

Amos 2:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself.

Analysis

In this verse detailing Moab's coming judgment, three classes of warriors prove helpless: **he that handleth the bow** (תֹּפֶשׁ הַקֶּשֶׁת, tofes haqeshet, the archer), **he that is swift of foot** (קַל בְּרַגְלָיו, qal b'raglav, literally 'light in his feet'), and **he that rideth the horse** (רוֹכֵב הַסּוּס, rochev hasus, the cavalry). The threefold repetition—'shall not deliver himself' (לֹא יַמְלִיט, lo yemalet)—hammers home human inability to escape divine judgment.

Ancient warfare relied on these three military advantages: long-range attack (archers), speed (runners for messages and retreat), and mobile power (cavalry). Yet when God judges, no human strategy suffices. This prefigures Romans 8:33—when God justifies, who can condemn? Conversely, when God condemns, no created thing can deliver.

Historical Context

Moab, descended from Lot (Genesis 19:37), occupied territory east of the Dead Sea. They possessed skilled archers and swift-footed messengers. This prophecy found fulfillment in multiple invasions: by Assyria (715 BC), Babylon (582 BC), and finally Arab conquest that erased Moabite identity entirely.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What modern 'advantages'—technology, wealth, intelligence—do people trust for security instead of God?
2. How does the futility of military might in escaping judgment challenge nations that trust in weapons?
3. If no one can flee from God's judgment, what makes the gospel offer of escape through Christ so extraordinary?

Interlinear Text

וְתִפֹּשׁ	הַקֶּשֶׁת	לֹא	יַעֲמֹד	וְהוּא
that handleth	the bow	H3808	Neither shall he stand	and he that is swift
H8610	H7198		H5975	H7031
וְיִמְלֹךְ	לֹא	יַעֲמֹד	וְהוּא	הַסּוּס
of foot	H3808	deliver	himself neither shall he that rideth	the horse
H7272		H4422	H7392	H5483
וְיִמְלֹךְ	נַפְשׁוֹ			
deliver	himself			
H4422	H5315			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 39:3 (Parallel theme): And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.