

Isaiah 25:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.

Analysis

He shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim—The subject 'he' is ambiguous: either Moab desperately flailing to escape judgment, or God actively executing judgment. The Hebrew verb *paras* (spread out, stretch) describes a swimmer's arm motions. The image: futile thrashing in an overwhelming flood. **And he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands**—God (clearly the subject here) brings down Moab's *ga'avah* (pride, arrogance) along with *arboth* (craftiness, schemes, spoils). The Hebrew *arboth* suggests cunning schemes—perhaps Moab's political machinations.

This verse emphasizes pride as the root sin leading to judgment. Moab's pride (mentioned in 16:6, 'We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud') becomes his undoing. The swimming metaphor is ironic: normally swimmers spread hands to stay afloat, but here the motion hastens sinking. Every attempt to save himself drives him deeper. This mirrors what happens when proud people face God's judgment—their very efforts to justify, excuse, or escape compound their guilt. Only humble submission brings grace; pride ensures destruction. James echoes this: 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble' (James 4:6).

Historical Context

Moab's pride was proverbial in ancient times. Despite being a small nation, they consistently overestimated their strength and importance. Their archaeological remains show cultural confidence and religious devotion to Chemosh, their god. This national pride led to hubris in dealings with larger powers (Babylon, Assyria) and arrogant treatment of Israel. Pride precedes fall (Proverbs 16:18).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does pride cause people to 'thrash' in ways that worsen their situation rather than improve it?
2. What is the relationship between human pride and the futility of self-salvation attempts?
3. How does this verse illustrate that the same actions (spreading hands) mean rescue when God does them but destruction when humans do them in pride?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּפְרֹשׂ	יָדָיו	בְּקֶרֶב	וּ	כַּאֲשֶׁר	
And he shall spread forth	his hands	in the midst			H834
H6566	H3027	H7130			
וַיִּפְרֹשׂ	לִשְׁחֹת	וְ	לִשְׁחֹת		
And he shall spread forth	his hands to swim		his hands to swim		
H6566	H7811		H7811		
וְהִשְׁפִּיל	גָּאוֹת	וְ	אֶרֶב	וְ	יָדָיו
and he shall bring down	their pride		together with the spoils		his hands
H8213	H1346	H5973	H698		H3027

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 16:6 (Parallel theme): We have heard of the pride of Moab; he is very proud: even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.

Isaiah 16:14 (Parallel theme): But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

Isaiah 5:25 (Parallel theme): Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Isaiah 14:26 (Parallel theme): This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

Isaiah 2:11 (Parallel theme): The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Isaiah 65:2 (Parallel theme): I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

Colossians 2:15 (Parallel theme): And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Jeremiah 48:42 (Parallel theme): And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD.

Jeremiah 51:44 (Parallel theme): And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

James 4:6 (Parallel theme): But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.