

Nahum 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were thy helpers.

Analysis

Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite (Kush ve'Mitzrayim otzmah ve'eyn qetseh, **כוש ומצרים עזמה אין קצה**)—continuing the comparison with Thebes (No-Amon), Nahum lists her allies. Kush (כוש, Ethiopia/Nubia) and Mitzrayim (מצרים, Egypt) were her might (otzmah, עזמה), endless (eyn qetseh, אין קצה, without limit). During this period, Ethiopia's 25th Dynasty ruled Egypt, uniting the Nile Valley's power.

Put and Lubim were thy helpers (Put veLuvim hayu be'ezrateykh)—Put (PUT, possibly Libya or Somalia) and Lubim (לובים, Libyans) were among her helpers (ezrah, עזרה). Despite these powerful allies and seemingly unlimited resources, Thebes still fell to Assyria in 663 BC. The argument devastates: if Thebes with Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and Put couldn't withstand assault, how can Nineveh? Alliances and confederations provide no security against divine judgment. God sovereignly determines which nations rise and fall, regardless of military coalitions.

Historical Context

In 663 BC, when Assyria conquered Thebes, Egypt was ruled by the Kushite (Ethiopian) 25th Dynasty. This meant Thebes could call on the combined military resources of Egypt proper and the powerful Kushite kingdom to the south—a formidable alliance. Additionally, Libyan tribes and other North African peoples were allies. Yet Assyrian king Ashurbanipal conquered Thebes despite this

coalition, carrying away enormous plunder. Now in Nahum's prophecy, Nineveh faces a similar coalition—Babylon, Media, and Scythia—and will experience the same fate it inflicted on Thebes. History confirms no alliance saved Nineveh in 612 BC; the city fell despite its resources and military might.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Thebes' fall despite powerful allies warn against trusting in political coalitions and military alliances apart from God?
2. What does this verse teach about God's sovereignty over nations—orchestrating the rise and fall of empires regardless of human calculations?
3. How should believers maintain proper perspective on international relations and geopolitics in light of God's ultimate control over history?

Interlinear Text

אֶת	כִּי	הַ	עַזְתֶּם	נִ	וּמְצָר	אָ	וְאֵין	לְ	אַ	נִ	גַּם
Ethiopia	were	her	strength	and	Egypt	and	it was	infinite			
H3568			H6109		H4714		H369		H7097		H6316

בְּעִזְבָּתֶרֶת:	כִּי	וְ	אַלְכִּים
and Lubim	H1961		were thy helpers
H3864			H5833

Additional Cross-References

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.

Ezekiel 30:5 (Parallel theme): Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

Isaiah 20:5 (References Egypt): And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

Jeremiah 46:9 (Parallel theme): 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.

Genesis 10:6 (Parallel theme): And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

Ezekiel 38:5 (Parallel theme): Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:

2 Chronicles 12:3 (References Egypt): With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.