

Zechariah 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.

Analysis

God's protective promise: 'For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.' The Hebrew 'nogea bakem' (he who touches you) 'nogea bebabat eyno' (touches the pupil/apple of his eye). The pupil is the eye's most sensitive, protected part—touching it provokes instant, involuntary protective reflex. This vivid metaphor describes God's fierce protectiveness toward His people: harming them is as personal an attack as poking His eye. The promise follows 'after the glory'—after God manifests His glory by judging oppressors. Though Israel suffered discipline through pagan nations, God then judges those nations for excessive cruelty (1:15). This demonstrates God's covenant loyalty: He disciplines His children but defends them against abusers.

Historical Context

Post-exilic context (520 BC): Jews had returned from Babylon but were weak, vulnerable, and surrounded by hostile neighbors. Zechariah reassures them of God's jealous protection. The principle applies throughout Scripture: God used Assyria and Babylon to discipline Israel/Judah, then judged those empires for brutality. Romans 11:28-29 reflects this: Israel as 'enemies' regarding the gospel yet 'beloved' regarding election. God's promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:3, 'I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you') remain in force.

Ultimately fulfilled in Christ protecting His church: 'he that toucheth you toucheth him' (Acts 9:4-5, Saul persecuting Christians touches Jesus).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does knowing I'm the 'apple of God's eye' shape my security and identity in Christ?
2. Does God's fierce protection of His people make me more bold in witnessing despite opposition?

Interlinear Text

שָׁלֵם	נִ	כְּבָד	אָמֵר	יְהִי	הַצְבָּאֹת	רְאִמְמָד	וְאַמְתָּד	שָׁלֵם
H3588	H3541	For thus saith	the LORD	of hosts	After	the glory	hath he sent	
	H559		H3068	H6635	H310	H3519		H7971
אֵל	מִ	בְּגֹויִם	בְּשָׁלֵלִים	מִ	בְּ	עָתָךְ	נִ	עָתָךְ
H413	me unto the nations		which spoiled		H853	H3588	you for he that toucheth	
	H1471		H7997			H5060		
בְּ	מִ	נִ	תְּ	עִינֹוּ:	בְּ	בְּ	תְּ	עִינֹוּ:
H0	you for he that toucheth		the apple	of his eye	H892	H5869		
	H5060							

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:10 (Parallel theme): He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Psalms 17:8 (Parallel theme): Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

John 14:26 (Parallel theme): But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

2 Thessalonians 1:6 (Parallel theme): Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

Matthew 25:40 (Parallel theme): And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

1 John 4:14 (Parallel theme): And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

John 17:18 (Parallel theme): As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Amos 1:13 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border:

Amos 1:9 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:

Amos 1:11 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: