

Zephaniah 2:4-15

1. The nations to the west (Philistia), the east (Moab and Ammon), the south (Cush) and the north (Assyria) are prophesied against. Also, the judgment is sure.
2. This could serve as additional warning to Judah. They could watch the judgment and fall of these nations as they waited for their own destruction.
3. The Day of the Lord is not explicitly mentioned in 2:4-15.
 - a. The Day of the Lord may be assumed, but it is not as clearly or repeatedly mentioned as in chapter one.
 - b. The destruction of these lands will occur with the coming of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonians, but also in the ultimate Day of restoration for Israel.
4. God's plan is to restore land to Israel in future.

PHILISTIA to the West

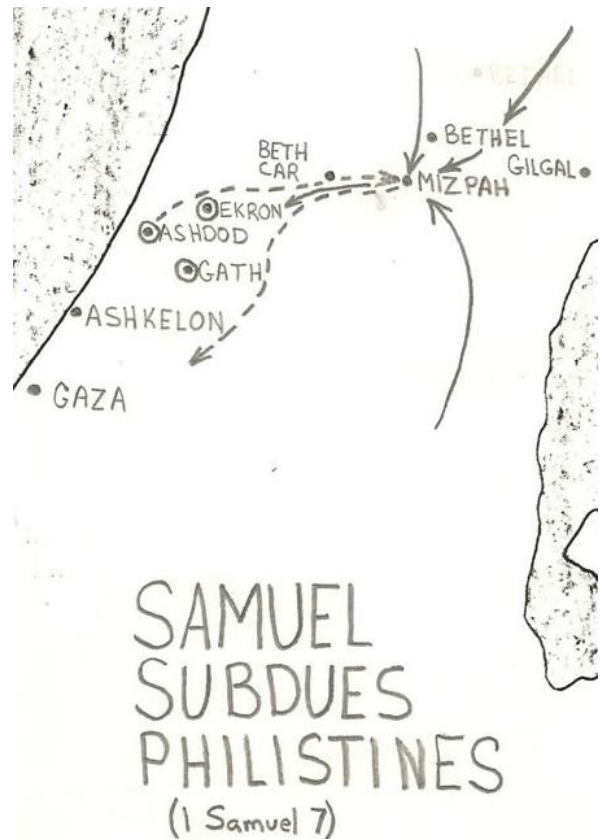
Zephaniah 2:4 – **“For Gaza shall be deserted, and Ashkelon shall become a desolation; Ashdod's people shall be driven out at noon, and Ekron shall be uprooted.”**

2:5 – **“Woe to you inhabitants of the seacoast, you nation of the Cherethites!
The word of the Lord is against you,
O Canaan, land of the Philistines;
and I will destroy you until no inhabitant is left.”**

2:6 – **“And you, O seacoast, shall be pastures,
with meadows for shepherds
and folds for flocks.”**

2:7 – **“The seacoast shall become the possession
of the remnant of the house of Judah,
on which they shall graze,
and in the houses of Ashkelon
they shall lie down at evening.
For the Lord their God will be mindful of them
and restore their fortunes.”**

1. Four of Philistia's five cities are mentioned:
 - a. Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron
 - b. Gath is not mentioned:
 - i. It had previously fallen into the control of the kings of Judah.
 - ii. In 712/711 BC Sargon II of Assyria claims to have taken Gath. It was not rebuilt.
 - c. The destruction of Philistia is to be quick.
 - d. These four Philistine cities were controlled at this time by Egypt beginning around 640 at the end of the reign of Assyrian Ashurbanipal when the power vacuum set in.
 - e. Egypt also controlled Edom at the time of Zephaniah's writing
2. Driven out by noon could mean several things:



