

Zechariah 9:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim,
and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece,
and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

Analysis

When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim—God personifies Judah and Ephraim (Israel's northern tribes) as His weapons of war. Judah is the bent bow, Ephraim the arrow—together representing reunified Israel as God's instrument. **And raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece** (וַהֲקִימְתִּי בְנֵי צִיּוֹן עַל-בְּנֵי יוֹן)—this is Zechariah's only explicit mention of Yavan (Greece), prophetically pointing to Maccabean conflicts (167-160 BC) when faithful Jews resisted Hellenistic oppression.

And made thee as the sword of a mighty man (וַיַּשְׁמְתִּיךָ כְּחֶרֶב גִּבּוֹר)—God empowers His people not for imperialism but for defensive holy war against those who would destroy covenant faith. This ultimately points to Messiah's victory over spiritual enemies. The New Testament applies this eschatologically to Christ's triumph over principalities and powers (Colossians 2:15).

Historical Context

This prophecy looks beyond Zechariah's immediate context (520 BC) to the Hellenistic period under Alexander the Great's successors. The Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) tried to eradicate Judaism, prompting the Maccabean revolt. God 'bent' His people as weapons to preserve covenant faith against pagan assimilation.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God use His people today as 'weapons' against spiritual darkness without resorting to physical warfare?
2. What does it mean for God to 'bend' us like a bow—what shaping and tension is required for usefulness?
3. How do the Maccabean conflicts parallel modern pressures to compromise biblical faith for cultural acceptance?

Interlinear Text

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|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| כִּי | אֶפְרַיִם יִמְלֵא אֹתִי | קַשְׁתְּךָ יְהוּדָה לִי | אֶפְרַיִם יִמְלֵא אֹתִי | אֶפְרַיִם יִמְלֵא אֹתִי | אֶפְרַיִם יִמְלֵא אֹתִי |
| H3588 | | H0 | H3063 | H7198 | H4390 |
| When I have bent | | Judah | the bow | for me filled | with Ephraim |
| H1869 | | | | | H669 |
| וְעוֹרֵרְתִּי | בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | עַל צִיּוֹן | בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | עַל צִיּוֹן | עַל צִיּוֹן |
| H5782 | H1121 | H6726 | H5921 | H1121 | H3120 |
| and raised up | against thy sons | O Zion | against thy sons | O Greece | |
| | | | | | |
| וַיַּעַשׂ | כְּחֶרֶב | גִּבּוֹר: | | | |
| H7760 | H2719 | H1368 | | | |
| and made | thee as the sword | of a mighty man | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 17:14 (Parallel theme): These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Isaiah 49:2 (Word): And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

Psalms 45:3 (Word): Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

Zechariah 1:21 (Parallel theme): Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

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