

Jeremiah 46:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath passed the time appointed.

Analysis

They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise—The fleeing mercenaries' taunt devastates Egypt's reputation. The phrase qar'u sham Par'oh melekh-Mitsrayim sha'on uses sha'on (שָׁׁוֹן), meaning tumult, noise, empty sound—all bluster, no substance. Egypt's ruler, who presented himself as divinely powerful, is exposed as mere noise without ability to deliver. This echoes Isaiah's "broken reed" metaphor (Isaiah 36:6) and Ezekiel's description of Egypt as a loud dragon whose roar God will silence (Ezekiel 29:3, 32:2).

The verdict continues: **he hath passed the time appointed** (he'evir ha-mo'ed, הָעִיר הַמּוֹעֵד). The verb avar (עָבַר, "passed") suggests missing an opportunity or deadline. God had appointed (mo'ed, מּוֹעֵד, set time/appointment) a moment when Pharaoh might have acted effectively, but that moment passed unused. This demonstrates God's sovereign control over historical opportunities—leaders have divinely allotted windows to act, and failure to recognize God's timing results in missed destiny. Egypt's moment of greatness had expired; the appointed time now belonged to Babylon.

Historical Context

This likely refers to Pharaoh Necho II (r. 610-595 BC) or Pharaoh Hophra/Apries (r. 589-570 BC). Necho missed his appointed moment at Carchemish; Hophra missed his by encouraging Judah's final rebellion against Babylon without providing effective support. Historically, after Carchemish, Egypt's window to dominate the

Levant closed permanently. The taunt "he hath passed the time appointed" became proverbial—Egypt was a has-been power living on ancient glory, unable to fulfill contemporary promises. This fulfilled God's prophecy that Egypt would become "the basest of kingdoms" (Ezekiel 29:15).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does Pharaoh being 'but a noise' teach about the difference between reputation and reality?
2. How does 'passing the appointed time' illustrate the importance of recognizing and seizing God's moments of opportunity?
3. In what ways might we be relying on sources of help that are 'but noise'—impressive in appearance but powerless to deliver?

Interlinear Text

1 קָרָא	שׁ מ	פָּרָעַ ה	מֶלֶךְ	מִצְבֵּה	שָׁא וְ
They did cry	H8033	there Pharaoh	king	of Egypt	is but a noise
H7121		H6547	H4428	H4714	H7588
הַמּוֹעֵד:					
בָּאָבֶן יְהֹוָה					
he hath passed	the time appointed				
H5674	H4150				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 15:9 (Parallel theme): The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

1 Kings 20:10 (Parallel theme): And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

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