

Zechariah 5:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.

Analysis

Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork—Zechariah observes two women (shetayim nāshīm, שְׁתַּיִם נָשִׁים) emerging with rūach biknaphēyhem (רוּחַ בְּכַנְפֵיהֶם, 'wind/spirit in their wings'). They possess kenaphayim kaknaphē hachasīdāh (כְּנָפַיִם כְּכַנְפֵי הַחֲסִידָה, 'wings like the wings of the stork')—the stork being a large, strong migratory bird capable of long-distance flight, though ritually unclean (Leviticus 11:19; Deuteronomy 14:18).

And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven—The two winged women seize the wickedness-filled basket and vattissē'nāh et-hā'ēphāh bēyn hā'āretz ūvēyn hashshāmayim (וַתִּשְׂאֲנָה אֶת־הָאֵפָה בֵּין הָאָרֶץ וּבֵין הַשָּׁמַיִם, 'and they lifted the ephah between the earth and the heaven'). Suspended between earth and sky suggests transportation, removal from one realm to another. The women function as agents executing God's judgment—removing wickedness from Judah and transporting it elsewhere. Their unclean nature (stork wings) suits handling unclean cargo (wickedness). The 'wind in their wings' may be divine enabling or demonic energy—either way, they accomplish God's purposes of purging His land.

Historical Context

The imagery of flying women carrying wickedness away symbolizes the complete removal of idolatrous materialism from post-exilic Judah. God promises not mere suppression but exile of wickedness itself—reversing the pattern where Israel went into exile because of sin. Now sin goes into exile so Israel can remain pure. The two women may represent divine judgment executed through various means, or angelic/demonic forces enlisted to accomplish God's purposes.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why does God use 'unclean' agents (stork-winged women) to remove unclean wickedness?
2. What does suspension 'between earth and heaven' during wickedness's transport symbolize?
3. How does this vision of sin's exile reverse the pattern of God's people going into exile for sin?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|
| וַתִּשָּׂא אָנָה | עֵינַי י | וְאֵל רָא | וְהִנֵּה | שְׁתֵּי ים | נָשִׁים ים |
| Then lifted I up | mine eyes | and looked | H2009 | two | women |
| H5375 | H5869 | H7200 | | H8147 | H802 |
| וַיֵּצְאוּת | וְרֵיחַ | כְּכַנְפֵי י | וְלֵה נָה | כְּכַנְפֵי י | |
| and behold there came out | and the wind | like the wings | for they had | like the wings | |
| H3318 | H7307 | H3671 | H2007 | H3671 | |
| כְּכַנְפֵי י | הַחֲסִידָה | וַתִּשָּׂא אָנָה | אֶת | הָאֵיפָה | בֵּין |
| like the wings | of a stork | Then lifted I up | H853 | the ephah | H996 |
| H3671 | H2624 | H5375 | | H374 | |
| בֵּין הָאֵרֶץ | וּבֵין | הַשָּׁמַיִם: | | | |
| between the earth | H996 | and the heaven | | | |
| H776 | | H8064 | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:49 (Parallel theme): The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

Hosea 8:1 (Parallel theme): Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.