

Isaiah 43:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Analysis

This verse offers profound assurance of God's presence in life's most overwhelming trials. The 'when' (not 'if') acknowledges that believers will face difficulties. Four scenarios represent different types of trials: waters (overwhelming circumstances), rivers (strong opposition), fire (persecution/testing), and flames (intense suffering). God doesn't promise exemption from trials but presence in them—'I will be with thee.' The promise that waters won't overflow and fire won't burn us doesn't mean we won't get wet or feel heat, but that trials won't destroy us. God's sustaining grace ensures our survival and ultimate victory.

Historical Context

Israel faced literal water crossings (Red Sea, Jordan) where God's presence meant salvation, not drowning. Babylon's fiery furnace (Daniel 3) demonstrated God's protective presence—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked in flames unharmed because the fourth figure (interpreted as Christ pre-incarnate) walked with them. First-century Christians facing martyrdom by fire found courage in this promise. Church history records countless believers who testified to God's sustaining presence in persecution, imprisonment, and martyrdom.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'waters' or 'fires' are you currently facing, and how does God's promise of presence change your perspective on them?
2. How can you cultivate awareness of God's presence in trials rather than focusing only on the difficulty itself?

Interlinear Text

כִּי תַּעֲבֹר רִבּוֹת מֵימָן אָנָּנוּ אַתָּה בְּפָנֵינוּ

H3588 When thou passest through the waters H854 H589

וְבָבָר וְתַל נָא שְׁטָפָה וְתַל נָא

I will be with thee and through the rivers H3808 they shall not overflow H3588 H1980

H5104 H7857

בָּמָוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִּפְאַר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא תִּלְבַּב הַמִּזְבֵּחַ

through the fire H3808 thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame H3808

H1119 H784 H3554 H3852

בְּרֹא תַּבְעֵר

kindle H0

H1197

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 41:10 (Parallel theme): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Psalms 66:12 (Parallel theme): Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

Joshua 1:9 (Parallel theme): Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Psalms 23:4 (Parallel theme): Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Psalms 91:15 (Parallel theme): He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Hebrews 11:29 (Parallel theme): By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Joshua 1:5 (Parallel theme): There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Psalms 66:10 (Parallel theme): For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

Matthew 1:23 (Parallel theme): Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Exodus 14:29 (Parallel theme): But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.