

Micah 7:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might:
they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be
deaf.

Analysis

The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might (yir'u goyim veyevoshu mikol gevuratam, יִרְאוּ גוֹיִם וַיִּבֹּשׁוּ מִכָּל גְּבוּרָתָם). When God performs His new Exodus, pagan nations will witness and be ashamed. Bosh (בוֹשׁ, "be ashamed/confounded") indicates humiliation and confusion. "All their might" (mikol gevuratam) refers to military power, wealth, and achievements that seemed impressive—now revealed as impotent before God's displays of power.

They shall lay their hand upon their mouth (yasimu yad al-peh, יָשִׁימוּ יָד עַל-פִּה). This gesture signifies stunned silence and submission (Job 21:5, 29:9, 40:4). Those who mocked Israel and boasted of their own gods will fall silent, unable to speak in the face of YHWH's manifest supremacy. Their ears shall be deaf (ozneihem techerashnah, אָזְנֵיהֶם תִּכְרַשְׁנָה)—overwhelmed by God's displays, they'll be unable to process or respond. This describes total defeat of pagan confidence and pride.

This was partially fulfilled when Cyrus and the Persians acknowledged YHWH (Ezra 1:2) and surrounding nations witnessed Israel's miraculous restoration. Greater fulfillment came through Christ's resurrection and the gospel's power to convert nations. Ultimate fulfillment awaits Christ's return when "every knee shall bow" and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10-11). Even God's enemies will ultimately acknowledge His supremacy.

Historical Context

Throughout Israel's history, pagan nations mocked their God and boasted of their own deities' superiority. When Israel faced defeat, enemies claimed their gods were stronger than YHWH (2 Kings 18:33-35). Yet God repeatedly vindicated Himself—through Exodus plagues, conquest of Canaan, David's victories, deliverance from Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:35-37). Each demonstration silenced mockers and proved YHWH's uniqueness. The resurrection of Christ was history's supreme vindication—death itself defeated, proving Jesus is Lord of all. The church's global expansion demonstrates His ongoing triumph. Final vindication comes at the Second Coming when all nations witness His glory (Revelation 1:7).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How should witnessing God's mighty acts move us from pride to humble silence?
2. What contemporary 'might' of nations—military power, technology, wealth—will be shown impotent when God acts?
3. How does the certainty that all nations will ultimately acknowledge Christ's lordship affect our evangelistic confidence?

Interlinear Text

יֵרָא וְ	גוֹיִם	וַיִּבְּשׁוּ	מִכָּל ל	גְּבוּרָתָם	יֵשׁ יָמָם
shall see	The nations	and be confounded	H3605	at all their might	they shall lay
H7200	H1471	H954		H1369	H7760
יָד	עַל	פִּי ה	אָזְנוֹתָם	תִּחְרָשׁוּ:	
their hand	H5921	upon their mouth	their ears	shall be deaf	
H3027		H6310	H241	H2790	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 26:11 (Parallel theme): LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

Isaiah 52:15 (Parallel theme): So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Job 40:4 (Parallel theme): Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.