sun became black and the moon became like blood," (Rev. 6:12) symbolises massive bloodshed, and enormous changes will be made on earth and immense changes in governments that control nations, countries and the world, and enormous religious changes worldwide.

Conclusion of the spiritual application; many suppose, "a great earthquake; the sun becoming black as sackcloth; the full moon becoming like blood; the stars of the sky falling to the earth; the sky vanishing like a scroll and every mountain and island being removed from their place (Rev. 6:12-14) refer to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus removing the need for the Levitical priesthood; the Jewish temple; a human high priest; all Jewish ceremonial rites, holy days, and religious customs and traditions and abolishing the old covenant and replacing it with the new covenant of grace.

Jesus' death on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and his resurrection to heaven, entirely-destroyed the old religious and spiritual world under the law and began an entirely new religious world under grace. Jewish worship and ordinances came to an end, in, order to make way for Christian ordinances and institutions, which were to remain. Should this view be right the symbolisms would be as follows:

The great earthquake; would symbolise the shaking up of the Jewish world.

The sun becoming black as sackcloth; would signify the removal of the high priest and Levitical priesthood

The full moon becoming like blood and the stars of the sky falling to the earth; would signify the Romans persecution against the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people.

The sky vanishing like a scroll and every mountain and island being removed from their place; would signify the full end of the Old Testament covenant, and the Jewish religious world, (Rev. 6:12-14) which was replaced by the new Christian world.

These verses show that many times Bible writers very skilfully and very beautifully use figurative language and colourful exaggerations and overstatements to amplify the story, the battle, the message, the moral, the teaching or to dramatize the event in focus, or to highlight God's power and glory.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.