

Zechariah 9:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

Analysis

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water—this verse transitions from describing Messiah's reign (verses 9-10) to addressing covenant people's redemption. The opening **"As for thee also"** (gam-at, גַּם-אַתָּה) personalizes the promise, directly addressing Zion/Israel. God Himself speaks: **"I have sent forth"** (shillachti, שְׁלַחְתִּי), emphasizing divine initiative in liberation.

The basis is **"by the blood of thy covenant"** (be-dam beriteyikh, בְּדַם-בְּרִיתֶיךָ), an astonishing phrase pointing to covenant ratification through blood sacrifice. This recalls Exodus 24:8 when Moses sprinkled blood on the people, declaring "Behold the blood of the covenant." Jesus explicitly quoted this at the Last Supper: "This is my blood of the new covenant" (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24). Zechariah prophetically connects Israel's deliverance to covenantal blood, ultimately fulfilled in Christ's blood that ratifies the new covenant (Hebrews 9:15-22; 10:29; 13:20).

"Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" (asiraikh mi-bor eyn mayim בּוֹר, אֲסִירֶיךָ מִבּוֹר אֵין-מַיִם) describes desperate captivity. A dry cistern/pit was used for imprisonment—Joseph was cast into such a pit (Genesis 37:24), as was Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38:6). Without water, these pits meant death. The imagery represents hopeless bondage—exile, spiritual death, or Satan's captivity. God's liberation is comprehensive: physical return from exile, spiritual deliverance from sin, and eschatological resurrection. Prisoners without hope are freed by covenant blood—the gospel's core message.

Historical Context

Immediate historical context addresses Jewish exiles. Though many returned from Babylon after Cyrus's decree (538 BC), multitudes remained scattered throughout the Persian Empire (Esther 3:8). Zechariah assures them that God hasn't forgotten them—by covenant faithfulness, He will continue bringing them back. The "blood of thy covenant" reminds them of Sinai's covenant ratification and assures that God's covenantal commitment remains despite their unfaithfulness.

Prophetic fulfillment extends beyond physical exile. Christ's blood inaugurates the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13), liberating captives from sin and death. The "pit wherein is no water" symbolizes humanity's hopeless condition apart from Christ—trapped in sin, facing death, without resources for escape. Romans 7:24 captures this: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Christ's blood answers: He liberates prisoners, bringing them from death to life (Ephesians 2:1-5), from darkness to light (Colossians 1:13), from Satan's domain to God's kingdom. The image of waterless pit contrasts with Christ offering "living water" (John 4:10-14)—He provides what the pit cannot: life-giving salvation.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that our liberation was purchased "by the blood of thy covenant" deepen appreciation for Christ's sacrificial death?
2. In what ways does the image of prisoners in a waterless pit accurately describe humanity's condition apart from Christ?
3. How should covenant blood redemption shape our assurance of salvation and our response to feelings of spiritual captivity or hopelessness?

Interlinear Text

גַּם	אֲתָ	בְּדָם	בְּרִיתְךָ	שָׁלַחְתִּי
H1571	H859	H1818	H1285	H7971
		As for thee also by the blood	of thy covenant	I have sent forth
אֲסִירֶיךָ	מִבְּאֵר	אֵין	מַיִם	בָּוֶה:
H615	H953	H369	H4325	H0
thy prisoners	out of the pit		wherein is no water	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 51:14 (Parallel theme): The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

Exodus 24:8 (Covenant): And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

Isaiah 42:7 (Parallel theme): To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

1 Corinthians 11:25 (Covenant): After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Matthew 26:28 (Covenant): For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Hebrews 10:29 (Covenant): Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Isaiah 49:9 (Parallel theme): That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

Isaiah 61:1 (Parallel theme): The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to

bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Psalms 69:33 (Parallel theme): For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

Psalms 40:2 (Parallel theme): He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

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