

Psalms 89:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.

Analysis

Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin—vivid agricultural and military imagery depicts comprehensive devastation. Geder (hedge/wall) protected vineyards from wild animals and invaders; mivtzar (stronghold/fortress) provided military defense. Both are broken down (פָּרָצְתָּ paratzta, breached) and brought to ruin (מַחֲרִית mechittah, terror, destruction).

Isaiah 5:5 uses identical vineyard language for judgment: "I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up." The removed hedge exposes Israel to plunder. Yet this judgment isn't arbitrary—it fulfills covenant curses for unfaithfulness (Deuteronomy 28:52: "He shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down"). God's faithfulness includes keeping promises of both blessing and cursing. The broken hedges paradoxically prove God hasn't abandoned the covenant—He's administering its terms. Only after the "wall of partition" was broken (Ephesians 2:14) could Gentiles enter God's vineyard.

Historical Context

The Babylonian siege of 586 BC systematically destroyed Judah's fortifications. Lamentations 2:2 confirms: "The Lord hath...thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah." Archaeology reveals massive destruction layers at this period. The psalmist doesn't blame Babylon—he recognizes God's sovereign hand behind enemy action.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What protective "hedges" (relationships, structures, securities) has God allowed to be broken in your life? What did it expose?
2. How does recognizing God's sovereignty in allowing protective structures to fall differ from blaming Him bitterly?
3. How does Ephesians 2:14 (Christ breaking "the middle wall of partition") reinterpret this imagery redemptively?

Interlinear Text

פָּרַצְתָּ	כָּל	גְּדֵרֶיּוֹ	שֶׁ	מִבְצָרָיו
Thou hast broken down	H3605	all his hedges	thou hast brought	his strong holds
H6555		H1448	H7760	H4013
מַחֲרָה:				
to ruin				
H4288				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 80:12 (Parallel theme): Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?

Lamentations 2:2 (Parallel theme): The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the

strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof.

Job 1:10 (Parallel theme): Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Lamentations 2:5 (Parallel theme): The Lord was as an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.