

Isaiah 28:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

Analysis

Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? Isaiah begins the agricultural parable with rhetorical questions expecting "No" answers. **Doth the plowman plow all day to sow?** (hakol hayyom yacharosh hachareish lizro'a, הַכֹּל הַיּוֹם יַחַרֵּשׁ הַחֹרֵשׁ לִזְרוֹעַ, does the plowman plow all the day for sowing?) Obviously not—plowing is preparatory, not the goal. **Doth he open and break the clods of his ground?** (yefatach visadded admato, יַפְתָּח וַיִּסְדֵּד אֲדָמָתוֹ, does he open and harrow his land?) Harrowing breaks up clods, but it's temporary stage, not perpetual activity.

The point: farmers don't plow endlessly. Plowing prepares soil for planting; it's not the end but means to an end. Applied theologically: God's judgments (plowing/breaking) are preparatory for restoration (planting/harvest). He doesn't discipline forever but works toward fruitfulness. This comforts those under God's "plowing"—painful breaking isn't purposeless or permanent but preparation for planting. Hosea 10:12 commands, "Break up your fallow ground," recognizing hard hearts need breaking before good seed can be sown.

Historical Context

Ancient plowing was arduous—wooden plows pulled by oxen broke hard ground, preparing for seed. Harrowing further broke clods. Farmers knew when to stop plowing and start planting—endless plowing would be absurd, accomplishing nothing. Similarly, God's judgments have purpose and limits. Exile to Babylon was

70 years (Jeremiah 25:11), not forever. Church discipline aims at restoration (2 Corinthians 2:6-8), not permanent condemnation. Even hell's judgment serves God's purposes in demonstrating justice (Romans 9:22). God never acts randomly or excessively—every action serves redemptive purposes.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that God's discipline is preparatory (like plowing) rather than punitive help you endure difficult seasons?
2. What 'plowing' or 'breaking' might God be doing in your life to prepare you for fruitful planting?
3. How should knowing that God doesn't 'plow all day' (doesn't discipline endlessly) encourage hope during trials?

Interlinear Text

הָכֹל ל	הִי יוֹם	הַחֹרֶשׁ שׁ	הַחֹרֶשׁ שׁ	לְזַרְעַ	יִפְתְּ ח
H3605	all day	Doth the plowman	Doth the plowman	to sow	doth he open
	H3117	H2790	H2790	H2232	H6605
וַיִּשְׁבֵּד ד	אֲדָמָתוֹ:				
and break the clods	of his ground				
H7702	H127				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:3 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

