

Joel 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head;

Analysis

God addresses Tyre, Sidon (Phoenician cities), and Philistia (Palestinian coast): "Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence?" The rhetorical questions challenge their presumption in attacking His people. "And if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head." God promises rapid, proportional retribution. This establishes the *lex talionis* principle at the national level—God repays nations according to their deeds. The phrase "your own head" means consequences returning to the perpetrator. Reformed theology affirms God's providence governs international relations—nations rise and fall under His sovereignty (Daniel 2:21, Acts 17:26). Kingdoms that oppose God's purposes face inevitable judgment, regardless of temporary power.

Historical Context

Tyre and Sidon were wealthy Phoenician seaports known for trade, craftsmanship, and moral corruption (Ezekiel 26-28). Philistia comprised five city-states along Palestine's coast, long-time enemies of Israel (Judges 13-16, 1 Samuel 4-7, 17). These nations participated in slave trade, selling Israelites to Greeks (Joel 3:6). Tyre's pride led to judgment prophecies (Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26-28), fulfilled when

Alexander the Great destroyed it in 332 BC. Philistia similarly disappeared from history. God keeps His word.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's governance of international affairs comfort believers living under hostile regimes?
2. What does it mean that opposing God's people means opposing God Himself?
3. How should this shape Christian prayer for nations?

Interlinear Text

גַּם	מָה	אֶתְּ	לִי	צַר	וְצִיד וְזִידוֹן
H1571	H4100	H859	H0	Yea and what have ye to do with me O Tyre	and Zidon
				H6865	H6721
וְכָל	גְּלִיל וְתַרְשִׁישׁ	פְּלִשְׁתִּים	גְּמֻלָּה	אֶתְּ	מְשַׁלֵּם יָם
H3605	and all the coasts	of Palestine	me a recompence	H859	will ye render
	H1552	H6429	H1576		H7999
וְאִם	גְּמֹל יָם	אֶתְּ	עַל יָם	קָל	מְהֵרָה
H5921	H518	and if ye recompense	H859	H5921	me swiftly
		H1580		H7031	and speedily
					H4120
אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא	גְּמֻלָּה	בְּרֹאשׁוֹכְכֶם:			
will I return	me a recompence	upon your own head			
H7725	H1576	H7218			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 34:8 (Parallel theme): For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

Isaiah 59:18 (Parallel theme): According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

Jeremiah 47:4 (Parallel theme): Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.

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