

Jeremiah 47:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it.

Analysis

How can it be quiet, seeing the LORD hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it. God Himself answers the plea from verse 6, explaining why the sword cannot yet be sheathed. "How can it be quiet" (eikh tishqoti, אֵיךְ תִּשְׁקוֹטִי) poses a rhetorical question: cessation is impossible because divine commission remains unfulfilled. The sword acts under orders; it cannot rest until completing its assigned task.

"The LORD hath given it a charge" (vaYHVH tzivvah, וַיְהוָה צִוָּה) uses the verb צָוָה (tzavah) meaning to command, commission, or appoint. This is the same verb used for God's commands to Israel—authoritative, binding instruction that must be obeyed. The sword has received divine orders "against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore"—specific targets including both the city and the coastal region. Until these targets face complete judgment, the sword must continue its work.

"There hath he appointed it" (sham yedah, שָׁם יָדָה) uses יָדָה (yaad), meaning to appoint, designate, or assign. This verb emphasizes purposeful divine determination—God has assigned the sword to specific tasks against specific targets. The final word "there" (שָׁם, sham) reinforces geographic specificity: the coastal regions and Philistine cities are the appointed location. This verse reveals crucial theology: historical events—even violent conquest—occur under divine sovereignty. Nothing happens by chance; God appoints times, places, and instruments for His purposes.

Historical Context

Ashkelon's archaeological record confirms violent destruction in the late 7th or early 6th century BCE, consistent with Babylonian conquest. Excavations reveal a destruction layer with evidence of fire, along with Babylonian-period pottery and artifacts indicating occupation change. The city's strategic coastal location made it important for controlling trade routes and access to Egypt, explaining Babylon's interest in subduing it thoroughly.

The phrase "the sea shore" (or "seacoast") encompasses Philistine territories along the Mediterranean. These coastal cities controlled maritime trade and provided potential naval bases or points of Egyptian influence. Babylonian strategy required neutralizing coastal strongholds to prevent Egyptian interference or rebellion supplied by sea. The systematic campaign against coastal cities appears in Babylonian records and aligns with Jeremiah's description of prolonged, thorough conquest.

This concluding verse of the oracle against Philistia (47:1-7) emphasizes divine sovereignty—a theme throughout Jeremiah's oracles against the nations (chapters 46-51). Each nation faces judgment for specific sins under God's appointed time and means. The Philistines, who had oppressed Israel for centuries and worshiped false gods, now face the same divine justice Israel experienced. God's impartiality demonstrates His universal moral governance: all nations stand accountable before Him.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that historical events occur under divine appointment affect our understanding of current world events?

2. In what ways should God's sovereign control over judgment encourage both holy fear and ultimate trust in His purposes?
3. What does the complete fulfillment of prophecy against ancient nations teach about the certainty of God's future judgments?

Interlinear Text

אֵין	תִּשְׁקֵט טִי	יִהְיֶה ה	צָוָה	אֶל לָה	
H349	How can it be quiet	seeing the LORD	hath given it a charge	H0	H413
	H8252	H3068	H6680		
אֶשְׁקֵל וְ	וְאֶל	ח וֶרֶף	הַיָּם	שָׁמַיִם	יָצָא:
against Ashkelon	H413	shore	and against the sea	H8033	there hath he appointed
H831		H2348	H3220		H3259

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 14:17 (Parallel theme): Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land; so that I cut off man and beast from it:

Micah 6:9 (References Lord): The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

Isaiah 10:6 (Parallel theme): I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.