

Journey through Jeremiah Part 49, Judgment Against the Philistines

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, Dec. 06, 2017

† Jeremiah 47:1-7 - Judgment against the Philistines

- 1 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza.
- 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.
- 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;
- 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.
- 5 Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?
- 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.
- 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.

We continue on in our studies with the LORD's judgments against the Gentile nations. Last week we looked at his judgment against Egypt and tonight, Lord willing, we will look at his judgments against the Philistines and against Moab.

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

Last week we studied how the LORD was judging Egypt and specifically because of the actions of Pharaohnecco, king of Egypt when he came against Judah and killed King Josiah. During that time Pharaoh also came through Gaza, which was one of the chief cities of the Philistines, and smote the inhabitants there. Our text tonight is dealing with the actions of the Philistines before that event occurred.

The name "Philistine" comes from the Hebrew word *Philistia*, and the Greek rendering of the name is, *palaistinei*. This is where the term "Palestine" comes from. The Philistines were some of the most feared enemies of God's people. They were brutal warriors when they fought and they were more advanced than the Israelites. They knew how to forge steel and make weapons from it.

The Philistines are mentioned early on in the Old Testament in **Genesis chapter 21** when Abraham made a covenant with **Abimelech, who is both called King of Gerar and King of the Philistines**, and Abraham sojourned in the Land of the Philistines for "many days," the Bible says. Abraham's son, Isaac, also had dealings with Abimelech.

Then in Exodus, after Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt's bondage, we read this: **Exodus 13:17** *And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:*

During the days of Joshua, the Children of Israel under his leadership battled and defeated many Philistines which greatly angered them and caused the contention between them to be great.

Throughout the Book of Judges, we find where the Children of Israel began intermingling with the Philistines and worshiping their Gods. The Philistines worshiped Dagon who was supposedly the father of Baal and was half man half fish. You may remember in **1 Samuel 5** when the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant and brought it into the Temple of Dagon which was in Ashdod, and the next day their statue of Dagon had fallen on its face. They set it back up and the next day they came out and the statue of Dagon had lost its head and arms, so they took the Ark out in the city and the LORD smote the men of Ashdod, so they took it to Gath and then the LORD slew the men of Gath, then they took it to Ekron and the LORD smote the men there, finally they got some sense about them and said, "**Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place.**"

Well, of course the worship of Dagon by the Israelites displeased the LORD and he punished them by allowing the Philistines to defeat them and rule over them: **Judges 13:1** *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.*

You can only imagine how engrained in the Philistine culture the Israelites became in those 40-years. That is why we find the LORD raising up Samson to deliver them out of the hands of the Philistines. We all know the story of how the LORD used Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman to fulfill his will.

Judges 14:1-4:

- 1 *And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.*
- 2 *And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.*
- 3 *Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.*
- 4 *But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.*

Right away someone may say, "You mean it was the LORD's will that Samson marry a Philistine woman?" No, that is not what this means. Samson was determined to marry this Philistine woman and since God gives us free will He knew that Samson was going to do this, so the LORD used his disobedience fulfill his purpose. Samson certainly paid for disobeying the LORD. His Philistine wife was given over to his companion and then later on she and her father were burned to death because she had married a Hebrew. – So, the Philistines were a large part of the lives of the Israelites beginning with their departure out of Egypt all the way through the days of the judges and up to the times of the Kings.

Probably one of the most memorable is the battle with the Philistine giant, Goliath from Gath, whom David referred to as an "**uncircumcised Philistine.**" **1 Samuel 17:26:** *And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*

After David's defeat of the Philistines there were a few more battles with them but nothing on the scale of
In this judgment of the Gentile nations in the Book of Jeremiah, God is no longer using the Philistines for correction of his people, but he is going to utterly punish them for their wickedness.

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.

The Bible often uses water and flooding as symbols of multitudes of people. This is a description of the vast number of soldiers that will rise up out of Babylon and they will emerge upon the Philistines like an overflowing river. The Philistines will not know what happened they will be so overwhelmed. They will run and cry and howl in fear and pain.

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;

This great army of Chaldeans will invade their land on horses and chariots. It will sound like thunder roaring as they stomp through their land. The fathers will be running in fear for their life and not even looking back to grab their children as they run.

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 LORD said that he was going to **spoil** the Philistines. That means He is going to **devastate** them. **Tyrus** and **Zidon** were the neighboring lands around them and they too will be destroyed and would be no help to them when the Chaldean army invades.

The Philistines were originally from the land of **Caphtor** which most believe to be the island of **Crete**. They were known as "Sea People." Close to the same time the Israelites settled in their land, the Philistines migrated inland and tried to wage war against Egypt. They could not defeat Egypt and ended up settling in the area around it.

The Philistine's land ranged from Joppa, which is now called Tel-Aviv, all the way southward to Gaza (we've all familiar with the Gaza Strip). This area contained the five cities of the Philistines; **Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron**, and was known as Philistia, or the Land of the Philistines. The Greeks later called it Palestine, which it is still referred to as to this day.

Over the years the Philistines battled off and on with the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and of course the Israelites and by the time of this prophecy there weren't many of them left, that is why in our text they are called a "remnant of the country of Caphtor."

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

"Baldness is come upon Gaza" that is a symbol that they had shaved their heads in mourning of the devastating loss they incurred. The entire land of the Philistines would be cut off and destroyed. Gaza is specifically mentioned due to it being one of their greatest cities.

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.

The **sword of the LORD** is mentioned here. Even though it was the swords of the Chaldeans that were being swung, they were being swung and directed by the LORD as punishment, therefore, it is referred to as His sword.

how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Some believe this to be the words of the Philistines begging for mercy, however, I believe it to be the words of Jeremiah asking the question of the LORD of how long will he continue to punish the Philistines? Even though they were the enemies of God they have been so severely punished that Jeremiah may be seeking some mercy or a reprieve for them. But the conclusion he comes up with we read in the next verse:

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.

So, the question: how can the LORD's sword be quiet? Is answered: Well, it can't. It can't be quiet because of the deep sins and transgressions committed by the Philistines against the LORD and His people. If God is the God he claims to be and is righteous and fair then he cannot withhold His sword of punishment against sin, because a Holy and righteous God cannot condone sin or allow it to go unpunished. Therefore, His sword will continue to destroy what He has appointed it to destroy.

We find this same truth in the Book of Revelation concerning the punishment of the sinful world when the LORD returns at his second coming:

Revelation 19:11-15:

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible