

Jeremiah 46:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Why are thy valiant men swept away? they stood not, because the LORD did drive them.

Analysis

Why are thy valiant men swept away?—The rhetorical question drips with irony, using *madua* (מַדּוּעַ, "why") to probe Egypt's humiliation. The phrase *niskhaf abbireyka* (נִסְחַף אַבְּיֵרֶיִךָ, "swept away thy valiant men") employs *sakhaf* (סָחַף), meaning swept away like flood debris, and *abbirim* (אַבְּיִרִים), referring to mighty bulls or champions—Egypt's elite warriors. The answer devastates Egypt's pride: **they stood not, because the LORD did drive them.** The verb *hadaph* (הִדָּפוּ, "drive them") means to push down, thrust away, demonstrating active divine opposition.

This verse answers Egypt's boast in verse 8—human strength cannot stand when God actively opposes. The passive *lo amad* (לֹא עָמַד, "stood not") contrasts with the command to "stand fast" in verse 14, showing that no amount of resolve can resist God's judgment. This principle echoes throughout Scripture: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31), and its corollary: if God opposes, no human power can stand (2 Chronicles 20:6). Egypt's mighty bulls were scattered like chaff before God's wind.

Historical Context

Egypt's military, considered among the ancient world's finest, included elite chariot divisions and professional infantry. Their valiant men had centuries of military tradition and recent victories. Yet at Carchemish, panic seized them, and they fled in disorder—an unprecedented humiliation. The theological explanation

—"the LORD did drive them"—reinterprets military history as divine action. This fulfilled earlier prophecies that Egypt would fail as an ally (Isaiah 30:1-7, 31:1-3, Ezekiel 29:6-7).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does this verse teach about the futility of human strength when God opposes?
2. How does Egypt's defeat encourage believers facing overwhelming opposition when God is with them?
3. In what areas of life might we be trusting our own 'valiant men' (abilities, resources) instead of seeking God's favor?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------|------------|-------|
| מִדּוֹ וַעֲ | נִסָּחֻם | אֲבִירֵי יֶגֶד | לֹא | עָמְדוּ | כִּי |
| H4069 | men swept away | Why are thy valiant | H3808 | they stood | H3588 |
| | H5502 | H47 | | H5975 | |
| יְהוָה | הִדְפּוֹ: | | | | |
| not because the LORD | did drive | | | | |
| H3068 | H1920 | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 68:2 (Parallel theme): As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

Psalms 18:39 (Parallel theme): For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.

Psalms 18:14 (Parallel theme): Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

Jeremiah 46:5 (References Lord): Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: for fear was round about, saith the LORD.

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