

Jeremiah 46:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and are innumerable.

Analysis

They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched (כָּרְתוּ יַעֲרָהּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי לֹא יִמְקָר) —The verb karatu (cut down) continues the timber metaphor, with yaarah (her forest) representing Egypt's dense population or military forces. The phrase lo yechaqer (cannot be searched/penetrated) emphasizes the forest's seeming impenetrability. Yet **they are more than the grasshoppers, and are innumerable** (כִּי רַבּוּ מֵאַרְבֵּה וְאִין לָהֶם מִסְפָּר) —Babylon's forces (rabbu me'arbeh) outnumber even locusts.

This reverses Egypt's eighth plague (Exodus 10:1-20), where locusts devoured Egypt. Now human "locusts" from Babylon will consume her. The forest metaphor also recalls Egypt's cedar trade and monumental architecture—all to be leveled by an army beyond counting.

Historical Context

Forests were rare in Egypt but symbolized abundance and strength in Hebrew poetry. Egypt's population density along the Nile was legendary. The locust comparison would immediately recall the Exodus plague, creating a theological reversal: the judged becomes the judgment instrument.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God use the very plagues Egypt inflicted on Israel to judge Egypt itself?
2. What seemingly "impenetrable" areas of your life might God be preparing to "cut down"?
3. Why does Scripture emphasize the innumerable nature of God's judgment forces?

Interlinear Text

כָּרְתוּ יַעֲרָה נְאֻם יְהוָה כִּי לֹא
They shall cut down her forest saith the LORD H3588 H3808
H3772 H3293 H5002 H3068

יִמְקַרְר וְכִי רַבּוּ מְאֹד הַחֲרָבִים
though it cannot be searched because they are more than the grasshoppers
H2713 H3588 H7231 H697

וְאֵין מִסְפָּר לָהֶם
and are innumerable H1992 H4557
H369

Additional Cross-References

Judges 7:12 (Parallel theme): And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude.

Judges 6:5 (Parallel theme): For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it.

Joel 2:25 (Parallel theme): And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

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