

Zechariah 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

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. The urgent command ruts (רוץ, run!) indicates immediate, pressing communication. The message must reach hana'ar halaz (הנער הלאז, this young man—likely the man with measuring line) before he limits Jerusalem by human measurements. Perazot (פרצות, unwalled towns/villages) describes settlements without defensive walls, typically indicating peace, security, and expansion beyond fortifiable limits.

The reason: merov adam u-vehemah betokha (מְרֻב אָדָם וּבָהָמָה בְּתוֹךְהָ, the multitude of men and cattle within it). Jerusalem's population will grow so large that walls cannot contain them. This promises extraordinary blessing—both numerical growth (people) and economic prosperity (cattle). The city will overflow with life, exceeding any planned boundaries.

This prophecy subverts conventional ancient Near Eastern expectations. Cities needed walls for protection; unwalled settlements indicated vulnerability. But God promises both expansion (unwalled) and protection (v. 5: He'll be a wall of fire). This demonstrates that divine blessing transcends human security measures—God's presence provides better defense than stone walls.

Historical Context

Ancient cities required walls for survival against enemies. Jerusalem's walls, destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC, wouldn't be rebuilt until Nehemiah (445 BC)—75 years after this vision. The promise of dwelling safely without walls seemed impossible in a hostile environment where Samaritans, Ammonites, and others opposed Jewish restoration.

Yet God promises population growth requiring expansion beyond walls. Historically, this had partial fulfillment as Jewish population increased, but complete fulfillment awaits the eschatological Jerusalem. Zechariah 14:10-11 describes Jerusalem dwelling safely, and Ezekiel 38:11 depicts Israel dwelling securely in unwalled villages when Gog attacks (finding them protected by God Himself). Ultimately, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:16-17) has walls for glory but needs no physical protection because God's presence fills it.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise of security without physical walls challenge your reliance on human defenses or security measures?
2. What does the vision of Jerusalem overflowing beyond planned boundaries teach about God's blessing exceeding human expectations?
3. In what areas of life are you building 'walls' that may actually limit God's expansive purposes for you?

Interlinear Text

לְאָמֵר בְּלֹزֶה לְאָמֵר

And said H413 unto him Run speak

H559 H7323 H1696

אֵל דְּבָרֶךָ עָרָם

young man to this And said

H5288 H1975 H559

אֶלְעָזֶר יְרֹשָׁלָם מִרְבָּם אֶלְמָן

פְּרוֹזֹת בְּתִישׁ בְּ יְרֹשָׁלָם מִרְבָּם אֶלְמָן

as towns without walls shall be inhabited

H6519 H3427

Jerusalem for the multitude of men

H3389 H7230 H120

בְּתִוְכָה וּבְהַמִּן הַ

and cattle therein

H929 H8432

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 1:17 (References Jerusalem): Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 38:11 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

Micah 7:11 (Parallel theme): In the day that thy walls are to be built, in that day shall the decree be far removed.

Isaiah 44:26 (References Jerusalem): That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

Isaiah 49:20 (Parallel theme): The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.

Jeremiah 33:22 (Parallel theme): As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

Jeremiah 31:27 (Parallel theme): Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.

Zechariah 12:6 (References Jerusalem): 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.

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