

# Zechariah 1:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

## Analysis

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God declares 'I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.' The Hebrew intensifies it: 'I am jealous with great jealousy' (qana'ti qin'ah gedolah) regarding Jerusalem, but 'with great wrath I am wrathful' (qetseph gadol ani qotsef) toward complacent nations. God's measured discipline of Israel through Babylon and others became excessive cruelty from the nations' perspective—they exceeded their mandate (Isaiah 10:5-7 shows Assyria's similar overreach). Though God used pagan nations as judgment instruments, their callous brutality and self-serving exploitation provoked His wrath. This reveals God's covenant faithfulness: He disciplines His people but defends them against those who abuse them. Romans 11:28 captures this: Israel 'as touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes.'

## Historical Context

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Zechariah prophesied in 520 BC, during post-exilic restoration under Persian rule. Babylon had destroyed Jerusalem (586 BC), but Cyrus's decree (539 BC) allowed Jews to return. By Zechariah's time, temple rebuilding had stalled, and returnees faced discouragement. Meanwhile, former oppressors (Babylon conquered by Persia, Edom displaced, Assyria long gone) lived 'at ease'—comfortable while God's people struggled. This seemed unjust to the Jews. Zechariah assures them that God hasn't forgotten: He will judge the nations that mistreated His people. Verses

16-17 promise Jerusalem's restoration. This pattern repeats: God uses pagan powers to discipline His people, then judges those powers for their cruelty (Habakkuk addresses this theodicy question).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How do I reconcile God's use of wicked people as instruments while still holding them accountable?
2. Does the reality of coming judgment on oppressors comfort me to trust God's justice when evil seems triumphant?

## Interlinear Text

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וְקִצְרִי	גָדוֹל	אֲנִי	קִצְרֵי פְתִי	עַל	הַגּוֹיִם	הַשְּׂאֲנָנִים
sore	And I am very		displeased		with the heathen	that are at ease
H7110	H1419	H589	H7107	H5921	H1471	H7600

אֲשֶׁר	אֲנִי	קִצְרֵי פְתִי	מַעַט	וְהֵמָּה	עָזְרוּ
		displeased	for I was but a little		and they helped
H834	H589	H7107	H4592	H1992	H5826

לְרָעָה:

forward the affliction

H7451

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 51:24** (Parallel theme): And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD.

**Isaiah 54:8** (Parallel theme): In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

**Psalms 69:26** (Parallel theme): For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

**Zechariah 1:11** (Parallel theme): And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

**Zechariah 1:2** (Parallel theme): The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.