

Zephaniah 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

Analysis

Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them (בְּזָהָב וּבְשָׁמֶן וְבְּזָהָב u'zehabam)—Wealth is impotent before God's wrath. This echoes Ezekiel 7:19: 'They shall cast their silver in the streets.' What secured social status becomes useless for purchasing salvation.

The fire of his jealousy (אֵשׁ קִנְאָתָה esh kin'ato)—God's jealousy is not petty envy but righteous zeal for His own glory and His people's exclusive devotion. The term qin'ah describes a husband's jealousy over his wife (Numbers 5:14), appropriate since Israel's idolatry was spiritual adultery. **A speedy riddance** (כָּלָה נִבְּרָלָה) kalah nivhalah)—a terrified end, a complete and sudden destruction.

Historical Context

In 586 BC, Judah's wealthy elite who had exploited the poor (Zephaniah 1:8-9) saw their treasures plundered by Babylonians. Archaeological evidence shows treasures buried in haste, never recovered—silent testimony to wealth's impotence before judgment.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What false securities (savings, insurance, investment portfolios) do you unconsciously trust for ultimate deliverance?
2. How does understanding God's 'jealousy' as holy zeal rather than petty envy change your view of His commands for exclusive worship?
3. What would a 'speedy riddance' look like for modern idolatries—materialism, nationalism, or self-righteousness?

Interlinear Text

לֹא יָכוֹל מִלְּפָאֵל מִזְבְּחָתָה מִכְּבָשָׁתָה
H1571 Neither their silver H1571 nor their gold H3808 shall be able H3201 to deliver H5337

בַּיּוֹם וְבַאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה הַעֲבָדָה בְּיַד
H3117 them in the day H5678 wrath H3068 of the LORD'S H784 by the fire H7068 of his jealousy

גַּם־כֵּל הַמְּאֵכֶל תִּמְאֵכֶל
H3605 shall be devoured H3605 but the whole land H3588 riddance H389 even a speedy H926

בְּאַרְצָה יְשַׁבּוּ אֶת־כָּל
H853 for he shall make H3605 of all them that dwell H3427 but the whole land H776

Additional Cross-References

Zephaniah 3:8 (References Lord): Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

Ezekiel 7:19 (Judgment): They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity.

Proverbs 11:4 (Judgment): Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Matthew 16:26 (Parallel theme): For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Genesis 6:7 (References Lord): And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Isaiah 1:24 (References Lord): Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

Psalms 79:5 (References Lord): How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

Psalms 78:58 (Parallel theme): For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

Job 21:30 (Judgment): That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

Proverbs 18:11 (Parallel theme): The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

