

Pentwater Bible Church

Book of Ezekiel

Message 62

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel

Message Sixty Two

THE PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT PT. I

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Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 29: 1-12

In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt; ³ speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great monster that lieth in the midst of his rivers, that hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. ⁴ And I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales; and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, with all the fish of thy rivers which stick unto thy scales. ⁵ And I will cast thee forth into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open field; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered; I have given thee for food to the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens. ⁶ And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. ⁷ When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and didst rend all their shoulders; and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand. ⁸ Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and will cut off from thee man and beast. ⁹ And the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. Because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it; ¹⁰ therefore, behold, I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from the tower of Seveneh even unto the border of Ethiopia. ¹¹ No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. ¹² And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of the countries that are desolate; and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be a desolation forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries (ASV, 1901).

JUDGMENT ON EGYPT

Ezekiel 29:1-2

In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt (ASV, 1901).

This begins a four chapter judgment upon Egypt. This is the longest prophecy that the Lord gave Ezekiel about any nation. It begins in chapter twenty-nine and continues through chapter thirty-two. The Old Testament has over 700 references to the land of Egypt. Of these, there are about 250 prophecies specifically concerning Egypt. Many of

these predictions deal with the present day situation. The parallel passages to be coupled with the Ezekiel chapters are the prophetic pronouncements in Isaiah 19:1-22, Daniel 11:4-8, 11-13, and Joel 3:19.

The prophecy was given on January 5, 585 B.C. which was one year and two days after Nebuchadnezzar had breached the walls in Jerusalem and seven months before it was destroyed. All the prophecies to Egypt brought together give us a large and long picture of God's judgment on Egypt from the time of the Babylonian captivity through the present day and lastly in the Messianic Kingdom. Some brief history of the military events in the Mid-East up to this time are helpful to gain a clearer understanding of the totality of God's judgments against Egypt.

Pharaoh Neco was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. and died in 595 B.C. His son Psammetic II succeeded him in 594 B.C. He died in 588 B.C. and his son Pharaoh Hophra (Jeremiah 44:30) followed him. He led a siege against Tyre and Sidon, and was unsuccessful against Cyrene. He was deposed by Amasis in 569 B.C. King Zedekiah and his predecessors Hezekiah (Isaiah 30) and Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 46) sought assistance from Egypt against the Babylonians. Ezekiel prophesied that Egypt would not provide any meaningful support in Israel's time of need. God condemned Egypt through other prophets for this as well (Isaiah 31:1; Jeremiah 2:36). The Babylonian Jewish Talmud predicts parallel judgments and says in Sota 9a that there have been and will be three general and large punishments to Egypt. The first was at the time of the Exodus. The second was during the days of Pharaoh Necho and the last during the Messianic Kingdom. Pharaoh Thutmose III was defeated by God when He led the Jews out of Egypt during the Exodus. Necho was defeated during the battle of Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel describes another time when Alexander the Great conquered Egypt and one of his generals controlled Egypt after him.

Daniel 11:4-8

⁴And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion wherewith he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides these. ⁵And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion. ⁶And at the end of years they shall join themselves together; and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the strength of her arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm; but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in those times. ⁷But out of a shoot from her roots shall one stand up in his place, who shall come unto the army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail. ⁸And also their gods, with their molten images, and with their goodly vessels of silver and of gold, shall he carry captive into Egypt; and he shall refrain some years from the king of the north. ⁹And he shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but he shall return into his own land.

After defeating the Persian king Darius III at Issus in 333 B.C., Alexander took almost all of Syria and areas to the south, including Judah, virtually without a fight. He was forced to

do battle only at Tyre and Gaza. He then continued into Egypt, where, in addition to being proclaimed a new pharaoh, he was designated son of the god Amon and founded the city of Alexandria, named after himself. From Egypt he continued his campaigns of conquest to the east.

One successor to Alexander was Ptolemy who took control of Egypt and surrounding areas. Among those neighboring regions was the small stretch of land occupied by the ethnic enclave of Jews in Jerusalem and its environs. As a result, Ptolemy became master of the large Jewish population in Egypt and also of the Jewish people in the Holy Land. He struggled for a long time to gain these lands, and he campaigned in Judea a number of times. He treated the Jews well and as a result many went to Egypt to be in a favorable government.

The last pharaoh Farouk (1920-1965) as well as presidents, Nasser (1918-1970) and Sadat (1918-1981) went to war with Israel on four occasions causing heavy losses for Egypt which devastated their economy. This caused the Egyptians to develop a healthy fear of the Israelis due to their military prowess. The Lord prophesied this fear through Isaiah.