- a. Noon was the time of day when the heat made it difficult to work. So, to be attacked at noon would be a surprise attack. This is not the best explanation.
 - b. Invasions and sieges could last for days, months or years. This invasion is over by noon. So, Ashdod would fall easily and quickly.
 - c. During Zephaniah's day Pharaoh Psammetichus I was active in a 30 year war with Ashdod (640-611) before Egypt would fully take the city.
3. Cherethites (or, Kerethites) was a reference to the isle of Crete (Caphtor). The original Philistines were Greeks and the people of Philistia were descendants of Greeks. Also called Pelethites in scripture or mentioned along with the Cherethites.
- a. David used these as mercenaries (1 Samuel 30:14; 2 Samuel 8:18)
 - b. Ezekiel 25:15-16 (January 587 BC, dated in 24:1) –
 ““Thus says the Lord GOD: Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul to destroy in never-ending enmity, therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the rest of the seacoast.”
 - c. Philistines came from Crete Deuteronomy 2:23; Jeremiah 47:4
 - d. Amos 9:7 – “Are you not like the Cushites to me, O people of Israel?” declares the LORD. “Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?”
 - e. Quote: “Now DNA sequencing of ten Philistine skeletons suggests they really were a genetically distinct community. Around 1200 BC, in at least one key Philistine city there was an influx of south European genes, suggesting a surge of Greek immigrants to the region.” This is from <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2208581-ancient-dna-reveals-that-jews-biblical-rivals-were-from-greece/>
 - f. Reference here: <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/5/7/eaax0061>
4. The seacoast would easily be accessed by shepherds grazing their sheep.
- a.
 - b. Based on Ostrakon found at Yabneh Yam in 1960 Josiah had expanded Judah's control into Philistia as far as the coast and north to Joppa. The ostrakon show there was a Judean governor at the fortress of Mesad Hashavyahu (between Ashdod and Joppa)
 - c. Zephaniah would have known of this expansion of Judah into Philistia due to the Assyrian power vacuum.

