

Habakkuk 3:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

Analysis

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed (לְיֵשַׁע עַמְּךָ לְיֵשַׁע אֶת־מְשִׁיחְךָ/atzata leyesha ammekha leyesha et-meshichekha)—God's warfare has redemptive purpose: 'salvation' (יֵשַׁע/yesha) of His people. The mention of 'thine anointed' (מְשִׁיחְךָ/meshichekha, Messiah) could refer to Israel's king but ultimately points to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. God's judgment aims at salvation, not mere destruction.

Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck (רֹאשׁ מִבֵּית רָשָׁא אֲרוֹת יְסוֹד אֲדַצָּאֵר/machatzta rosh mibeyt rasha arot yesod ad-tzavar)—God strikes the 'head' of the wicked's house, exposing foundations to the neck. This depicts total destruction: from head (top) to foundation (bottom), the enemy is demolished. This prophecy finds ultimate fulfillment in Genesis 3:15—Messiah crushing the serpent's head, destroying Satan's power through the cross and resurrection.

Historical Context

In Habakkuk's context, this references God's past deliverances (exodus, conquest) and promises future deliverance (preserving a remnant through Babylonian exile, eventually judging Babylon). The 'anointed' would be Davidic kings who led Israel.

Yet the New Testament reveals the ultimate fulfillment: Christ the Anointed One, through whom God accomplishes ultimate salvation. Jesus's death and resurrection struck the decisive blow against Satan, sin, and death—crushing the serpent's head. Believers await the consummation when Christ returns to complete this victory, destroying all wickedness utterly (Revelation 19-20).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that divine judgment serves redemptive purposes change your view of God's wrath and justice?
2. In what ways did Christ's death and resurrection crush the head of wickedness, and what remains to be fulfilled at His return?
3. How should Christians live in the 'already but not yet' tension—salvation accomplished but final victory still future?

Interlinear Text

יָצָאתָ	לִי שָׁעָה	עַמְּךָ	לִי שָׁעָה	אֶת
Thou wentest forth	even for salvation	of thy people	even for salvation	H853
H3318	H3468	H5971	H3468	
מְשִׁיחֶךָ	מָחַ צָרָתְךָ	רֹאשׁ	מִבֵּית	רָשָׁע
with thine anointed	thou woundedst	the head	out of the house	of the wicked
H4899	H4272	H7218	H1004	H7563
עָרַבְתָּ	יָסֻד	עַד	צוֹ אֶרֶץ	סֵלָה:
by discovering	the foundation	H5704	unto the neck	Selah
H6168	H3247		H6677	H5542

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 110:6 (Parallel theme): He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

Psalms 105:15 (Parallel theme): Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.