

Jeremiah Ch 46 • “Against Egypt”

- Background: Ch 46 begins new section of Jeremiah; prophecies against the nations.
Starts w/ Egypt; proceeds west thru various states until ends up at Babylon.
Fulfills Jeremiah 1v5 @ “prophet to the nations”
- v1 Intro to entire section (Ch 46-51)
- v2 Perspective: Egypt less of world power after c. 1200BC
612BC @ Babylonians are overtaking Assyrians (conquer Ninevah).
609BC @ Babylonians take Haran (backup capital after fall of Ninevah).
Assyrians fall back to Carchemish; Egypt moves to assist (allies w/ Assyria).
Pharaoh Neco (Egypt) intercepted by Josiah (Judah) at Megiddo; Josiah killed.
605BC @ Babylon defeats Egypt at Battle of Carchemish.

This chapter describes Battle of Carchemish before it happens.
- v3-4 Description of soldiers preparing for battle; turns out to be in vain.
- v5-6 Note: no description of battle; jumps right to the aftermath — no escape!
“Why have I seen them” – is Jeremiah asking what happened?
Or is he dismayed to receive the prophecy, knowing implications for Judah?
- v7-8 Metaphor of army-as-flood familiar from Isaiah (except there was Assyrians)
- v9 Egypt relying on mercenaries: Ethiopians (Cush), Libyans probably Somalis.
- v10 Mercenaries sided with Egypt; receive same judgment as Egypt.
- v11-12 “Virgin daughter” – graphic image of innocents being violated / brutalized.
No balm = no help, no healing; only mourning and lament. Utter defeat.
Extrabiblical history suggest not a single Egyptian soldier survived the battle
- v13 Beginning of second prophecy (poem).

Context: after Battle of Carchemish, Babylonians press attack to Egypt.
Captures Ashkelon c. 604BC; battles Neco at border c. 601BC.
Ultimately invades c. 568BC.
- v14 Same cities mentioned in Ch 44 – where Jewish refugees have settled.
- v15 As with first poem, no description of battle – scene flips from prep to aftermath.

*Suggestion in the Hebrew that YHWH drove HIM (singular) away (not them).
“Drove” is used in Ezekiel 34 in the sense of driving cattle.
Could this mean that YHWH drove Apis (Egyptian bull god) from the land?
Our God (the true and living God) beat up your god?*

- v16 Could be the mercenaries referenced above OR Jewish refugees.
- v17 Word play alert: the Pharaoh referenced was named “Hophra”
 “Hophra” in Hebrew is similar to word for “bypass”
 “Pharaoh Bypass” let the time to prepare pass by!
 Time to prepare could mean time to prepare militarily or spiritually (ie repent)
- v18 Judgment is coming – for Egypt’s sins in general or killing Josiah specifically?
 Either way, God’s judgment is coming and Babylonian army will deliver it.
 Tabor & Carmel are at opposite ends of Jezreel Valley – easily recognizable.
 Nebuchadnezzar will loom over Egypt just as dramatically!
- v19 Could refer to population of Egypt OR Jewish refugees IN Egypt.
 Reference to Jewish landmarks (v18) probably suggests the latter?
- v20 “Heifer” could be another (derogatory) reference to Apis the bull god?
 “Destruction” could also refer to biting / stinging from a horsefly —
 painful but ultimately not fatal. If so, historically accurate at least...
- v21 “Fat bulls” = fattened calves ready for the butcher. Not going to fight.
- v22-23 NIV = serpents are fleeing attack. NKJV = serpents attacking.
 NKJV probably fits better? Together w/ woodcutter @ smooth, easy attack...
 Egyptian people are dense forest; no match for professional woodcutters.
- v24 Compare v19 (above) – dwelling IN Egypt vs. daughter OF Egypt/
 Likely different groups but same destiny (brought low).
- v25-26a Amon = Egyptian sun god; shows extent of attack. Earlier focus = Memphis.
 Mention of Amon of No (Thebes) shows Nebuchadnezzar coming south.
- v26b But destruction not total nor permanent.
 Provocative: most study bibles cross-reference Isaiah Ch 19 & Ezekiel Ch 29.
 Parallel passages offering similar hope for Egypt’s future.
 But Is 19:16-17 have no ancient fulfillment; only contemporary fulfillment!
 Is 19:18-22 – sounds like the end of Jer 46 but clearly ref Millennial Kingdom!
 See also Joel 3:19 re end times fulfillment.
 Ez 29:11-13 also no ancient fulfillment; only after 2nd Coming!
 Walk all that back to Jer Ch 46, we now read end of chapter w different eyes!
- v27-28 “Jacob shall return, have rest, and be at ease...” – hasn’t happened yet!
 But one day it most certainly will! Maranatha!

Application *How big is the God we worship?*