

Zephaniah 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant.

Analysis

Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites (וְהֵיכָל הַיָּם יִשְׁבֵּי קֶרֶתִּים goy Kerethim)—The Cherethites were Philistines from Crete (Ezekiel 25:16, Amos 9:7), giving archaeological support to their Aegean origin. The 'woe' (hoy) is a funeral lament, mourning them as already dead.

O Canaan, the land of the Philistines—Calling Philistia 'Canaan' identifies them with the Canaanites under Joshua's conquest (Joshua 13:2-3). Just as God drove out Canaan to give Israel the land, so He will dispossess Philistia. The promise **I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant** (ve'ha'avadtikh me'ein yoshev) was literally fulfilled—Philistines ceased to exist as a distinct people after successive conquests.

Historical Context

The Philistines originated from the 'sea peoples' migrations (c. 1200 BC) from the Aegean. By Roman times, the term 'Palestine' (from Philistia) referred to the region, but the ethnic Philistines had vanished, absorbed into surrounding populations—fulfilling Zephaniah's prophecy of total destruction.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's complete judgment on Philistia demonstrate that nations and empires are not permanent fixtures despite their apparent strength?
2. What warnings does the extinction of entire people groups offer to nations that persistently oppose God's purposes?
3. How should believers respond to enemies of the gospel—with triumphalism or with gospel urgency before judgment falls?

Interlinear Text

ה וי	יושב:	חַ בָּל	הַי מ	ג וי
Woe	thee that there shall be no inhabitant	coast	of the sea	the nation
H1945	H3427	H2256	H3220	H1471
כְּרִיתִים	דָּבָר	יְהוָה	עָלֶיךָ מ	כָּנַ עַן
of the Cherethites	the word	of the LORD	H5921	is against you O Canaan
H3774	H1697	H3068		H3667
אֶרֶץ	פְּלִשְׁתִּים	וְהָאֲבִדְתִּי יָךְ	מֵאֵין	
the land	of the Philistines	I will even destroy	H369	
H776	H6430	H6		
	יושב:			
	thee that there shall be no inhabitant			
	H3427			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 25:16 (References Lord): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea coast.

Jeremiah 47:7 (References Lord): 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.

Amos 3:1 (Word): Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

Joshua 13:3 (References Lord): From Sihor, which is before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites: