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JEREMIAH 47: 1 the LORD's word that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines, before that Pharaoh struck Gaza.

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Among the nations doomed to suffer from the hostilities of Nebuchadnezzar are the Philistines, (see Jer 25:20.) And the calamities predicted in this chapter befell them probably during the long siege of Tyre, when their country was desolated to prevent their giving Tyre or Sidon any assistance, Jer 47:1-5. The whole of this chapter is remarkably elegant. The address to the sword of Jehovah, at the close of it, is particularly a very beautiful and bold personification, Jer 47:6, Jer 47:7.

Verse 1

The word of the Lord - against the Philistines - The date of this prophecy cannot be easily ascertained. Dr. Blayney thinks it was delivered about the fourth year of Zedekiah, while Dahler assigns it some time in the reign of Josiah.

Before that Pharaoh smote Gaza - We have no historical relation of any Egyptian king smiting Gaza. It was no doubt smitten by some of them; but when, and by whom, does not appear either from sacred or profane history.

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JEREMIAH 47: 2 Thus says the LORD: Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall become an overflowing stream, and shall overflow the land and all that is therein, the city and those who dwell therein; and the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.

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Verse 2

Waters rise up out of the north - Waters is a common prophetic image for a multitude of people. The north here, as in other places of this prophecy, means Chaldea.

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JEREMIAH 47: 3 At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong ones, at the rushing of his chariots, at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers don't look back to their children for feebleness of hands;

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Verse 3

The stamping of the hoofs - At the galloping sound, -

Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum, is a line of Virgil, (Aen. 8:596), much celebrated; and quoted here by Blayney, where the galloping sound of the horses' hoofs is heard. In the stamping of the horses, the rushing of the chariots, and the rumbling of the wheels, our translators intended to convey the sense by the sound of the words, and they have not been unsuccessful. Their translation of the original is at the same time sufficiently literal.

The fathers shall not look back - Though their children are left behind, they have neither strength nor courage to go back to bring them off.

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JEREMIAH 47: 4 because of the day that comes to destroy all the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains: for the LORD will destroy the Philistines, the remnant of the isle of Caphtor.

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Verse 4

To spoil all the Philistines - These people, of whom there were five seignories, occupied the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, to the south of the Phoenicians.

Tyrus and Zidon - Places sufficiently remarkable both in the Old and New Testament, and in profane history. They belonged to the Phoenicians; and at this time were depending on the succor of their allies, the Philistines. But their expectation was cut off.

The remnant of the country of Caphtor - Crete, or Cyprus. Some think it was a district along the coast of the Mediterranean, belonging to the Philistines; others, that the Cappadocians are meant.

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JEREMIAH 47: 5 Baldness has come on Gaza; Ashkelon is brought to nothing, the remnant of their valley: how long will you cut yourself?

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Verse 5

Baldness is come upon Gaza - They have cut off their hair in token of deep sorrow and distress.

Ashkelon is cut off - Or put to silence; another mark of the deepest sorrow. Ashkelon was one of the five seignories of the Philistines, Gaza was another.

The remnant of their valley - Or plain; for the whole land of the Philistines was a vast plain, which extended along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea from Phoenicia to the frontiers of Egypt. The whole of this plain, the territory of the Philistines, shall be desolated.

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JEREMIAH 47: 6 You sword of the LORD, how long will it be before you be quiet? Put up yourself into your scabbard; rest, and be still.

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Verse 6

O thou sword of the Lord - This is a most grand prosopopoeia - a dialogue between the sword of the Lord and the prophet. Nothing can be imagined more sublime.

Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still - Shed no more blood, destroy no more lives, erase no more cities, desolate no more countries. Rest: - hast thou not been long enough at this work of judgment? O be still: - let wars and desolations cease for ever.

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JEREMIAH 47: 7 How can you be quiet, since the LORD has given you a command? Against Ashkelon, and against the seashore, there has he appointed it.

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Verse 7

How can it be quiet - This is the answer of the Sword. I am the officer of God's judgments, and he has given me a commission against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore; all the coast where the Philistines have their territories. The measure of their iniquities is full; and these God hath appointed this sword to ravage. The Philistines were ever the implacable enemies of the Jews, and the basest and worst of all idolaters. On these accounts the sword of the Lord had its commission against them; and it did its office most fearfully and effectually by the hand of the Chaldeans.