

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

בְּכָי וְרַחֲמָה	וְיְהוָה הַ	אֶלְפָי	אֶת	אָשִׁים	בְּהָאָת	בְּיַמִּים	בְּהַיָּה וְאַתָּה	בְּיַמִּים
In that day	H1931	will I make	H853	the governors	H441	of Judah	H3063	like an hearth
H3117		H7760		H441		H3063		H3595
אֲשֶׁר	בְּעֵץ יָם	וְכָלְפָה יָד	בְּעֵץ יָם	אֲשֶׁר	בְּעֵם יָרָא	אֲשֶׁר	בְּעֵם יָמִים	אֲשֶׁר
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	יְמִינְךָ	וְעַל	יְמִינְךָ	אֶת	שְׁמָאָל	כָּל	כָּל	בְּעֵם יָמִים
on the right hand	and on the left			H853	H3605	all the people		
H5921	H5921		H8040			H5971		
וְיַשְׁבֶּה הַ	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:	בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:
round about	shall be inhabited							
H5439	H3427							
וְיַשְׁבֶּה יְהֹוָה								
בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:								
again in her own place even in Jerusalem								
H3389								
בְּיַרְשָׁלָם:								
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:

