

# Zephaniah 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword.

## Analysis

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**Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword** (gam-atem Kushiim chalalei charbi hemah)—A terse, sudden announcement. 'Ethiopians' (Kushim) refers to Nubia/Cush, south of Egypt, ruling Egypt during the 25th Dynasty (715-663 BC).

The brevity is striking—no explanation, no elaboration. God's sword (charbi) indicates direct divine agency, though executed through human armies (Babylon). This brief oracle may refer to Nebuchadnezzar's Egyptian campaign (568 BC, Ezekiel 29:19-20) which affected Ethiopian/Cushite territories. The sword imagery recalls Ezekiel 32:11: 'The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.'

## Historical Context

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The Ethiopian Dynasty (25th Dynasty) ruled Egypt until Assyria defeated them at Thebes (663 BC). By Zephaniah's time, Egypt was in turmoil. Babylon's campaigns against Egypt (605, 601, 568 BC) brought further devastation to Ethiopian-controlled regions, fulfilling this prophecy.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. Why does God's judgment extend even to distant nations like Ethiopia that had less direct contact with Judah?
2. What does the brevity of this oracle suggest about the certainty and swiftness of divine judgment?
3. How does God's sovereignty over distant nations encourage believers facing global powers that seem beyond God's reach?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאַתָּה אַתָּה כֹּשֶׁ יְמִינְךָ מְלָלָה מְרַבָּה תִּמְהַלֵּל  
H1571 H859 Ye Ethiopians shall be slain by my sword also ye  
H3569 H2491 H2719 H1992

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