

Micah 4:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

Analysis

But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel (וְהֵמָּה לֹא יָדְעוּ מַחְשְׁבוֹת יְהוָה וְלֹא הִבִּינוּ עֲצָתוֹ, we-hemmah lo yade'u machshevot YHWH we-lo hevinu atsato). The adversative "but" (וְ, we) contrasts enemies' intentions (v. 11) with God's hidden purposes. They don't יָדְעוּ (yada, know/perceive) Yahweh's מַחְשְׁבוֹת (machshevot, thoughts/plans) or בִּין (bin, understand/discern) His עֲצָה (etsah, counsel/purpose). Isaiah 55:8-9 declares: **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."**

For he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor (כִּי קִבְּצָם כְּעֲמִיר גֹּרְנָה, ki qibbetsam ke'amir gornah). God קִבֵּץ (qabats, gathers) enemies like עֲמִיר (amir, sheaves) to the גֹּרֶן (goren, threshing floor). The imagery is agricultural: harvest sheaves gathered for threshing—separation of grain from chaff. What appears as threatening coalition is actually God assembling enemies for judgment. They think they're conquering; God is preparing their destruction.

This reveals divine irony: God uses enemies' evil intentions to accomplish His purposes. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery; God meant it for good (Genesis 50:20). Pharaoh hardened his heart; God displayed His power (Exodus 9:16; Romans 9:17). Babylon destroyed Jerusalem; God disciplined His people then judged Babylon (Jeremiah 25:12-14). Ultimately, rulers crucified Jesus; God

ordained this for redemption (Acts 2:23, 4:27-28). Proverbs 21:30 summarizes: **"There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD."** Nations may plot, but God's purposes prevail. What enemies intend for evil, God orchestrates for redemptive judgment.

Historical Context

This principle appears repeatedly in Scripture. Sennacherib gathered armies against Jerusalem (2 Kings 18-19; Isaiah 36-37); God destroyed 185,000 in one night (2 Kings 19:35). Haman plotted Jewish genocide; God used Esther to save Jews and execute Haman on his own gallows (Esther 7:10). Babylon conquered Jerusalem but 70 years later fell to Persia, enabling Jewish return (Jeremiah 25:12; Daniel 5).

The ultimate application is eschatological. Psalm 2:1-6 depicts nations raging against God's Anointed; God laughs and sets His King on Zion. Revelation 16:14-16 describes demonic spirits gathering kings to Armageddon; Christ destroys them at His coming (Revelation 19:19-21). Revelation 20:7-9 pictures Satan gathering Gog and Magog against the beloved city; fire from heaven devours them. The pattern is consistent: God lures enemies into gathering where He can judge them decisively. What looks like dangerous coalition is actually judicial gathering. Believers shouldn't fear when enemies surround but recognize God's sovereign control orchestrating judgment (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's hidden counsel (gathering enemies as sheaves for threshing) reveal His sovereignty over even hostile coalitions?
2. What does the agricultural imagery of threshing teach about judgment as necessary separation of righteous from wicked?
3. In what ways should understanding that God orchestrates enemy gatherings for their own judgment affect Christians' response to persecution or opposition?

Interlinear Text

לֹא יָדְעוּ	יְהוָה מַה	יְהוָה מַה	יְהוָה מַה	יְהוָה מַה	יְהוָה מַה
H1992	H3808	H3808	H3808	H3808	H3808
But they know	not the thoughts	of the LORD			
H3045	H4284	H3068			
יְהוָה יִבְרָךְ	יְהוָה יִבְרָךְ	יְהוָה יִבְרָךְ	יְהוָה יִבְרָךְ	יְהוָה יִבְרָךְ	יְהוָה יִבְרָךְ
H995	H6098	H3588	H6908	H5995	H5995
neither understand	they his counsel	for he shall gather	them as the sheaves		
גִּרְנָה:					
into the floor					
H1637					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 55:8 (References Lord): For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 29:11 (References Lord): For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Luke 3:17 (Parallel theme): Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

