

CHAPTER 47

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 47

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of the Philistines chiefly; and also of the Tyrians and Zidonians. The title of the prophecy, (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:1); the instruments of this destruction, who are compared to overflowing waters; which would cause great lamentation in the inhabitants of the places where they should come, (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:2); the noise of their horses and chariots would be so terrible, as to make parents flee and leave their own children, (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:3); at the same time Tyre and Zidon would fall into the hands of the enemy, and have no helper, (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:4); particular places in Palestine are mentioned, that should be destroyed, (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:5); and all this owing to a commission the Lord gave to the sword, and which therefore would continue to ravage, (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:6,7).

Ver. 1. *The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines*, etc.] As the former prophecies were against the Egyptians, the friends and allies of the Jews, in whom they trusted; this is against the Philistines, the near neighbours of the Jews, and their implacable enemies: the time of this prophecy was,

before Pharaoh smote Gaza; one of the five cities of the Philistines, a very strong and fortified place, as its name signifies; (see Gill on “^{<485>}Acts 8:26”). The Jews, in their chronicle, say^{f860} this was fulfilled in the eighth year of Zedekiah, when Pharaoh came out of Egypt, while the Chaldeans were besieging Jerusalem; which they hearing of, broke up the siege, and went forth to meet him; upon which he went to Gaza, and destroyed that, and returned to Egypt again. Both Jarchi and Kimchi make mention of this, but say it was in the tenth year of Zedekiah; and which, no doubt, is the truest reading, since the Chaldean army did not come up against Jerusalem until the ninth year of his reign. But it is more likely that this Pharaoh was Pharaohnecho, and that he fell upon Gaza, and smote it, either when he came to Carchemish, or when he returned from thence, after he had slain Josiah. Now this prophecy was delivered out before anything of this kind happened, and when the Philistines were in the utmost peace, and in no

fear or expectation of destruction; and the smiting of this single city by the king of Egypt is foretold, as the forerunner and pledge of a greater destruction of the land by the king of Babylon, next mentioned.

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord, behold, waters rise up out of the north*, etc.] 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 fulness of it”^{f861}; 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.

Ver. 3. *At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong [horses]*, etc.] 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 precipitancy 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.

Ver. 4. *Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines,* etc.] The time appointed by the Lord for their destruction, which should be universal:

[and] to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth; these were cities in Phoenicia, which bordered on the country of the Philistines, who were their auxiliaries in time of distress; but now, being wasted themselves, could give them no help when Nebuchadnezzar attacked them; as he did Tyre particularly, which he besieged thirteen years, and at last destroyed it, and Zidon with it:

for the Lord will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor; these last are not put by way of apposition, as if they were the same with the Philistines, though they were near of kin to them, coming from Casluhim; who were the posterity of Mizraim, as well as Caphtorim, (¹⁰⁰³Genesis 10:13,14); indeed the Philistines are said to be brought from Caphtor, (³⁰⁰⁷Amos 9:7); being very probably taken captive by them, but rescued from them; and now in confederacy with them, and like to share the same fate as they. The Targum renders it,

“the remnant of the island of the Cappadocians;”

and so the Vulgate Latin version. Some think the Colchi, others that the Cretians, are meant. R. Saadiah by Caphtor understands Damiata, a city in Egypt; which is the same with Pelusium or Sin, the strength of Egypt, (³³⁰⁵Ezekiel 30:15); and it is usual with the Jews^{f862} to call this place Caphutkia, the same with Caphtor, they say; and, in Arabic, Damiata.

Ver. 5. *Baldness is come upon Gaza,* etc.] 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^{f863} 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^{f864}. 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.

Ver. 6. *O thou sword of the Lord*, etc.] 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, commiserating 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.

Ver. 7. *How can it be quiet*, etc.] 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 seashore? 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.