

**Jeremiah 47: 1-7; “The Sights & Sounds of Judgment”, Sermon #54 in the series –
“Heart Lessons Learned for a Prophet and the People of God”, Delivered
by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 8th, 2020,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

The title of this message is – The Sights and Sounds of Judgment. Do you see them? Do you hear them coming, in relation to our country? The sights and sounds of judgment in the text that we are studying, were the sights and sounds of national judgment which would come to the Philistines of that day. And the prospect of it caused them to react with expressions of agonizing pain. These words are written for our instruction so that we might get an idea of what wicked and unbelieving people will experience on the Day of Judgment; that Day when Christ returns; that great Day when all the dead will be raised and all of us will stand before Almighty God. What will be your experience on that great Day, the Day when our Lord Jesus Christ appears? Are you ready for that Day? Well, I want you to know that you can personally find everlasting hope and joy if you will heed the warning, and repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. You will find salvation.

So, as we look at this passage we find that there were 3 sights and sounds of judgment which these Philistines were warned of, which I would have all of us consider at this hour as well. They are: 1st of all – The sight and sound of waters rising. 2nd – The sight and sound of horses and chariots coming. And 3rd – The sight and sound of the sword being drawn. I want you to understand that national judgments, such as we are seeing come upon our country in our days, have come because many people in this nation have not taken notice of their need to repent. And so, they falsely assume that good things will continue to come to them in the future, just as they have always have been there for them in the past. But we need to see that we as a nation, and we as individual people, are always in God’s hands, either for mercy or for judgment. So let us think about these things together for a few minutes so that each one here might know God’s saving mercy.

1st of all – Let’s think together of the Sight and Sound of Waters Rising.

Verses 1 and 2 say – “The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.” “Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, waters rise out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood; they shall overflow the land and all that is in it, the city and those who dwell within; then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.’” So, we see here that the Philistines had not yet been attacked by Pharaoh. They were at that time living in prosperity and ease. And yet, Jeremiah predicted that judgment was coming. It is called here: Waters from the North; meaning, the Chaldean soldiers under Nebuchadnezzar. John Gill says – “The Jews, in their chronicle, say that this was fulfilled in the eighth year of Zedekiah, when Pharaoh came out of Egypt, while the Chaldeans were besieging Jerusalem; which they hearing of it, broke up the siege, and went forth to meet him; upon which he went to Gaza, and destroyed that, and returned to Egypt again.”

He further says that this Pharaoh was Pharaohnecho, and that he fell upon Gaza, and smote it, either when he came to Carchemish, or when he returned from there, after he had slain Josiah. He says that this prophecy was delivered out before anything of this kind happened, and when the Philistines were in the utmost peace. They were at that time in no fear or expectation of destruction; and the smiting of this single city by the king of Egypt was foretold, as the forerunner and pledge of a greater destruction of the land by the king of Babylon, next mentioned. In our text, in verse 7, Jeremiah says that the Lord had given His sword of judgment a charge against Ashkelon and the seashore; that He had appointed this national judgment

against the Philistines because of their many sins. The waters were going to rise out of the north and would become to them an overwhelming flood, to overflow the land and all that was in it.

This is not speaking of literal waters but the physical “waters” of these Egyptian soldiers coming against them. People are often called “waters” in prophetic scripture. Revelation 17: 15 – “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” Waters are sometimes in the scriptures, a word picture of the great calamities and judgments which God would send upon a people for their sins. You see this in Isaiah 43: 1-4. “But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.’” “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.” “When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” “For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place.” “Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life.”

It is good to meditate upon these words, which teach us so much. God has created us all for His glory, but you can see here very clearly that some whom He has created, He has also redeemed. Redemption is being spoken about here, and you can see that it is particular because those whom God has redeemed He calls “Mine”. These persons are going to pass through the waters, that is, through the calamities and trials of life, and even national judgments; and those who belong to Him, these rivers will not overflow them, even so. God will be with them. When we think about the Philistines, the case is different, because they did not belong to Him. They were not His special people. In a similar way we can also say that “not all Israel are Israel”, because some, perhaps even many Jews, thus far in the history of the world, could not say that the reality of these precious promises was theirs, for they had not believed in them, and as such, they were not redeemed personally, even though these promises were given to all Jewish persons during that time, and are extended to them, even now, in Christ.

Look with me at Psalm 124, verses 1-8. “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, Let Israel now say – If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over over our soul; then the swollen waters would have gone over our soul.” “Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as a prey to their teeth.” “Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped.” “Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” So, I want you to notice that the Lord must be on our side, and we on His side, if we do not want the calamities of life and the sins of our hearts to overwhelm us, and bring us to eternal judgment.

If you fear eternal judgment, you must learn to pray, and cry out to God for mercy and grace. And while you are doing that, you need to remember what Christ has done for you, a sinner. Look at Psalm 69, verses 1-9. “Save me, O God!” “For the waters have come up to my neck.” “I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.” “I am weary with my crying; my throat is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for my God.” “Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they are mighty who would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully; though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it.” “O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You.” “Let not those who wait for You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me; let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.” “Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face.” “I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother’s children; because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.”

