

Zechariah 12:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

Analysis

In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. God's warfare involves psychological and supernatural weapons against enemy armies. Three judgments fall on attacking forces: First, **"every horse with astonishment"** (kol-sus etimmahon)—horses panic and become uncontrollable. The term timmahon (תִּמְחָוֹן) means confusion, panic, or stunning bewilderment (Deuteronomy 28:28 lists it among covenant curses). Second, **"his rider with madness"** (rokvo eshigga'on)—warriors lose their minds, becoming insane. Shiggaon (שִׁיגְאוֹן) indicates raving madness or mental chaos.

These first two judgments recall Deuteronomy 28:28: "The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart." Covenant curses threatened against disobedient Israel now fall on Israel's enemies—a dramatic reversal. Third, **"every horse of the people with blindness"** (kol-sus ha-amim ivvaron)—enemy cavalry becomes literally blind. Horses and riders rendered useless through divinely inflicted panic, insanity, and blindness.

Contrasted with enemy judgment: **"I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah"** (ephqach et-eynay al-beyt Yehudah). While enemies experience blindness, God opens His eyes upon Judah—vigilant, protective watchfulness. The idiom

"open eyes upon" means attentive care and favor (2 Chronicles 6:40; Nehemiah 1:6; Daniel 9:18). God's watchful gaze protects Judah while His judgment blinds enemies. This divine discrimination—simultaneous blessing on His people and judgment on their attackers—demonstrates covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare depended heavily on cavalry and chariots. Horses panicking, riders going mad, or blindness afflicting animals would render an army completely ineffective. Historical precedents include God's confusion of Sisera's army (Judges 4-5), panic among Philistines (1 Samuel 14:15-20), and Assyria's defeat at Jerusalem when the angel killed 185,000 (2 Kings 19:35). Zechariah prophesies similar supernatural intervention defending eschatological Jerusalem. Theologically, this teaches that spiritual warfare isn't won by human military might but by God's supernatural intervention. Paul writes that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Corinthians 10:4)—God confuses, blinds, and defeats His enemies through means beyond human capability. The prophecy assures that no matter how formidable the opposition, God can render it impotent through supernatural judgment. Eschatologically, when nations gather against Jerusalem, Christ will defeat them supernaturally (Zechariah 14:12-15 describes plague, panic, and infighting).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise to "open His eyes" upon His people comfort you when facing enemies or overwhelming opposition?
2. What does the contrast between God blessing His people while judging their enemies teach about covenant faithfulness?

3. In what ways does this prophecy encourage confidence that spiritual battles are won by God's power, not human strength?

Interlinear Text

בַּיּוֹם	וְהָיָה	וְאָמַר	יְהוָה	אֲנִי	כָל	סוֹס
In that day	H1931	saith	the LORD	I will smite	H3605	every horse
H3117		H5002	H3068	H5221		H5483
בְּתִמְהוֹן	וְרֹכֵב	בְּשֹׁגֵג	וְעַל	בֵּית	יְהוּדָה	
with astonishment	and his rider	with madness	H5921	upon the house	of Judah	
H8541	H7392	H7697		H1004	H3063	
אֶפְתָּח	אֶת	עֵינַי	וְכָל	סוֹס	הָעָם	אֲנִי
and I will open	H853	mine eyes	H3605	every horse	of the people	I will smite
H6491		H5869		H5483	H5971	H5221
בְּעִוְרוֹ:						
with blindness						
H5788						

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 12:3 (Parallel theme): And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

Deuteronomy 28:28 (References Lord): The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

Zechariah 12:6 (Parallel theme): In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.