

Zephaniah 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

Analysis

A day of the trumpet and alarm (יום שופר ותרועה yom shofar u'teruah)—The shofar warned of enemy attack (Jeremiah 4:19, Amos 3:6) and announced the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:24). Here it heralds God Himself as invader.

Against the fenced cities, and against the high towers—Judah's fortifications provided false security. The Hebrew migdalim (towers) suggests military strongholds and human pride. No human defense withstands divine assault—a truth demonstrated when Babylon breached Jerusalem's walls in 586 BC despite Hezekiah's fortifications (2 Chronicles 32:5).

Historical Context

Judah's cities had substantial fortifications from Hezekiah's preparations against Assyria. Archaeological evidence from Lachish, Azekah, and Jerusalem confirms elaborate defensive systems that proved inadequate against Babylonian siege warfare.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What 'fenced cities' and 'high towers' (career security, retirement plans, reputation) give you false confidence?
2. How does the image of God's trumpet blast reframe your understanding of His 'alarm' through Scripture and conscience?
3. In what ways do modern societies build defensive 'towers' against acknowledging God's authority?

Interlinear Text

וְיֻמָּה	וְיֻמָּה	שׁוֹפֵט	וְיֻמָּה	עַל	וְיֻמָּה	עַל	בְּבָאָר	וְתַּחַת	עַל	עַל
A day	of the trumpet	and alarm			cities		against the fenced			
H3117	H7782	H8643		H5921	H5892		H1219			H5921
תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת	תַּחַת
towers	and against the high									
H6438	H1364									

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 32:14 (Parallel theme): Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

Amos 3:6 (Parallel theme): Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?

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.