

Habakkuk 3:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

Analysis

I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Habakkuk's vision continues with more examples of nations terrified by God's theophany. "The tents of Cushan" (כָּשָׁן/oholey Kushan)—Cushan likely refers to a region in Arabia or possibly Ethiopia/Cush. "In affliction" (אַבָּל/tachat aven) means under trouble or calamity. "The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble" (מִדְיָן יָרִיעֹת אַבָּל/yirg'zun yeri'ot eretz Midyan)—the tent curtains shake with terror.

Midian was Israel's ancient enemy (Judges 6-8), yet even they trembled at God's manifestation during the exodus and conquest. The parallel mentions of tents and curtains—nomadic dwelling imagery—suggests peoples living in the wilderness regions south and east of Israel. These nations witnessed God's power during Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan and were terrified.

The point: God's theophany affects not just Israel but surrounding nations. All peoples see God's power and respond with fear. This anticipates the universal recognition of YHWH that prophets consistently proclaim—ultimately all nations will acknowledge Israel's God as the only true God (Isaiah 45:23, Philippians 2:10-11).

Historical Context

During the exodus and conquest, surrounding nations heard of God's mighty acts and feared (Exodus 15:14-16, Joshua 2:9-11). Rahab testified that news of the Red Sea crossing and victories over Amorite kings terrified Canaan. The Midianites, descended from Abraham through Keturah (Genesis 25:2), inhabited regions east of the Jordan and south into Arabia. They later oppressed Israel during the judges period but were defeated by Gideon (Judges 7).

Habakkuk's mention of these nations recalls God's historical displays of power, encouraging faith that He will act again against Babylon. Just as Egypt, Midian, and Canaan couldn't withstand God's purposes for Israel, neither could Babylon. This historical perspective strengthens confidence in God's sovereignty over all nations.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does remembering that surrounding nations feared God during the exodus strengthen faith in God's present power?
2. What does the trembling of nations at God's theophany teach about the universal recognition of His sovereignty?
3. How should believers pray and work toward the day when all nations acknowledge God's authority and glory?

Interlinear Text

וְרִיעַ זֹת יָרַקְעַ אַל כָּוֹשׁ אַבְלֵי בָּא יִתְיַ אַל תְּמַת
H8478 in affliction H205 I saw H7200 the tents H168 of Cushan H3572 did tremble H7264 and the curtains H3407

אֶרְזָ אֶמְדָנָה
of the land of Midian

H776 H4080

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