

Zechariah 12:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Judah's leaders, previously weak, become instruments of divine judgment. Two vivid similes convey irresistible destructive power: First, **"like an hearth of fire among the wood"** (kekiyor esh be-etzim)—like a firepot or brazier among logs. The image is a concentrated heat source igniting surrounding fuel, consuming it rapidly and completely.

Second, **"like a torch of fire in a sheaf"** (kelapid esh be-amir)—like a flaming torch thrust into harvested grain sheaves. Dry sheaves ignite instantly and burn intensely; nothing can stop the conflagration. Together, these images convey unstoppable, consuming judgment. The governors of Judah, empowered by God, become agents of holy war against surrounding hostile peoples.

The scope: **"they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left"**—complete, directional thoroughness. No enemy escapes. Yet the purpose isn't mere destruction but security: **"and Jerusalem shall be inhabited**

again in her own place, even in Jerusalem." The Hebrew emphasizes permanence and restoration: Jerusalem will be re-established and continuously inhabited in its historical location. The phrase "in her own place" (tachat) means "on her own site"—not displaced or relocated, but restored to her rightful position. This promises permanent security after complete victory over all threats.

Historical Context

Zechariah's audience lived amid ruins. Jerusalem was partially rebuilt, but hardly secure; hostile neighbors surrounded them. The prophecy promises future reversal: weak Judah becomes militarily victorious; vulnerable Jerusalem becomes permanently secure. This finds partial fulfillment in Maccabean victories (165-160 BC) when weak Judea defeated Seleucid forces, but ultimate fulfillment awaits eschatological deliverance. The New Testament applies this spiritually: the church, though persecuted and weak, will triumph. Jesus promised the gates of hell won't prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18). Paul declared that God always leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14). Revelation shows the church victorious after tribulation (Revelation 7:9-17, 15:2-4, 20:4-6). The "fire" imagery appears in Jeremiah 5:14 where God makes His word in the prophet's mouth fire consuming the people. God's people, empowered by His Spirit and Word, become instruments executing His purposes. The permanent security of Jerusalem points to the New Jerusalem, the church's eternal home, which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28, Revelation 21-22).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the image of God's weak people becoming fire among wood encourage confidence when facing overwhelming opposition?

2. What does permanent inhabitation of Jerusalem "in her own place" teach about God's faithfulness to restore what seems lost?
3. In what ways will the church's ultimate victory over all enemies bring glory to God and vindicate His faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

בִּי וּם	הָהּ וְאֵ	אֲשִׁים	אֶת	אֲלֵי י	יְהוּדָה	כְּכִי וֹר
In that day	H1931	will I make	H853	the governors	of Judah	like an hearth
H3117		H7760		H441	H3063	H3595
אֵשׁ	בְּעֵצִים	וְכֹלֵף יָד	אֵשׁ	בְּעֵמָּה יֵר	וְאֵ כָל ו	
of fire	among the wood	and like a torch	of fire	in a sheaf	and they shall devour	
H784	H6086	H3940	H784	H5995	H398	
עַל	יְמִין	וְעַל	שְׁמֹאל	אֶת	כָּל	הָעָם יִם
H5921	on the right hand	H5921	and on the left	H853	H3605	all the people
	H3225		H8040			H5971
סָבִיב	וְיִשְׁכָּה	בִּירוּשָׁלַם:	עֹד			
round about	shall be inhabited	again in her own place even in Jerusalem	H5750			
H5439	H3427	H3389				
תַּחֲתֵי יָהּ	בִּירוּשָׁלַם:					
H8478	again in her own place even in Jerusalem					
	H3389					

Additional Cross-References

Obadiah 1:18 (Parallel theme): And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken it.

Zechariah 2:4 (References Jerusalem): And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein:

