

Isaiah 28:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

Analysis

For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. God's judgment will be as decisive as past victories, but directed differently. **Mount Perazim** (har Peratsim, הַר פְּרָצִים) refers to David's victory over Philistines (2 Samuel 5:20, 1 Chronicles 14:11) where God "broke through" enemies like waters breaking through. **Valley of Gibeon** (emeq Givon, עֵמֶק גִּבְעוֹן) recalls Joshua's victory where God fought for Israel (Joshua 10:10-14), making the sun stand still. These were triumphs FOR Israel against enemies.

Now comes the reversal: **his strange work...his strange act** (ma'asehu zar...avodato nokhriyyah, מַעֲשֵׂהוּ זָר...עֲבֹדָתוֹ נֹכְרִיָּה, His work is strange/alien...His deed is foreign). Zar (זָר, strange, alien) and nokhriyyah (נֹכְרִיָּה, foreign, unusual) emphasize this is against God's nature and normal pattern. His delight is mercy, not judgment (Micah 7:18); His goodness is severe toward unbelief (Romans 11:22). Judging His own people is "strange"—necessary but grievous. Lamentations 3:33 says He doesn't "willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men."

Historical Context

In 701 BC, God defended Jerusalem from Assyria (2 Kings 19:35)—His normal work protecting His people. But in 586 BC, He fought AGAINST Jerusalem through Babylon—His "strange work" judging His people. Jesus wept over Jerusalem's coming destruction (Luke 19:41-44)—grieving over necessary judgment. At the cross, God's "strange act" was making His Son sin (2 Corinthians 5:21) and crushing Him (Isaiah 53:10). Judgment, even righteous judgment, grieves God's heart while satisfying His justice. This paradox shows divine complexity: justice and mercy, holiness and love, wrath and compassion coexisting.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that judging His people is God's 'strange work'—against His natural inclination?
2. How does understanding that judgment grieves God affect your view of His discipline in your life?
3. In what ways was the cross God's ultimate 'strange act'—necessary but grievous?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	כָהָר	פְּרָצִים	יָקֻם	יְהוָה	כַּעַם מִקַּ
H3588	as in mount H2022	Perazim H6559	shall rise up H6965	For the LORD H3068	as in the valley H6010
בְּגִבֹּעַ	יִרְגֵּז	לַעֲשׂוֹת	מַעֲשֵׂה	זֶר	מַעֲשֵׂה
of Gibeon H1391	he shall be wroth H7264	that he may do H6213	his work H4639	his strange H2114	his work H4639
וְלַעֲבֹד	עָבַדְתּוֹ	נִכְרֵי	עָבַדְתּוֹ		
and bring to pass H5647	act H5656	his strange H5237	act H5656		

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 14:11 (Parallel theme): So they came up to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

Joshua 10:12 (References Lord): Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

2 Samuel 5:20 (References Lord): And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

Joshua 10:10 (References Lord): And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

1 Chronicles 14:16 (Parallel theme): David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer.

2 Samuel 5:25 (References Lord): And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

Isaiah 28:19 (Parallel theme): From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.

Isaiah 29:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Lamentations 2:15 (Parallel theme): All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?