Now, this was a Psalm which was written by David, a man after God's own heart. And yet he speaks of God's knowing his foolishness and his sins not being hidden from Him. But even though this Psalm was written by David, there are many verses in it where we hear the voice of Christ speaking. In fact, we find that verse 9 was fulfilled in a much greater sense by the Lord Jesus, than it was in David, for the very words are quoted in John chapter 2 as regarding His tremendous zeal which He had, for a pure worship to be taking place in the temple. He did not want His Father's house to be house of merchandise. He was zealous for truth and righteousness, and as a result, the waters of wicked people judging Him and putting Him to death rose up against Him. But all of this was a part of God's purpose; that these things came to pass in order that you and I might be saved.

God the Father would use these events of wicked men crucifying the Lord Jesus, and on the cross He Himself would pour out His righteous wrath upon His own dear Son, there at the cross. I am trying to show you that it was there that God would have you the sinner look. He would have you to behold the pure and perfect motives and actions of His Son, who suffered in your place, so that you might learn to see that it is only Christ who can save you and cleanse you from your own foolishness; the many sinful thoughts of your own heart, and sinful actions which flow from your heart. Any person who wants to avoid coming into eternal judgment must learn to pray, thinking of how Christ has fulfilled the law on their behalf; that there was no foolishness or sin in Him. They must see how the waters came up to His neck, how He was hated without a cause, for your sake, so that you who have been very foolish, sinful, and unbelieving, would be able to be forgiven and become wise and holy through His grace. If you believe that He suffered in your place, you will not come into judgment.

2nd – The Sight and Sound of Judgment which was heard by the Philistines was the sound of horses and chariots. (verses 3 and 4)

Verse 3 says – “At the noise of the stamping hooves of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers will not look back for their children, lacking courage, because of the day that comes to plunder all the Philistines, to cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains; for the Lord shall plunder the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.” So, the noise that they would hear when judgment was coming against them was the stamping of the horses coming. It would be the rushing and rumbling of the chariots that would bring terror to their hearts on that day. So great would their terror be, that they would not look back for their children because, it says, they would be lacking in courage.

Oh, how great is our need as a nation, to understand that God is at war with all sin. Righteousness exalts a nation. Sin is a reproach to any people. God does not have any lack of ability to be able to use sinful and wicked people among us, or sinful people from other nations, to chasten and punish, or even destroy our nation if we will not repent. Jeremiah 46: 12 says – “The nations have heard of your shame and your cry has filled the land; for mighty man has stumbled against the mighty; they both have fallen together.” One of God's greatest earthly judgments against any people is war. The anticipation of being overrun by a foreign barbaric invader is most agonizing. Everything of value may be lost; home, wife, children, and one's own life.

There is this sound, of the rushing of the chariots, which is coming to our ears; the realization that armed forces, might actually come against us. In our own case, in this country, it is apparent that God has been causing us to hear the sound of rioters; rebellious revolutionary people who live in our own dear country; people who actually hate our Constitutional Republic and everything which is right, that Christians stand for. They are even in these days, rising up against our institutions and our government, and they threaten the stability of our way of life. And we are also finding, to our great consternation, that certain people in public office, on the local, State, and National levels, are not only just standing by and doing nothing, but they

actually approve of what is happening, and they are promoting it, to the harm of people and the destruction of businesses. What will prevent the total chaos of revolution from taking place? Where do all these things come from? Well, you need to understand they only come when God ordains that they come, in relation to our sin and lack of repentance.

Listen to Amos chapter 3, verse 6 – “If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?” “If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?” Or Isaiah 45: 1-7 – “Thus says the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held – to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut: I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron.” “I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.” “For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.” “I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me.” “I will gird you, though you have not known Me, that they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides me.” “I am the Lord, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things.”

So, what we need to understand is that God can rush to judgment against us if He wants to, and He can also rush to bring salvation if he purposes to do so. Let me give you an example of this. Turn over to 2nd Kings 6: 8-23 with me. “Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, ‘My camp will be in such and such a place.’” “And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, ‘Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there.’” “Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him.” “Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice.” “Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, ‘Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?’” “And one of his servants said, ‘None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.’” “So he said, ‘Go and see where is, that I may send and get him.’” “And it was told him, saying, ‘Surely he is in Dothan.’”

“Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city.” “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?” “So he answered, ‘Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’” “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.” “So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, and said, ‘Strike this people with blindness according to the word of Elisha.’”

“Now Elisha said to them, ‘This is not the way, nor is this the city.’” “Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek.” “But he led them to Samaria.” “So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, ‘Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.’” “And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; and there they were, inside Samaria!” “Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, ‘My father, shall I kill them?’” “Shall I kill them?” “But he answered, ‘You shall not kill them.’” “Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow?” “Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.” “Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master.” “So the bands of Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.”

Now I hope that you can see how wonderfully sovereign God is, in relation to the people and nations that came against His people in that time. The king of Syria who was waging war against Israel could not figure out why his best laid plans were understood by Israel; why he could not make any military headway against them. He learned, from someone in the know, that it was all due to God's revealing the king of Syria's plans to Elisha the prophet, so that when Elisha knew what the king's intention was, he would warn the king of Israel about it, and therefore it would not come to pass, or be successful. The king of Syria should have understood that God was not only not on his side, but that He was against him in his plans to harm Israel. But he stupidly went on thinking in his own selfish and sinful way.

