

## Jeremiah 46

**Read Jeremiah 46:1-2:** Israel is like a world clock. It is like at the hub of prophecy. The rise and fall of nations have a lot to do with God's plans for Israel. The content of this chapter, through chapter 51, is all about judgements on surrounding nations. This chapter is because of Judah, but it is not about Judah. Isaiah does the same thing with some of his prophecies. This chapter is basically showing us that Judah's unfaithfulness indirectly destroyed Egypt. The Book of Jeremiah (up to this point) has just been about Judah. Why would God now include details about the destruction of the surrounding idol-worshipping nations? After all, *dead is dead*. What can you do to a man going to hell; who cares nothing about the real God? You are writing letters that will never be opened. They do not care.

Wasn't it pretty self-evident that the heathen nations and their broken family structure, were trying to find a better life through their man-made idols? They were essentially destroying themselves with ear plugs on. We have no indication that people in foreign lands were getting saved over these foreign-nation prophecies.

This has more to do with the roles that unbelievers play in the lives of God's people. Interestingly, God doesn't describe the judgement of more distant lands such as China or India. This is probably because they were more distant and had no interaction with Israel or Judah.

Somebody should write a history book of the rise and fall of nations according to their dealings with Israel. That is *the story behind the stories*. There actually were some world powers far away who did effect Israel and Judah. Daniel wrote about the rise and fall of Babylon, Medo Persia, Greece and Rome long before they existed. Babylon was used to vacate Judah. Medo Persia brought them back home. Greece created a one-world language for the gospel, and Rome built the roads to carry the gospel from city to city. There are also many things written about Egypt and Assyria, because they effected God's people. This chapter is about the fall of Egypt.



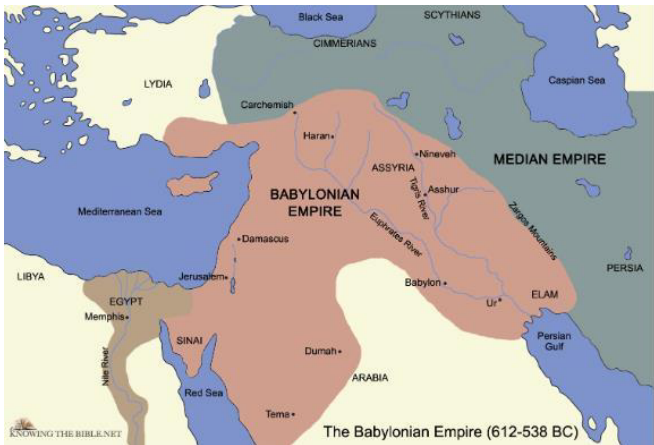
Egypt was described as a terrible sea monster, run by Satan. The imagery comes from it being from an area with many rivers (around the Nile) and being so involved in inland waterway and oceanic exports to all of the nations. They ship grain and goods everywhere. In addition, the sea is an idiom for the collection of Gentile nations. Every nation is compared to a river; because it has an origin. They all have distinct characteristics (like rivers) serves as a boundary. Satan wants to control all of the nations (the sea) as though they were one body of water. His winds (demonic activity) produce dangerous waves. Only Israel is compared to the more-stable dry land.



Nobody could mess with a powerful sea monster and live to talk about it. There was a time when Egypt was the dominating world power. Using the sea for trade and transportation is more efficient than land caravans. When Egypt had fulfilled its purpose too God, God brought in Babylon to strip them down to having no more power or status. Pharaoh and Egypt also are compared to Lucifer and his demons.

*So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12)*

*In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea. (Isaiah 27)*



It is critical to know that the powers given to regional and world empires has much to do with how it affects God's people. Egypt had served a purpose for God's people more than once. In the same way, the unbelieving world serves a purpose in our lives. God told his people to not re-connect with Egypt or rely on it in any way. That would be a huge step backwards. Depending on Egypt is equal to depending on this worlds power and provisions. We are warned about making deals with the Devil.

Jeremiah 42-44 was all about warnings to not go to Egypt. The people of Judah were to repent. They did not. The Babylonians were sent to remove them to sanitize the land of idolatry. Judah was to go to Babylon for 70 years as the idol were burned and buried. A few survivors of that holocaust sought to make a fresh start. God allowed this small remnant to stay put in Judah. They dismissed this option, and they went on into Egypt against God's explicit direction not to.

Again, Egypt did previously serve a purpose to Israel and Judah; but not this purpose. Here are some ways that Egypt was used by God over the centuries.

- God had to vacate Canaan early on. Abram got along well with the Amorites; and formed an alliance...but their future was not going in the same direction as his. God told Abram well in advance that future generations of his children would leave Canaan, to separate from the Canaanite culture for 400 years. They were heading for total anarchy and destruction. Abrams grandchildren went to Egypt for 400 years while things got uglier back home with the Canaanites.
  - *Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> Now as for you, you shall <sup>[d]</sup>go to your*

*fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (Genesis 15)*

- Israel became a nation in Egypt. Egypt is a representation of this hardened world.
  - *But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. (Deuteronomy 4)*
  - *And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: ‘My father was a <sup>[b]</sup>Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and <sup>[c]</sup>dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. <sup>6</sup> But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. <sup>7</sup> Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. <sup>8</sup> So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. (Deuteronomy 26)*
- Egypt would be used to advertise God’s power to the whole world. God humiliated their idols.
  - *and said to the men: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. <sup>10</sup> For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. <sup>11</sup> And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. (Joshua 2)*
- At the point of this chapter, many of God’s intentions for Egypt have been fulfilled. They will no longer be a world power or serve to be a temptation to God’s people. Now they will essentially be dismantled from world power status...and transformed into a broken 3<sup>rd</sup>-world poverty state. Babylon defeated Egypt.
  - This chapter describes how the Battle of Carchemish broke Egypt’s back.
    - The Battle of Carchemish was in 605 BC. It was a showdown between Babylon and Egypt. Carchemish was an old Hittite fortress on the Euphrates River. It had become an alternate Assyrian capital. It was between Turkey and Syria. The Assyrian Empire allied with Egypt; and the Medo Persian Empire and the Scythians allied with Babylon. This battle essentially ended the Assyrian empire, and it broke the back of the Egyptian empire. The

casualties to Egypt were large. God essentially lured the sea monster out of the river to die in the desert. The bible describes the incident like a person catching a sea monster with a fishing pole.

- Soon thereafter, in 601 BC, Babylon invaded and took the Sinai Peninsula. The casualties to both nations was large. Ezekiel 29 describes how now Egypt would have a 40-year period with no Pharaohs and become a base kingdom.
  - *‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster who lies in the midst of his rivers, Who has said, ‘My <sup>[a]</sup>River is my own; I have made it for myself.’ <sup>4</sup> But I will put hooks in your jaws, And cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales; I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, And all the fish in your rivers will stick to your scales. <sup>5</sup> I will leave you in the wilderness, You and all the fish of your rivers; You shall fall on the <sup>[b]</sup>open field; You shall not be picked up or <sup>[c]</sup>gathered. I have given you as food To the beasts of the field And to the birds of the heavens. <sup>6</sup> “Then all the inhabitants of Egypt Shall know that I am the LORD, Because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> When they took hold of you with the hand, You broke and tore all their <sup>[d]</sup>shoulders; When they leaned on you, You broke and made all their backs quiver.” <sup>8</sup> ‘Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will bring a sword upon you and cut off from you man and beast. <sup>9</sup> And the land of Egypt shall become desolate and waste; then they will know that I am the LORD, because he said, ‘The River is mine, and I have made it.’ <sup>10</sup> Indeed, therefore, I am against you and against your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from <sup>[e]</sup>Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Ethiopia. <sup>11</sup> Neither foot of man shall pass through it nor foot of beast pass through it, and it shall be uninhabited forty years. <sup>12</sup> I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate; and among the cities that are laid waste, her cities shall be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries.” <sup>13</sup> ‘Yet, thus says the Lord GOD: “At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. <sup>14</sup> I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. <sup>15</sup> It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself above the nations, for I will diminish them so that they will not rule over the nations anymore. <sup>16</sup> No longer shall it be the confidence of the house of Israel, but will remind them of their iniquity when they turned to follow them. Then they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.” ’ ’ ’*  
(Ezekiel 29)

- The Egyptian Dynasty derailed in 565 BC. All of the temples had been destroyed, except one. Most of the Egyptian population was slaughtered or taken captive. There was no Pharaoh for 40 years. When the Medo Persians defeated Babylon, they took control over Egypt.

**Read Jeremiah 46:3-10:** Babylon had recently defeated and drove out the Assyrians at their capital (Nineveh) in 612 BC. Then the Assyrians set up a new capital further south in Harran. The Babylonians drove them out again, so the Assyrians retreated further south to Carchemish. You could say that Babylon was systematically running Assyria out of their territory. Now Babylon was going in for the final kill.

Egypt and Babylon both had alliances that got involved at the Battle of Carchemish as well. Egypt pulled its troops together and marched north to help Assyria. The Egyptians started marching towards Carchemish in 609 BC. They were delayed by King Josiah of Judah who went out to battle against Egypt. This was completely unsolicited. Pharaoh defeated Judah and killed King Josiah. Pharaoh then spent time in Riblah imprisoning Josiah's replacement, Jehoahaz. By the time that the Egyptian army arrived in Carchemish, Assyria had already been wiped out by Babylon. Pharaoh was too late. Assyria had historically terrorized Israel. Now God was through with them. God was wiping out two ancient enemies of Israel and Judah. Egypt had been the most powerful army in North Africa and middle east for 1500 years. They were defeated soundly and became a second-rate power.

**Read Jeremiah 46:11-22:** Assyria and Egypt went down hard. The bullies and torture experts were getting pounded. Jeremiah asks a rhetorical question about the balm of Gilead. Isn't there any available for this situation? The balm of Gilead was an ancient medicine and meat preservative and perfume. There is not enough perfume to cover this mountain of dead bodies. There is no healing to a dead body.

God asks another rhetorical question. "Why can't these strong soldiers fight? God answers his own question. He says that it is because God is fighting against them. The Assyrians carried Israel away as captive long ago. Now they are carried away or killed. The terrorists are being terrorized. The Assyrians ran away from their fort and were killed. Then the Egyptians walked into a slaughter. Babylon is truly God's servant.

**Read Jeremiah 46:27-28:** God is now turning back to his own people. He tells them that after this mess gets cleared up they will be going back home. He says that the terrorists of Israel are going to all get wiped out. It's poetic justice. God raised Medo Persia to wipe out Babylon, after that chapter was finished. Then God raised Greece to wipe out Medo Persia when their role was done, etc... It's a pattern.

