

Habakkuk 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

Analysis

Thou didst march through the land in indignation (תִּצְעַד בְּעֵצָא/beitz'ad-beza'am titz'ad-aretz)—God strides across the earth in anger against wickedness. The verb 'march' (תִּצְעַד/tiza'ad) suggests purposeful, military advance. **Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger** (תִּדְּשׁ גּוֹיִם בְּאַף/be'af tadush goyim)—God tramples nations like grain on a threshing floor. 'Thresh' (תִּדְּשׁ/dush) depicts violent trampling to separate grain from chaff, an apt metaphor for divine judgment separating righteous from wicked, destroying enemies.

This verse emphasizes divine anger (עֵצָא/za'am and אַף/af)—God's righteous wrath against sin and oppression. His indignation isn't arbitrary emotion but just response to evil. The conquest of Canaan involved God's judgment on nations whose sin had reached fullness (Genesis 15:16). Similarly, God's coming judgment on Babylon would be righteous anger against their pride, idolatry, and cruelty.

Historical Context

This references the conquest under Joshua, when God delivered Canaanite nations into Israel's hands. Those battles were acts of divine judgment—God using Israel as instrument to punish nations for centuries of accumulated evil (child sacrifice, sexual immorality, idolatry). Habakkuk draws this parallel: just as God judged Canaan through Israel, He would judge Judah through Babylon, then judge Babylon through Persia. History reveals God's active governance, executing justice

against wickedness. The pattern demonstrates that no nation—including God's covenant people—escapes accountability for persistent evil.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God's righteous anger against sin deepen appreciation for His holiness and justice?
2. What does the conquest of Canaan teach about God's patience with wickedness and His eventual decisive judgment?
3. How should Christians balance proclaiming God's love and mercy with affirming His wrath against unrepentant sin?

Interlinear Text

בִּי עַם	תִּצְעַד	אֶרֶץ	בְּאַף	וְשָׁרְשָׁהּ
in indignation	Thou didst march through	the land	in anger	thou didst thresh
H2195	H6805	H776	H639	H1758
גִּוִּים:				
the heathen				
H1471				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 51:33 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.

