

## September 18

**Scriptures:** Read Jeremiah 46 & 47

**Key Verse:** “But do not fear, O My servant Jacob For behold, I will save you from afar have rest and be at ease...” (Jeremiah 46:27)

### Overview

The Lord raised up Jeremiah as not only a prophet to Judah (his main calling) and Israel but also to the Gentile nations (46:1; cf. 1:5, 10), for these nations had also sinned greatly and so God’s judgment was also to come upon them. Chronologically, the prophecies concerning the nations in chapters 46 to 51 likely follow chapter 25, but since the main body of material was dealing with Judah’s sin and judgment, these have been attached as a supplement.

Jeremiah does not describe the sins for which the nations were guilty. Rather, he directly pronounces judgment. From chapter 25, however, we learn that the judgments upon the nations came because their cup of iniquity was full, and so God would cause them to drink the cup of his fury (25:14-17; Ps. 11:6). We firstly read of the judgment upon Egypt (chapter 46). Pharaoh Necho was the last reigning Pharaoh while Egypt had been a world power, and he had been one of the most powerful Pharaoh’s in Egypt’s history. Necho had killed good King Josiah at Megiddo before he went on to capture Carchemish, a strategic military city. Upon his return to Egypt, he deposed and deported Jehoahaz and appointed Jehoiakim as his vassal king (2 Chron. 35:20-24; 36:4).

Three years later (606 B.C.), Carchemish was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and the army of Necho was sorely defeated. This decisive battle altered history, for thereafter Babylon became the world power. Jeremiah begins with a poetic song about Nebuchadnezzar’s victory. The Egyptian army and the North African coalition had come up proudly and confidently with their many horses and chariots like an onrushing flood, but they were quickly dismayed by the vengeance of the Lord in His day of judgment (46:10). They retreated and fled southward, but not even the superior balm of Gilead could heal their wounds, for God had purposed to defeat them so that Egypt would never again rise to become an oppressive world power (46:11).

Necho, “the mighty man”, was put to shame and humbled before Nebuchadnezzar, the one whom God had ordained from the north country (46:10b, 12). When Nebuchadnezzar was routing the Egyptians, as they fled he heard the news of his father’s death and had to return to Babylon.

Although for a short time Egypt was not directly threatened, Jeremiah prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar would indeed invade and bring Egypt to her knees, for the appointed time for Egypt to drink the cup of God’s wrath had arrived (46:17). Ending on a note of hope, Jeremiah foretold that Egypt would not permanently lie desolate; she would again be inhabited but would not be a powerful nation (46:26). A few years later, Jeremiah gave a very similar prophecy about Egypt, for it was during that period when Egypt seemed safe from Babylon that the remnant of the people of Judah, with Jeremiah, travelled as refugees there (43:7, 10; 44:30). However, Jeremiah had warned that God would punish not only Egypt but those who trusted in her (46:25).

Judah had many times sought Egypt's help rather than the help of the Lord, and this was partly the reason for the judgment upon Judah and the refugees (ch. 44). Again, Jeremiah ends on a note of hope. God promised salvation and restoration to His people, after they had suffered His chastisement. Likewise, in the end times when God judges the wicked nations, the remnant of His faithful people will not need to fear, for their hope will be in Jesus (cf. 2 Thess. 2:16-17).

In chapter 47 we read of yet another "appointed" judgment which fell upon the Philistines (47:7b). There were five main Philistine cities: Ekron, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Gath. All of them were in the coastal plain of southern Palestine, except for Gath which was in the Shephelah (lowlands). King David had subjected the Philistines, yet their cities remained independent of Judah. They were called "the remnant of Caphtor" (the ancient name of Crete, Amos 9:7; Deut. 2:23), likely because they had emigrated from the island of Crete. Their population gradually decreased due to the many battles, and they eventually became absorbed into the population of Judah during the period of the Maccabees. Jeremiah prophesied their doom, even before they were threatened and attacked by the Pharaoh in Gaza, probably when Pharaoh Necho was returning from his successful campaign against Megiddo. However, a more severe judgment was to come from the Babylonians; it would come upon them like flood waters from the north (47:2). The land would be left bald from the deforestation of the enemy and the desolation of their cities. The sword of the Lord was to remain out of its sheath until it had accomplished its charge against those coastal cities (47:6-7). Ezekiel gives us the reason for their judgment: their hatefulness, "spiteful hearts" and desire to destroy, most of which was directed against the people of the Lord (Ezek. 25:15-17; cf. Amos 1:6-8; Isa. 14:28-31; Zeph. 2:4-7).

## **Prayer**

Lord, Your judgments are coming upon all the earth. Thank You Jesus for being our hiding place from God's wrath. Bring many into the fold while there is still time.