

Ezekiel 20:47

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein.

Analysis

I will kindle a fire in thee (הצִיתִי בָּם אֲשָׁר, hitsati vekha esh)—God Himself lights the judgment fire. The verb **יָצַת** (yatsat, to kindle) indicates deliberate ignition. **Every green tree and every dry tree** (כָּל-עֵץ לְחֵם וְכָל-עֵץ יְבָשָׁה, kol-etz lakh v'khol-etz yavesh) means total destruction—both righteous (green) and wicked (dry) will be swept into exile.

The flaming flame shall not be quenched (לֹא תִּקְבַּה לְהַבֵּת שָׁלֵמָה) uses emphatic Hebrew repetition for an unstoppable conflagration. This fire is the Babylonian army (21:3-5), but ultimately represents God's wrath against covenant unfaithfulness. Jesus uses similar language for final judgment (Mark 9:43-48), where the fire is never quenched.

Historical Context

This prophecy was fulfilled in 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem and the temple (2 Kings 25:8-9). The fire consumed everyone—even righteous people like Daniel's contemporaries went into exile. Ezekiel's audience initially mocked this as impossible (20:49).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's impartial judgment (consuming green and dry trees alike) challenge assumptions about earthly prosperity indicating divine favor?
2. What does unquenchable fire symbolize regarding the seriousness of sin and rebellion?

Interlinear Text

בָּהּ	יְהִי	הַ	דְּבָרָ	שְׁמָעָ	מִתְּבָרָךְ	לֵיְלָה	אָמָר	רָ
And say	to the forest	from the south	Hear	the word	of the LORD			
H559	H3293	H5045	H8085	H1697	H3068			H3541
אָשָׁ	בָּאָ	מִצְאָתָ	הַנְּבָאָ	יְהִי הָ	אָדָנָ	אָמָר	רָ	
And say	the Lord	GOD	H2005	Behold I will kindle		H0	a fire	
H559	H136	H3069		H3341			H784	
וְאַכְלֵ	הָ	כָּלְ	בָּאָ	עַ	לְהָ	וְאַכְלֵ	הָ	
in thee and it shall devour		H0	H3605	tree	every green	H3605	tree	
				H6086	H3892		H6086	
שָׁלֵמָה	בָּתָה	לְהָ	בָּתָה	תְּכִבָּה	לְהָ	בָּתָה	שָׁלֵמָה	
in thee and every dry	H3808	shall not be quenched		H3518	the flaming	H3852	flame	
	H3002						H7957	
אַפְּנָהָה:	מִתְּבָרָךְ	בָּהָ	כָּלְ	בָּהָ	פָּנִים	מִתְּבָרָךְ	אַפְּנָהָה:	
shall be burned	H0	H3605	and all faces	from the south	to the north	H5045	H6828	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 21:14 (References Lord): But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.

Luke 23:31 (Parallel theme): For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Ezekiel 17:24 (References Lord): And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done it.