

## Jeremiah 47

**Read Jeremiah 47:1-2:** The more that you read the Bible, the more you realize how simple the overall themes are. 95% of the things that we fear are effects...not causes. It is not about Russia, Democrats, transgenders, Fentanyl, Covid, the national debt or terrorism. The ancient Jews had all kinds of problems; worse than we have. The blood thirsty neighboring nations were not the problem at all. It all traced back to their walk with God. All of the villains are ultimately passing through God's filter. They were living too independently from God.

*"But, behold, I will raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel," Says the LORD God of hosts; (Amos 6)*

Throughout the Bible God is establishing his kingdom and driving out unbelief. He is also bringing the disorderly into order. Any sickly or dead parts of our walk will get cut off one way or another. Worst-case, God will bring home a saint who is only doing damage. If we are doing great; we will still continue to experience healthy and significant losses...to bring about a yet-greater walk (like rose bushes or grape vines).

*"I am the true Vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that continues to bear fruit, He [repeatedly] prunes, so that it will bear more fruit [even richer and finer fruit]. (John 15)*

Ironically, one way this cleansing and rejuvenation happens is through unbelievers and their hurtful intents. God is so sovereign and wise that can equally use good guys and bad guys. We do not need to worry about the devil or evil men. The good news is that God is never mocked. God has dealings with both the righteous and the unrighteous simultaneously. God uses his worst enemies as much as he uses his friends. There has never been an issue as to if Satan serves God. The only question is to what degree he actually knows it. The deceiver has become self-deceived. All evil intent towards us can only bless us. Everything plays into his plans.

Judgement always begins with the house of the LORD...and then it goes outwards. We have taken a turn away from discussions of Judah and their need for repentance. Now God is addressing the neighboring unbelieving nations and influencers of Judah one by one. In the previous chapter Egypt and Assyria were

taken out. They had been major bullies to Israel. They were God's unwitting tools to bring about Judah's repentance. Again, they are not the problem. Israel and Judah were way out of control, before all of this started.

Initially, Israel and Judah were being cruel and sinful to their own people (see blue highlights below). This is why these savage countries had to rise to power. God sent in cruel nations to humble them. Assyria was more than happy to play the spoiler...though it was not their intention to help God (see red highlights below). These cruel nations began to think it was all about them (see green highlights below) ...and not God, they got taken out of the picture (see purple highlights).

*“Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, Who write misfortune, Which they have prescribed <sup>2</sup>To rob the needy of justice, And to take what is right from the poor of My people, That widows may be their prey, And that they may rob the fatherless. <sup>3</sup>What will you do in the day of punishment, And in the desolation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory? <sup>4</sup>Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners, And they shall fall <sup>[a]</sup>among the slain.” For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. <sup>5</sup>“Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation. <sup>6</sup>I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets. <sup>7</sup>Yet he does not mean so, Nor does his heart think so; But it is in his heart to destroy, And cut off not a few nations. <sup>8</sup>For he says, ‘Are not my princes altogether kings? <sup>9</sup>Is not Calno like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad? Is not Samaria like Damascus? <sup>10</sup>As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols, Whose carved images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria, <sup>11</sup>As I have done to Samaria and her idols, Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?’ ” <sup>12</sup>Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks.” <sup>13</sup>For he says: “By the strength of my hand I have done it, And by my wisdom, for I am prudent; Also I have removed the boundaries of the people, And have robbed their treasures; So I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man. <sup>14</sup>My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people, And as one gathers eggs that are left, I have gathered all the earth; And there was no one who moved his wing, Nor opened his mouth with even a peep.” <sup>15</sup>Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? (Isaiah 10)*

### Prophecy of Unbelievers

The Bible is all about God and his people. It is focused on Jesus as that bridge. Those people and nations who are not God's people still play an important role. As believers, we probably miss this whole point.

We focus on fulfilled scripture as it pertains to God's people. Why not also note the fulfilled prophecy to unbelievers? Chapter 46 was about the fall of Egypt and Assyria. This chapter is about the fall and destruction of the Philistines. Chapters 48-51 are about the fall of: Moab, Ammon, and Babylon.

Prophecy is frequently not sequential. God is in every moment of time at once. How we become aware of what is brewing is a different story. This chapter may have been written in 609 BC. It actually took place before most of Jeremiah 46. God is judging the Philistines for being so brutal against the children of Israel. Despite their greed and brutality, God allowed the Philistine attacks on Judah and Israel for a period of time. God used the Philistines to bring corrections to his own people.

