

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 (הִצַּתִּי בָךְ אֵשׁ, 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 לֵחַ וְכָל-עֵץ יָבֵשׁ, 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 תִכְבֶּה לֶהֱבֵת שֶׁלֶהֱבֵת, lo tikhbeh lahevet shalhevet) 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

כֹּה יְהוָה הַ דִּבֶּר שְׁמַע מִן גֹּב לִי עַר אָמַר
And say to the forest from the south Hear the word of the LORD H3541
H559 H3293 H5045 H8085 H1697 H3068

אֵשׁ בָּרָא מִצִּית הִנֵּנִי יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי אָמַר
And say the Lord GOD Behold I will kindle H0 a fire H784
H559 H136 H3069 H2005 H3341

עֵץ וְכָל לֶחֶם עֵץ וְכָל הָאֲכָלִי
in thee and it shall devour H0 H3605 tree every green H3605 tree H6086
H398 H6086 H3892

שִׁלֵּה בַת לֵה בַת תִּכְבֶּה לֹא יֵב שׁ
in thee and every dry H3808 shall not be quenched the flaming flame H7957
H3002 H3518 H3852

צָפוֹנָה: מִן גֹּב פְּנֵי יָם כָּל בָּהּ וְנִצְרְבוּ
shall be burned H0 H3605 and all faces from the south to the north H6828
H6866 H6440 H5045

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.