

Psalm 78:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.

Analysis

He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them. This verse interprets the plagues theologically, not just as natural disasters but expressions of divine fury. Four terms escalate: **ḥārōn** 'appō (חרון אפּוֹ, "fierceness of anger")—burning nostrils; **'ebrā** (אֶבְרָא, "wrath")—overflowing fury; **za'am** (זָעַם, "indignation")—denunciation; **šārā** (שָׁרָא, "trouble")—distress.

Mal'ākē rā'îm (מלאכי רָאִים, "evil angels") has sparked debate: angels of evil/harm, or evil as in calamity? Most likely angels executing judgment, called "evil" from the recipients' perspective—like the destroying angel of Passover (Exodus 12:23) or the angel who struck Assyria (2 Kings 19:35). They're God's agents of wrath, not independent evil beings.

This verse reveals that behind natural phenomena stood divine intention. The plagues weren't random but calibrated expressions of God's holy anger against idolatry and oppression. They foreshadow final judgment when God's full wrath is poured out (Revelation 15-16), making Calvary's wrath-absorption all the more stunning.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern peoples attributed disasters to angry deities. Asaph confirms this worldview but identifies Yahweh as the true God whose wrath is righteous, not

capricious. His anger has moral grounds—Egypt's enslaving His firstborn son, Israel (Exodus 4:22-23).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's wrath as righteous response to evil differ from pagan concepts of divine anger?
2. What should the reality of God's "fierceness of anger" produce in believers who have been spared through Christ?
3. How do the plagues reveal both God's justice and His patience (giving Pharaoh multiple opportunities to repent)?

Interlinear Text

נִזְבְּחָה	בְּמִן	יְשַׁלַּח	בְּרִין	אֵפֶר	עֲבָבָה	עַמְּךָ
He cast	H0	upon them	the fierceness	of his anger	wrath	and indignation
	H7971		H2740	H639	H5678	H2195
בְּעִימָם: מֶלֶאכִים מְשֻׁלְּחָת	אֵצֶב הָ					
and trouble	by sending	angels	evil			
H6869	H4917	H4397	H7451			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 11:6 (Evil): Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

Exodus 15:7 (Judgment): And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

Exodus 12:13 (Parallel theme): And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

2 Samuel 24:16 (Evil): And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

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