

Zechariah 9:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.

Analysis

The LORD of hosts shall defend them (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יִגֹּן עֲלֵיהֶם)—Yahweh Tzva'ot, 'LORD of armies,' emphasizes God's military might. **And they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones**—Israel will overcome enemies using seemingly primitive weapons (slings), demonstrating that victory comes from God, not superior armaments (cf. David versus Goliath, 1 Samuel 17).

And they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine—the imagery shifts to celebratory feasting after victory. **And they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar** (וַיִּמְלְאוּ כַּמִּזְבֵּחַ כְּקֻיּוֹת מִזְבֵּחַ)—comparing warriors to sacrificial vessels full of blood is jarring but deliberate. Just as altar bowls received sacrificial blood in worship, so Israel's victory over God's enemies is itself an act of worship, a holy offering. This anticipates Christ's victory where His blood consecrates the new covenant altar.

Historical Context

Maccabean victories were remarkable precisely because Jewish forces were numerically inferior and poorly equipped compared to Seleucid professional armies. Their success validated this prophecy—God defended them beyond natural

explanation. The altar imagery connects military victory to temple restoration (the Maccabees rededicated the temple in 164 BC, commemorated as Hanukkah).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does understanding spiritual warfare as 'worship' change your approach to confronting evil?
2. What does it mean that God often chooses 'sling stones' (weak instruments) to accomplish His purposes?
3. In what sense is Christ's sacrifice the ultimate fulfillment of this 'altar blood' imagery?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה ה	צָבָאוֹת	יְגִן	עֲלֵיהֶם	וְאָכְלֵם	
The LORD	of hosts	shall defend	H5921	them and they shall devour	
H3068	H6635	H1598		H398	
וְכִבְּשׁוּ	אֲבָנֵי	קֶלֶעַ	וְשָׁתוּ	וְהִמְנוּ	כְּמוֹ
and subdue	stones	with sling	and they shall drink	and make a noise	H3644
H3533	H68	H7050	H8354	H1993	
וּכְיֵין	וְהִמְלֵאוּ	כְּמִזְבֵּי קַל	כְּזוּי וְ	מִזְבְּחֵ:	
as through wine	and they shall be filled	like bowls	and as the corners	of the altar	
H3196	H4390	H4219	H2106	H4196	

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 12:6 (Parallel theme): In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

Zechariah 10:7 (References Lord): And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

Exodus 27:2 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass.

Zechariah 10:5 (References Lord): And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.

Zechariah 12:8 (References Lord): In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

Psalms 78:65 (References Lord): Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

Leviticus 4:25 (Sacrifice): And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.

Leviticus 4:18 (Sacrifice): And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.