### The Cause of International Terrorism

God originally told the Israelites to wipe out all Canaanites in the land when they returned to Canaan. They did not follow through or complete that....so God had to bring in outsiders to finish that job. This created big problems. Large lapses in obedience create large enemies. The Philistines became the day-in day-out enemy of Israel.

There is a lot of confusion about who the Philistines really are. Some people consider the Palestinians to be Philistines. They are absolutely not the Philistines. The Philistines were all wiped out in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

Who are the Palestinians? Most of them are the remainder of the Arabs who attacked Israel in the 1948 6-Day War.



This includes Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Israel won this war. The Palestinians are the displaced Arab attackers of Israel who were not allowed to return back to their homeland after the war. Israel has been gracious enough to let them stay.



The Philistines are no longer in existence. They were a warlike people who came to the coast of Israel around 1175 BC from Crete. They were a seafaring nation who attacked Egypt and other nations around the Mediterranean Sea. They were kind of like a Viking-type of invading people, raiding the Mediterranean, and settling in the coasts of Israel. They made a treaty with Tyre and Sidon as their neighboring allies.

Jeremiah was not the only prophet to declare that God's judgement was coming to the Philistines. The 5 regional jurisdiction centers of the Philistines were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath.

*Thus says the LORD: “For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, Because they took captive the whole captivity To deliver them up to Edom. <sup>7</sup> But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza, Which shall devour its palaces. <sup>8</sup> I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon; I will turn My hand against Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,” Says the Lord GOD. (Amos 1)*

It was God who eventually cleansed the land of the Philistines.

*We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us, The deeds You did in their days, In days of old: <sup>2</sup> You drove out the nations with Your hand, But them You planted; You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out. <sup>3</sup> For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them. (Psalm 44)*

Like other enemies of Israel, the Philistines gained strength as Israel disobeyed God. The need for hardier correction to Israel increased. All of our enemies gain strength when we disobey God. God’s people got tired of putting in the effort to chase the remaining Canaanites completely out of the land. Joshua aged out; and the effort fizzled. Consequently, the Philistines resurged and were a scourge to Israel. Any remnant of procrastination with God has significant effects.

*Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: “You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. <sup>2</sup> This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all that of the Geshurites, <sup>3</sup> from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites; (Joshua 13)*

*“But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, <sup>17</sup> but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, <sup>18</sup> lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations*

*which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.  
(Deuteronomy 20)*

It is almost like God has to allow a new terrorizing nation to make forced corrections to God's people...and then the threat needs to be taken away. Pharaoh attacked the Philistines in 609 BC; and then Nebuchadnezzar wiped the Philistines out in 604 BC.

**Read Jeremiah 47: 3-7:** How specifically did the Philistines get destroyed? The invaders of the Philistines are an invading cavalry specifically coming in from the north. This chapter describes chariot forces who were working their way south from Tyre and Sidon. Tyre and Sidon were in league with the Philistines. It may have been written in 609 BC. This judgement for those who had come from Caphtor (Crete/Philistines).

The Philistines were warlike and ambitious. They tried to invade Egypt and the countries around the Mediterranean. Egypt defeated the Philistines and repelled them back to the coasts of Israel, where they settled in and embedded.

The middle east had been a tug of war zone between Assyria, Babylon and Egypt. Judah and the surrounding countries were like a football. The Philistine regions had come under the control of Assyria and Egypt. After the Battle of Carchemish, the Philistines rebelled from the weakened Assyrian and Egyptian control. Assyria was ruined. Egypt had been reduced from a world power, down to a regional power. Nevertheless, Egypt re-asserted control over the Philistines through an invasion. That was just a forced surrender of power.

After that, the Babylonians crushed the Philistine cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron and Gath. The Philistines were all taken captive or killed by Nebuchadnezzar II.

When Judah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonians returned to lock down regional control and domination. In 604 BC, the Philistines, who had been under the rule of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (911–605 BC), were ultimately vanquished by King Nebuchadnezzar II of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Nebuchadnezzar then proceeded to more fully re-conquer Phoenicia in 585BC and to invade Egypt in 567BC. The defeat of Tyre and Sidon with the Philistines made sense, since they were working together.