This, you should know, is the natural tendency of people who do not know the Lord; that even when they hear that God has been, and He is, intending to thwart their best laid plans to do something wrong, to do harm to God's people, yet they will keep up their own false and sinful way of thinking about it, so that God then knows that He will have to take further steps to thwart them according to His purposes of mercy in relation to His people. For He always purposes good to His people in their salvation, and their being made more holy, their souls being kept, and their being preserved to eternal glory. So here we read that the king of Syria sent an army of men to find out where Elisha was, so that he could get rid of him. But God was still watching out for Elisha. And yet Elisha's servant did not understand just how much God was watching over his master.

When he came outside and saw the great army which had been sent to get Elisha he said – Alas, my master, what shall we do? But Elisha wasn't afraid at all. He simply said to him – Do not be afraid, for there are more who are with us than those who are with them. And he prayed that God would open his servant's eyes to see just how great God's saving and keeping power was, in relation to himself, and the people of Israel. When God opened his eyes, he saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha. This, I believe, has lessons for us. When the odds seem completely against God's servant and God's people, they should still understand that God Himself is keeping watch over them, and He can enlist the help of many thousands of angels to secure a favorable outcome to our most difficult situations; an outcome which will totally surprise us, and cause us to know that we are continually in His good care.

In fact, we can go even farther than this, because this story goes further. Elisha prayed to God that He would strike those soldiers with blindness who had come to get him. And so God did strike them with blindness. And Elisha was able to then lead the whole army of them back to Samaria to stand in the presence of the king of Israel. And the king said – "Shall I kill them"? And Elisha said – No, you shall not kill them. You would not kill prisoners of war that you have taken, would you? Rather, set food and water before them, and after that, send them back to their master, the king of Syria so that he can see what great things in mercy He had done for them. And so, this was what was done, and it says that the Syrian raiders came no more into the land of Israel.

What can learn from this? We should see is that this is how great God's wisdom and power are in the gospel. That if you hear the sound of horses and chariots, and you believe that your godly pastor and people are being given over to the forces of an enemy, should you panic? No, you should remember the words of Psalm 125, verse 1 – "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mt. Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever." "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever." Remember the words of Romans 12: 17-21 – "Repay no one evil for evil." "Have regard good things in the sight of all men." "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." "Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.'" "Do not be overcome by evil, but

overcome evil with good.” This is how you and I should react to all of the strange things which are coming upon our dear country at this time. We may not have political power in the way that we would want it, but we have the power of God and the wisdom of God which has been given to us in His word. Let us be strong and confident to do what is good and what is right, even when so many are perpetrating what is false and what is evil. Let us heap coals of fire on their heads in this holy way.

And then 3rd – Let’s think together of the sight and sound of the sword being drawn. (verses 5-7)

“Baldness has come upon Gaza, Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley.” “How long will you cut yourself?” “O you sword of the Lord, how long until you are quiet?” “Put yourself up into your scabbard, rest and be still!” “How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord has given it a charge against Ashkelon and against the seashore?” “There He has appointed it.” Here we see that Jeremiah wishes that the sword of the Lord would be quiet, but how could it be, he says, for God had given it a charge. He appointed things to be this way. These Philistines who were idolaters, who would cling to what was false, would be punished. But even on the verge of their utter destruction, God was still reasoning with them. How long would they cut themselves? Judgment will always be overwhelming and eternal as long as a person reacts wrongly to the guilt of their own sins.

Sometimes when people react wrongly, they cut themselves. When they see that they cannot find the meaning of life, they cut themselves. When they see that they cannot measure up to God’s expectations or keep His holy law, they cut themselves. When they see that the gods that they have made for themselves will not answer them, then they cut themselves. When their parents and others tell them that they are sinners who need a Savior and that there is a fundamental problem with their heart, they cut themselves. You should understand that God will never ask you to disfigure or cut yourself when you see the greatness of your sins. He will command you to cut off your most beloved sins, but He will not ask you to disfigure His own handiwork. Suicide or self-mutilation is never the right response to frustration.

What is the right response is to look to Jesus to see what He has done for you. He was scourged; His flesh was cut and torn, and He was cut by the crown of thorns, and He was pierced through for your transgressions. He was marred more than any man. Will you not see that Jesus took your place in judgment, and believe in Him? It was God the Father who gave the Lord Jesus to have His beard plucked out, and who gave Him to be nailed on a cross for your sins. It was against Jesus that the sword of the Lord was given charge.

Sinner, will this not suffice for you, to think that Jesus felt more than you could ever feel, in order to atone for your sins? He felt more pain for your sins and felt the burden of all of the wrath of God being poured over Him for your sake. And so, will you not come to Him, and receive Him, and you will come to know the blessed sights and sounds of salvation. You will be able to speak the words of Psalm 31: 11 and 12 – “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent.” “O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.”