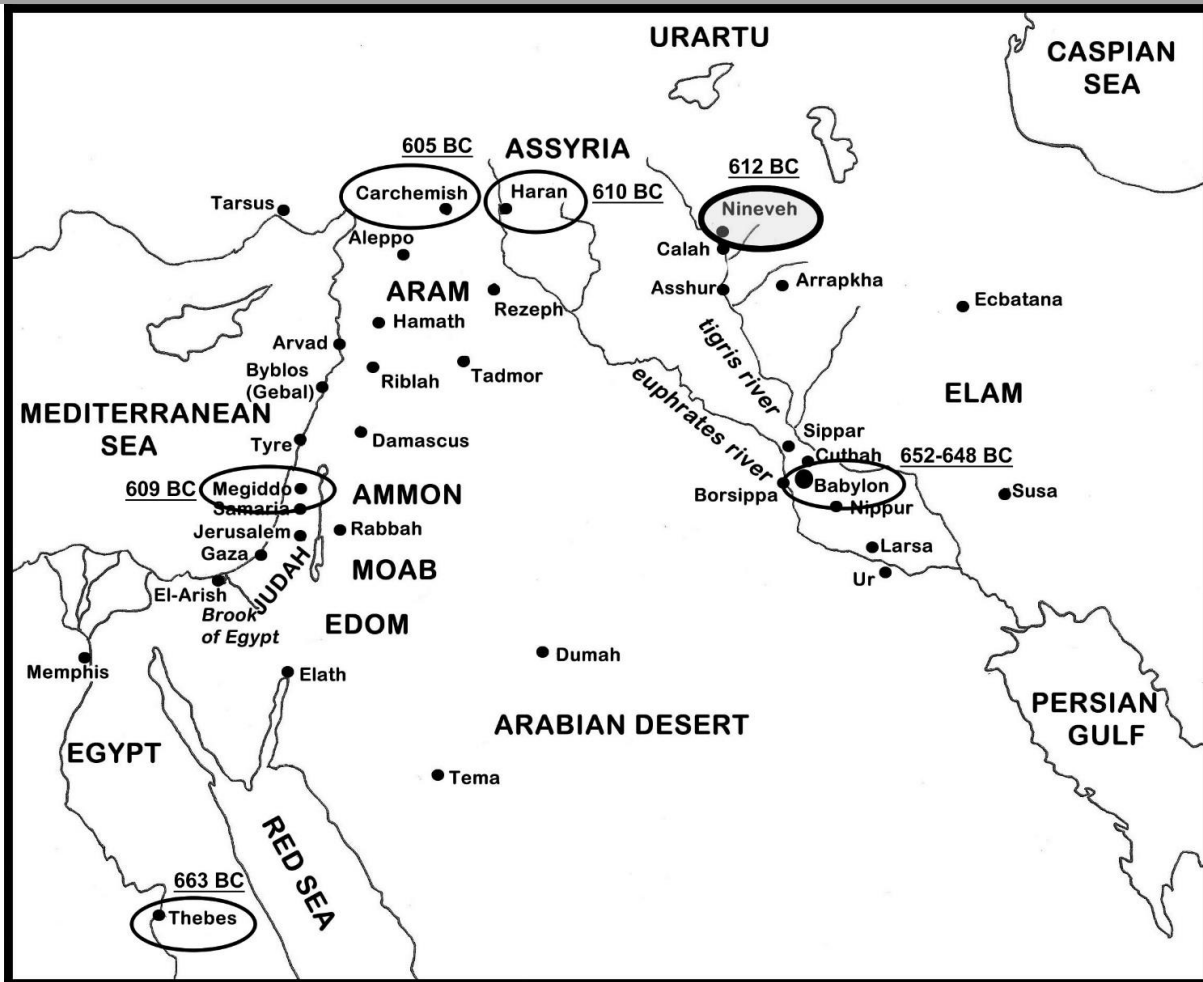




Yavneh Yah Ostracon. Letter of Petition Regarding the Return of a Confiscated Coat. Photo from J. Naveh original 1960 article in Israel Exploration Journal.

שמע <u>אדני השר</u>	1	Let my <u>lord</u> , the <u>governor</u> , listen
את דבר עבדה <u>עבדך</u>	2	to the word of his servant. <u>Your servant</u>
<u>קצר</u> היה עבדך בח	3	is a <u>reaper</u> . Your servant was in
צר אסם ויקצר עבדך	4	<u>Hasar-'Asam</u> , and your servant reaped,
ויכל ואסם בימם לפני 'שב	5	and finished, and stored (the grain) during the days prior to the abboth.
ת כא 'שר כל עבדך את קצר וא	6	When your servant had completed the reaping, and

<p>סם כימם ויבא <u>ח שביהו</u> בן שב</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>stored (the grain) during these days, <u>Hoshabyahu</u> ben-<u>Shobi</u> arrived,</p>
<p>י ויקחאת בגד עבדך כא שר כלת</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>and he confiscated the garment of your servant when I had completed</p>
<p>את קצרי זה ימם לקח את בגד עבדך</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>the reaping. It is already days since he took the garment of your servant.</p>
	<p>10</p>	<p>And all my brothers—who are reaping with me—can testify on my behalf,</p>



MOAB and AMMON to the East

2:8 – **“I have heard the taunts of Moab
and the revilings of the Ammonites,
how they have taunted my people
and made boasts against their territory.**