### **Spiritual Significance**

So far, we have discussed the intimidation and the physical battles. Now let's look at the underlying spiritual significance. What we see on earth, first takes place spiritually. We only see what we see. We see terror on the evening news and video of advancing armies. That is actually the small picture. Ezekiel 25 describes how God is going to wipe out Ammon, Moab, Edom and the Philistines. They are being judged for their hatred and furious rebukes. Heaven dispatches whichever invading army that suits him. It has absolutely nothing to do with the bad actors.

On one hand, we can feel like we are in the minority and are being left alone to face the unfriendly world forces. We can feel like martyrs standing on our marks as the evil empire advances. Elijah was more aware of the invisible army than his servant. His servant only saw the physical army...which was not the real force at hand.

*Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. <sup>15</sup> And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" <sup>16</sup> So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6)*

God wants to make the life journey of experiences to cause us to dwell with man in harmony and peace. The Land of Canaan represents the abundant life in Christ. It is our destination. Joshua is a representation of Christ our conqueror. Even believers who are obedient have to fight for their life. It is valuable. There are many battles that must take place with us and around us, despite the promises of deliverance. Our battle is ultimately with ourselves. The Devil is just a catalyst to accelerate our natural inclinations. He studies us, and produces a favorable atmosphere to lure us to act out on our hidden characteristics. The Canaanites, particularly represent different aspects of the flesh that we have to displace to fully

enjoy the life that God has for us. The battle of the spirit and the flesh is displayed all over the scriptures. Jacob and Esau represent the man of the Spirit and the man of the flesh. One is motivated by God and the other is motivated by his appetite. Rebecca had two children, representing our two natures. One represents the spiritual man and the other is the man of the flesh. They are locked into battle.

*And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." <sup>24</sup> So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. <sup>25</sup> And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. <sup>26</sup> Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. (Genesis 25)*

In the same way, the children of Israel were called to come to the place of God's promises. To get there, they had to overcome doubts and fears and self-reliance. Once they got there, the battle was about keeping it spiritual. It is easier to be spiritual when your life is on the line.

Now that Joshua had cleared the land life became easier. They started to ease off on their commitments to God. The children of Israel began to prioritize easy living and pleasure. There is no making peace with our selfish desires and the old life. The Philistines were an example of how hard it can be to destroy your old strongholds of desire and pride. That old-life tendency we have will never stop advancing against us. We have to fight it.

The Philistines are characterized as a warlike people. We are not supposed to be ruthless with anything, except sin in our life. We cannot allow any spiritual compromise; because it will grow from a coexistence into a monster. Don't be fooled by the bumper sticker that reads: COEXIST.



According to [Wikipedia](#), the bumper sticker typically spells “COEXIST” using an Islamic crescent moon for the “C,” a peace sign for the “O,” a combination of the male and female symbols for the “E,” a Star of David for the “X,” a pentagram for the dot of the “I,” a yin-yang symbol for the “S,” and a Christian cross for the “T.” The meaning is quite clear: “We all *should* get along!” No matter what worldview one holds, we *ought* to get along, live peacefully among each other, and help neighbors of a different religion, belief system, or worldview flourish.

However, while we are called to charitably tolerate every person, we are not obliged—in principle—to tolerate any and every idea. The question remains: What is *wrong* about the “Coexist” bumper gospel? Two problematic aspects to the “Coexist” philosophy. Certainly, no common person wants to stand out and object to such a seemingly compassion-centered approach to others. Yet these issues need to be realized, outlined, and proclaimed, as there are far too many Christians who are borderline complicit, if not intentionally so, with this questionable philosophical worldview. The two problematic outcomes of the “Coexist” worldview manifest in either insanity or tyranny.

*‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because the Philistines dealt vengefully and took vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the old hatred,” <sup>16</sup> therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast. <sup>17</sup> I will execute great vengeance on them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I lay My vengeance upon them.” ’ ’ (Ezekiel 25)*

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:14)*

The Philistines and other Canaanites were people of promiscuity, and they worshipped anything connected with fertility. Personal gratification and abundance seemed to be ideas that go hand in hand. We too have an integral enemy intent on dedicating some portion of our thoughts to these drives.

You can never make peace with sin. It never ever stops there. The enemy has all kinds of ways to get a foothold. Perhaps it is the trans people wanting equality and fairness. Once they are established they will draw fire on God's people and try to push us out.

The 5 Philistine strongholds are revelations of intent:

Ashkelon (the place where values are weighed and traded.... like slaves)

Ashdod (the ravager)

Ekron (to eradicate)

Gath (to stomp and crush)

Gaza (Strong and fierce)