*Women are punished again with rape in the Bible !*

written by Kevin Abdullah Karim

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In Zechariah 14:1-2 we read how the "biblical" God orders the rape of women [ as a punishment for the sins of Jerusalem ] :

Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. [1]

Renowned biblical scholar and theologian John Calvin in his classic commentary writes:

Behold, he says, the day shall come to Jehovah, and divided shall be thy spoils in the midst of the city. By the demonstrative particle Behold, the certainty of the prophecy, as it has been elsewhere said, is intimated; for the Prophet points out as by the finger what could not yet be comprehended by human minds. And he says, that the day would come to Jehovah, that they might know that they would suffer a just punishment when the Lord treated them in this manner; for men, we know, indulge themselves and seek pleasures, and when God seems not to deal kindly with them, they raise a clamor as though he were too severe. Hence the Prophet reminds them, that so great a calamity would not come without a cause, for God would then execute his judgment. He does not expressly describe it, but he speaks as though he summoned them before God's tribunal. Now when we understand that we have to do with God, it avails us nothing to murmur. It is then better to be silent when God is set forth as being in the midst of us, for it is certain that he will not in chastising us exceed what is just.  
  
But here is described a hard affliction; for Zechariah intimates that the city would be exposed to the will of enemies, so that they would divide at pleasure their spoils in the very midst of it. What conquerors snatch away, they afterwards in private divide among themselves; and we know that many cities have been plundered, when yet the conquerors have not dared to expose to view their spoils. But the Prophet means here that there would be no strength in the Jews to prevent their enemies from dividing the spoils at their leisure in the midst of the city.  
  
He afterwards adds, I will gather all nations against Jerusalem. He confirms what I have already said, that God would be the author of those calamities, and thus he puts a restraint on the Jews, that they might not expostulate with him respecting the severity of their punishment. He then shortly intimates, that the nations would not come by chance to attack Jerusalem; and that whatever commotions would arise, they could not be ascribed to chance or to fortune, or to the purposes of men, but to the decree of heaven. He then bids them to look to God, that they might humble themselves umber his mighty hand, according to what Peter also does. [[1 Peter 5:6](javascript:if(confirm('http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible?passage=1Peter+5:6,%20%20\n\nwindow.location='http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible?passage=1Peter+5:6,').] He might have said in a briefer manner, "All the nations shall conspire;" but he ascribes this to God, and says, that he will bring them, like a prince, who collects an army, which he commands to fight under his banner. And by naming all nations, he reminds them that their trials would not be light; for such would be the union of enemies, and so large would be their number, that Jerusalem would be brought nigh to utter ruin. But afterwards he subjoins a consolation to moderate the grievousness of that calamity: yet he says first -  
  
Taken shall be the city, plundered shall be the houses, and the women shall be ravished. What usually happens to a city taken by storm, the citizens of Jerusalem, the Prophet says, would have to endure. It is indeed an extreme outrage, when women are ravished by enemies; and then, poverty is often more grievous than death; and yet he says, that when deprived of their substance they would have to witness an outrage more hard to be borne than death itself, because their women would be subjected to such a disgrace.  
  
He adds, that half part of the city would depart. He had said before that a third part only would be saved; but he now seems to be inconsistent with himself. But as to number we need not anxiously enquire, as I have elsewhere reminded you; for the Prophets often mention half part and then the third, when yet they mean the same thing. It is the same as though he had said, that the destruction would be so great, that hardly half of them would remain alive. [2] 

Biblical scholar W.J. Deane in his exposition on Zecharia [ chapter 14:1-2 ] moreover points out how the "biblical God" uses Gentile nations [ their barbaric armies ] as instruments to "purify" and "refine" the people [ which in the account of Zecharia 14:1-2 includes the brutal rape of Jerusalem's women ] :

How this shall come to pass is now shown. "For I will gather all nations" . God uses the Gentile nations as his instruments in his trial of his people; they are the fires by which he refines and purifies his elect [ Joel 3:2, 9-11 ]. [3]

It's shocking to read such passages in a book [ the Bible ] which christians consider or believe to be inspired by the holy ghost.   
  
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**References and Notes:**[1]  
  
The Bible, Zechariah 14:1-2 [ Kings James Translation ].   
  
[2]  
  
See: - <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom30.iii.xv.ii.html> -  
  
[3]  
  
The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XIV, Exposition by W.J. Deane [ WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grands Rapids Michigan 1977 ] , p.156