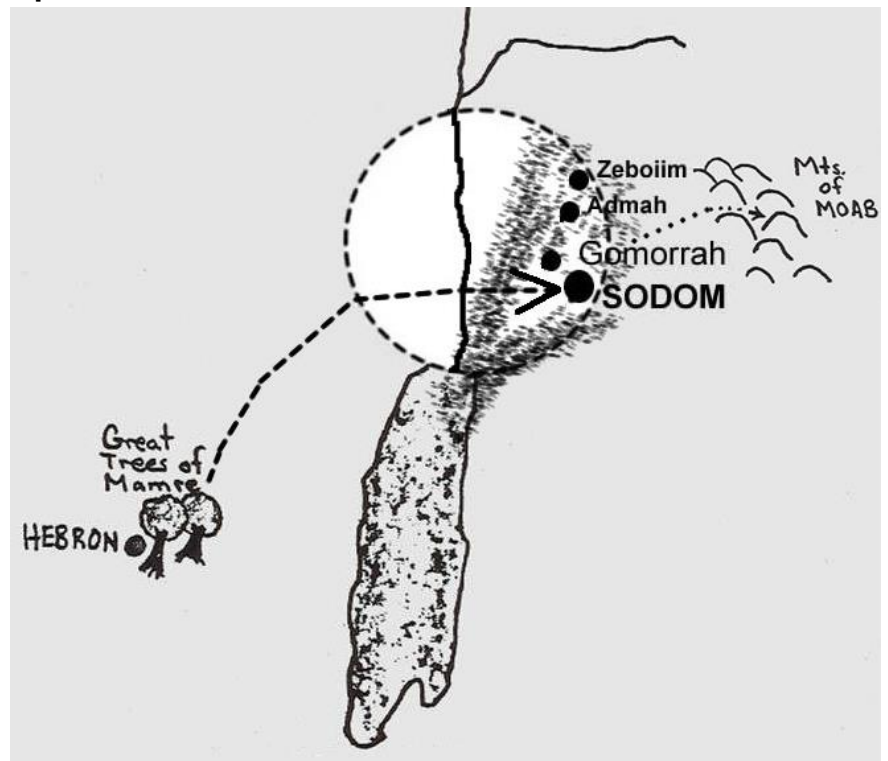
1. During the decline and fall of Northern Israel Moab and Ammon would have verbally threatened and made plans to fill the void.
2. Likewise during the days of Assyria’s invasion and destruction of Judah Moab and Ammon would have rejoiced with intentions of taking their share of Israel territory.
3. Moab and Ammon paid tribute to Assyria during the reigns of Sargon, Sennacherib and Esarhaddon according to Assyrian records.

2:9 – **“Therefore, as I live,” declares the Lord of hosts,
the God of Israel,**

**“Moab shall become like Sodom,
and the Ammonites like Gomorrah,
a land possessed by nettles and salt pits,
and a waste forever.**

**The remnant of my people shall plunder them,
and the survivors of my nation shall possess them.”**

1. Sodom (today Tall el-Hammam) and Gomorrah was in the territory of Moab and Ammon
2. Moab and Ammon were a people who resulted from an sexual relationship between Lot and his two daughters after they fled the destruction of Sodom. (Genesis 19)
3. “Weeds” and “salt pits” leave this a wasteland forever.
4. “Pride” of Moab and Ammon is addressed in Jeremiah 48:26 along with announcing judgment on Moab in Jeremiah chapter 48.



2:10 – **“This shall be their lot in
return for their pride,
because they taunted and boasted
against the people of the Lord of hosts.**

1. “taunted” and “boasted” are mentioned again.
2. Judah is identified as the “people of the Lord of hosts”. Even in discipline the Lord remembers who his people are.

**2:11 – “The Lord will be awesome against them;
for he will famish all the gods of the earth,
and to him shall bow down,
each in its place,
all the lands of the nations.**

1. The Lord will ruin the land of the other gods so that they and their people starve or “he will famish all the gods of the earth.”
2. All these “gods will bow down to YHWH.”
 - a. In the kingdom age the nations will come to meet the Lord in Jerusalem.
 - i. Isaiah 2:3 – “Many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”
 - ii. Isaiah 66:19 – “I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory. And they shall declare my glory among the nations.”
 - iii. Isaiah 66:23 – “From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord.”
 - iv. Isaiah 19:19 – “In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border.
 - v. Isaiah 19:23 – “In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.”
 - vi. Malachi 1:11 – “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be[a] great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.”
 - vii. John 4:21-23 – “Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.”
 - b. Here the leaders of those nations return to their homelands and to their people groups to teach their people of the Lord and his ways.
 - c. These are eschatological events in the Day of the Lord.

CUSH to the South

2:12 – “You also, O Cushites,
shall be slain by my sword.

ASSYRIA to the North

2:13 – “And he will stretch out his hand against the north
and destroy Assyria,
and he will make Nineveh a desolation,
a dry waste like the desert.

2:14 – “Herds shall lie down in her midst,
all kinds of beasts;
even the owl and the hedgehog
shall lodge in her capitals;
a voice shall hoot in the window;
devastation will be on the threshold;
for her cedar work will be laid bare.

2:15 – “This is the exultant city
that lived securely,
that said in her heart,
“I am, and there is no one else.”
What a desolation she has become,
a lair for wild beasts!
Everyone who passes by her
hisses and shakes his fist.