

Tuesday 10th August 2021

2 Kings 24: 1 *“During Jehoiakim’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But then he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar.”*

2 Samuel 5: 18, 19 *“Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David enquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?’ The Lord answered him, ‘Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you.’”*

Joshua 22: 11 *“And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar in the land of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them”*

“Jaw jaw always better than war war.” Winston Churchill 27th June 1954.

The Old Testament is full of accounts of battles between tribes and nations. Jehoiakim’s reign as king of Judah was marked by the first invasion by the Babylonians in 605 BC. This was God’s response to the evil that had been done in Jerusalem by the Israelites. The invaders sacked the city and carried off all the treasures from the temple that Solomon had so lavishly built.

The Philistines were never in God’s good books so he was happy to support David in his battles. David was different in that he listened carefully to God’s instructions and followed them to the letter. After the battle he gave the glory to God not himself.

But perhaps the message for us as we face our daily battles against sin, unbelievers and the graceless can be found in the story of the entry to the promised land in Canaan. Here rather than rushing to take up arms a period of explanation, negotiation and acceptance averts conflict. Soothing words, a willingness to listen and compromise is always going to be better, more in tune with God’s Word, than strife.