

Jeremiah Chapter 47

Verses 1-7

The LORD would use an army from the “north” as “an overflowing flood” to destroy the Philistines, and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of “Ashkelon” (in 604 B.C.).

The LORD uses the kings and armies of the nations to accomplish His purposes.

Nebuchadnezzar and his armies would become a “sword of the LORD”.

“Against the Philistines” (compare Isa. 14:29-32; Ezek. 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph. 2:4-7).

Although Egypt’s Pharaoh-hophra conquered the Philistines (who lived on the coastal plain of Palestine), in Gaza and Phoenicia around 587 B.C. (verse 1), Babylon appears to be the conqueror in this scene (“of the north”), at the same time as the invasion of Judah (588-586 B.C.; compare 39:1-2).

Jeremiah 47:1 "The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza."

For other prophecies against the “Philistines” (see Isaiah 14:29-31; Ezek. 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph. 2:4-7).

For Philistine-Israelite relations (see the note at Joshua 13:2-3). The Philistines largely disappear from the pages of history with the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar.

47:1-7

The calamities of the Philistines.

The Philistines had always been enemies to Israel; but the Chaldean army shall overflow their land like a deluge.

Those whom God will spoil, must be spoiled.

For when the LORD intends to destroy the wicked, He will cut off every helper.

So deplorable are the desolations of war, that the blessings of peace are most desirable.

But we must submit to His appointments who ordains all in perfect wisdom and justice.

Jeremiah 47:2 "Thus saith the LORD; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl."

Meaning an army of men, which should come in great numbers, and with great force and rapidity, like an overflowing flood.

So the Targum, "behold, people shall come from the north;" that is, from Chaldea, which lay north of Palestine.

"And shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein":

Or, "the fullness of it"; the land of the Philistines.

And carry off the men and cattle, and all the riches thereof.

"The city, and them that dwell therein":

Not any particular or single city as Gaza; but the several cities of Palestine, and the inhabitants of them.

"Then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl":

Not being able to do anything else.

Not to defend themselves, their families, and property.

And seeing nothing but ruin and destruction before their eyes.

This is an army so great it seems like a flood.

This is probably speaking of a Babylonian army, since it mentions the north.

This is a furiously fast army that attacks.

The battle is so great the people cry out in fear.

Jeremiah 47:3 "At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong [horses], at the rushing of his chariots, [and at] the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to [their] children for feebleness of hands;"

The noise of the cavalry of Nebuchadnezzar's army, as they came marching on towards the country of the Philistines.

Who, being mounted on strong prancing horses, made a great noise as they came along, and were heard at a distance.

"At the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels":

The rattling and clatter the chariot wheels made; in which rode the chief officers and generals, with other mighty men.

Chariots were much used in war in those times.

"The fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands":

They should be so frightened at the approach of the enemy, and flee with much suddenness to provide for their own safety, that they should not think of their children.

Or stay to deliver and save them, the most near and dear unto them.

Being so terrified as not to be able to lift up their hands to defend themselves, and protect their children.

The Targum is, "the fathers shall not look back to have mercy on their children."

In their fright should forget their natural affection to them, and not so much as look back with an eye of pity and compassion on them.

So intent upon their own deliverance and safety.

The chariots and horses come through so fast, that the fathers will not be able to reach out and help their children.

The fathers will not be able to protect their families in this case.

Jeremiah 47:4 "Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, [and] to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for the LORD will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor."

The Phoenicians are denounced severely by Ezekiel (Ezekiel Chapters 26-28; compare Amos 1:9-10).

The "Philistines", Phoenicians and Edomites were guilty of making slaves of the Israelites, and are therefore repeatedly condemned by the prophets (compare Joel 3:4-8, 19; Amos 1:6-12; Obad. 10-14).

For their crimes, the Phoenicians suffered repeated invasions by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans.

This is a judgement of God against these Philistines.

Tyrus is the Greek form of Tyre.

Tyre was a city about 10 miles from Zidon.

They were probably attacked at the same time as Gaza.

The LORD was the spoiler in this.

Caphtor was another name for Crete.

This is where these people came from originally.

Jeremiah 47:5 "Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off [with] the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?"

The Targum is, "vengeance is come to the inhabitants of Gaza."

It is become like a man whose hair is fallen from his head, or is clean shaved off.

Its houses were demolished; its inhabitants slain, and their wealth plundered.

A pillaged and depopulated place.

Some understand this of shaving or tearing off the hair for grief, and mourning because of their calamities.

Which agrees with the latter clause of the verse.

"Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley":

This was one of the live cities of the Philistines; it lay north of Gaza.

Herodotus calls Ashkelon a city of Syria, in which was the temple of Urania Venus, destroyed by the Scythians.

Said to be built by Lydus Ascalus, and called so after his name.

Of this city was Herod the king, and therefore called an Ashkelonite.

It was now destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, but afterwards rebuilt and inhabited.

And with it were destroyed the remainder of the cities, towns, and villages, in the valley, adjoining to that and Gaza.

Or Ashkelon and Gaza, now destroyed, were all that remained of the cities of the valley, and shared the same fate with them.

The Targum is, "the remnant of their strength."

So Kimchi, who interprets it of the multitude of their wealth and power.

"How long wilt thou cut thyself?"

Their faces, arms and other parts of their body, mourning and lamenting their sad condition.

The words of the prophet signifying hereby the dreadfulness of it, and its long continuance.

"Baldness" is associated with extreme mourning.

This would be for the great loss of life.

Ashkelon was on the top of a mountain near the sea.

Cutting themselves was a type of mourning as well.

They might as well stop mourning.

This judgement against them is of God.

Verses 6-7

"Sword of the LORD":

Compare Judges 7:18, 20.

Jeremiah 47:6 "O thou sword of the LORD, how long [will it be] ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still."

For though it was the sword of the Chaldeans, yet being appointed and sent by the LORD.

And having a commission from him, and being ordered and directed in his providence to do his will, it is called his sword.

"How long will it be ere thou be quiet":

And cease from destroying men.

Wilt thou not cease till thou hast no more to destroy?

"Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still":

And make no more havoc among the people.

These are either the words of the Philistines, entreating a stop might be put to the ravages of the sword.

And that the war might cease, and the desolations of it.

Or rather of the prophet, sympathizing to their state as a man, though they had been the avowed enemies of his people.

To which the following words of him are an answer.

Either to the Philistines, showing why their request could not be granted, or as correcting himself.

It is as if the LORD is doing a thorough work, before He stops.

His wrath has come up in His face.

He will stop when they are all punished.

Jeremiah 47:7 "How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it."

There is no reason to believe it will, nor can it be expected that it should.

To stop it is impossible, and to request that it might be stopped is in vain.

"Seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore?"

For it had a commission from the LORD to destroy the inhabitants of Ashkelon, and other places, which lay still more towards the sea, as Joppa and Jamne.

And indeed, all Palestine lay on the coast of the Mediterranean sea.

"There hath he appointed it":

By an irreversible decree of his, in righteousness to punish the inhabitants of these places for their sins.

The judgement God has spoken will be carried out to the fullest.

It will not stop until every prophecy He made about it is fulfilled.

Jeremiah Chapter 47 Questions

1. Who is this prophecy against?
2. They had been strong _____ of Israel.
3. What is verse 2 speaking of?
4. Why will the fathers not be able to help the children?
5. In verse 4 we see this is a judgement of _____.
6. Tyre is _____ miles from Zidon?
7. Caphtor is another name for _____.
8. "Baldness" is associated with extreme _____.
9. Where was Ashkelon located?