

Jeremiah 46:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow.

Analysis

Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots—The Hebrew alah (עלה, "come up") echoes verse 8's ascending waters, now ironically commanding Egypt's military to advance toward their doom. The verb halal (הלל, "rage") means to act madly or boast, suggesting frenzied, reckless confidence. Jeremiah catalogs Egypt's mercenary forces: **the Ethiopians** (Kush, כוש, referring to Nubia/Sudan), **the Libyans** (Put, פוט, modern Libya), and **the Lydians** (Ludim, לודים, Asia Minor)—demonstrating Egypt's reliance on hired soldiers rather than covenant faithfulness.

The phrase **that handle the shield** (taphas magen, תַּפַּח מִגֶּן) and **that handle and bend the bow** (dorekei qeshet, דֹּרְכֵי קֶשֶׁת) emphasizes military expertise, yet expertise cannot prevent God's ordained judgment. This multinational coalition mirrors the nations gathered against God's purposes throughout Scripture, prefiguring the eschatological gathering against Jerusalem in Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19-20. Human military might, however impressive, crumbles before divine decree.

Historical Context

Egypt's military relied heavily on mercenaries from its vassal territories. Archaeological evidence confirms Ethiopian (Kushite) and Libyan troops served in Egyptian armies throughout the Late Period. The Lydians from western Asia Minor were renowned archers. This diversity revealed both Egypt's extensive influence

and its fundamental weakness—mercenaries fight for pay, not loyalty, and often fled when battle turned against them (v. 16).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does Egypt's reliance on mercenaries teach about trusting human strength rather than God?
2. How does the 'raging' of chariots contrast with the peace found in trusting God's sovereign purposes?
3. In what ways do we assemble our own coalitions of human resources instead of seeking God's help?

Interlinear Text

עַל ו	הַסּוֹסִים ו	וְהִתְהַלֵּל ו	הָרֶכָב ו	וַיֵּצֵא ו	הַגִּבּוֹרִים ים
Come up	ye horses	and rage	ye chariots	come forth	and let the mighty men
H5927	H5483	H1984	H7393	H3318	H1368
כּ וְשׁ	וּפּוֹט	תִּפְשׁ י	מִגֵּן	וְלִידֵי ים	
the Ethiopians	and the Libyans	that handle	the shield	and the Lydians	
H3568	H6316	H8610	H4043	H3866	
תִּפְשׁ י	דָּרְכֵי	קֶשֶׁת:			
that handle	and bend	the bow			
H8610	H1869	H7198			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 66:19 (Parallel theme): And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

Ezekiel 27:10 (Parallel theme): They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of war: they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; they set forth thy comeliness.

Nahum 3:9 (Parallel theme): Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers.

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