

Zechariah 8:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:

Analysis

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not.

This verse establishes divine consistency and covenant faithfulness through contrasting God's unwavering judgment with His equally unwavering blessing. The phrase "**as I thought to punish you**" (ka'asher zamam Yahweh Tzeva'ot lehara lakhem, כִּי אָשָׁר זָמַם יְהוָה צְבָאֹת לְהַרְעָא לְכֶם) uses zamam (זָמַם), meaning "purposed," "planned," or "determined." God's judgments aren't impulsive reactions but deliberate, purposed responses to covenant violation.

The temporal clause "**when your fathers provoked me to wrath**" (be-haqtisif avoteikhem, בְּהַקְתִּיסִיף אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם) recalls the pre-exilic generation's persistent rebellion—idolatry, social injustice, rejection of prophets—that culminated in Babylon's devastation. The verb qatsaf (קָצַף, "provoke to anger") indicates deliberate actions that aroused divine wrath. Their sin wasn't accidental but willful covenant breaking.

Most striking is "**and I repented not**" (velo nichamti, וְלֹא נִחַמֵּתִ). The verb nacham (נִחַם) means to relent, change one's mind, or have compassion. God's stated purpose to judge, once the fathers crossed the threshold of persistent rebellion, remained unalterable—He brought the threatened curses exactly as warned (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). This wasn't divine caprice but covenant faithfulness: He

keeps His word both in judgment and in blessing. The parallel structure (verse 15) will show God's equally unwavering commitment to bless the restored community.

Historical Context

The "fathers" who provoked God's wrath were the pre-exilic generation spanning approximately 931-586 BC—from the kingdom's division through Jerusalem's destruction. Despite repeated warnings through prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Hosea, Amos, and others, the people persisted in Baal worship, child sacrifice, oppression of the poor, and trust in political alliances rather than God. God warned through Deuteronomy 28 that covenant breaking would bring curses including exile—and He fulfilled every warning without relenting.

This historical reality profoundly shaped the post-exilic community. They had experienced God's unwavering judgment; now Zechariah assures them of His equally unwavering blessing. The prophecy addresses a subtle danger: having experienced judgment, they might doubt God's commitment to restoration. Zechariah counters this by showing God's character: He doesn't arbitrarily change His mind. Just as He judged unfailingly when the fathers rebelled, He will bless unfailingly as the remnant returns.

This principle extends throughout Scripture. God's immutability (unchangeability) guarantees both the certainty of judgment on the impenitent and the certainty of blessing on the faithful (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17, Hebrews 6:17-18). For Christians, this means assurance: God's promise of salvation through Christ remains as unalterable as His judgment on sin.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's unwavering commitment to both judge sin and bless obedience reveal His covenant faithfulness?
2. What comfort does God's immutability provide when facing doubts about His promises?
3. How should the certainty of God's Word—both His warnings and His promises—shape our daily obedience?
4. In what ways might believers today be tempted to presume on God's patience the way the fathers did?
5. How does God's refusal to relent in judging sin magnify the wonder of Christ bearing that judgment in our place?

Interlinear Text

זֶמֶם תִּי כִּאַשׁ רַא צָבָא וְתִי יְהִי הָכִי
H3588 H3541 For thus saith the LORD of hosts H834 As I thought
H559 H3068 H6635 H2161

אַתָּה אֶבְתִּיכֶם לְפָנֶיךָ יְרִיב בְּפֶקַע יְרִיב
to punish H0 provoked me to wrath you when your fathers H1
H7489 H7107 H853

נִתְמַתֵּן וְלֹא צָבָא וְתִי יְהִי הָכִי אַמְרָא
For thus saith the LORD of hosts H3808 and I repented H5162
H559 H3068 H6635

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 31:28 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.

Ezekiel 24:14 (Judgment): I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.

Jeremiah 4:28 (Repentance): For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

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