Isaiah 19:16-17

¹⁶In that day shall the Egyptians be like unto women; and they shall tremble and fear because of the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of hosts, which he shaketh over them. ¹⁷And the land of Judah shall become a terror unto Egypt; every one to whom mention is made thereof shall be afraid, because of the purpose of Jehovah of hosts, which he purposeth against it (ASV, 1901).

In the Messianic kingdom there will finally be peace between Israel and Egypt initially by their destruction during the Tribulation. Then they will convert, speak Hebrew and become amongst the sheep Gentiles judged by the Lord Jesus in the seventy-five day interval just before the Messianic Kingdom starts. This judgment will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat on the east side of the Temple mount.

In the Messianic Kingdom peace will finally come between Israel and Egypt when the Egyptians worship the same God as Israel. Through Jesus the Messiah, will peace finally come. For the first forty years of the Kingdom, Egypt will be desolate and the Egyptians will be dispersed all over the world. But afterwards, the Egyptians will be regathered, becoming a kingdom again. The various prophecies can be attributed to some events near to the time they were given and also to a much later time as the twentieth century and beyond.

PHARAOH HOPHRA THE SEA MONSTER

Ezekiel 29:3-5

³Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great monster that lieth in the midst of his rivers, that hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. ⁴And I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales; and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, with all the fish of thy rivers which stick unto thy scales ⁵And I will cast thee forth into the

wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open field; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered; I have given thee for food to the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens (ASV, 1901).

God likens Hophra to a sea monster in the Nile. The Hebrew word Tannin describes large reptiles like crocodiles. The Nile crocodile can reach 16 ft. in length and weigh 1,653 lbs. They are opportunistic predators and a very aggressive. They are capable of taking almost any animal within its range. The Nile crocodile is an ambush predator that can wait for hours, days and even weeks for the suitable moment to attack. It is fitting that the Lord refers to Pharaoh with this comparison. The Egyptians frequently depicted themselves as crocodiles because of their strength and ferocity. Pharaoh was considered a god by the Egyptians and therefore he must have created the Nile (Ezekiel 29:9). God says the He will *put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales; and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, with all the fish of thy rivers which stick unto thy scales.* God said that he would then drag him as a fish out of the Nile with other fish attached to him and cast him into the desert (wilderness). God would defeat Egypt despite their strength and pride.

EGYPT'S SINS

Ezekiel 29:6-9

⁶And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am Jehovah, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. ⁷When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and didst rend all their shoulders; and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

The first characterization the Lord makes of Egypt is making reference to them as a *staff of reed to the house of Israel*. A staff was used as a walking stick for support. Israel leaned upon Egypt for support when they revolted against Babylon. Egypt actually provided very little support for Israel which was as fragile as a mere reed which grew in abundance on the shores of the Nile River. When Israel actually reached out to Egypt their support was far less than what they had promised. When Israel exerted pressure on Egypt to help they snapped like a reed and Israel was unable to stand. God used the same language that was a proverb which characterized Egypt as unreliable. This prophecy was making reference to Egypt's weak attempt to help Jerusalem during Nebuchadnezzar's siege (Jeremiah 37:4-8). Egypt was like a reed which one would try to lean on only to find it was weak and ineffective therefore unable to give support. They were worse than no support at all. By promising to support Israel they had lulled Israel into a sense of security and encouraged them to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. So when Egypt did not provide any support and even retreated to their own country from Judea (Jeremiah 37:5-7) Israel was left unprotected and faced Nebuchadnezzar. So Egypt was a weak splintered reed that not only provides no support but pierces the shoulder of the person that attempts to lean on it.

II Kings 18:20-21

²⁰Thou sayest (but they are but vain words), There is counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou hast rebelled against me? ²¹Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him (ASV, 1901).

THE FALL OF HOPHRA

Ezekiel 29:8-9

⁸Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and will cut off from thee man and beast. ⁹And the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste; and they shall know that I am Jehovah. Because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it (ASV, 1901).

God therefore promised Egypt and specifically Hophra a tragic and violent death as a result of his treatment of the people of Jerusalem. He was defeated at Cyrene (modern Lybia), dethroned and strangled by Amasis and his followers. He was an Egyptian general who had led Egyptian forces. This passage does not name Amasis. It just says that because of what Hophra had done *the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste*. Hophra was so prideful claiming to be the god of the river Nile. When in fact there is only one God and it was He who as Creator made all things including the Nile. Hophra was blasphemous in his pretensions of prideful affirmation of capabilities that only God can carry out. As a result of Hophra's defeat he would realize that it is Jehovah that is the Creator and has carried out the devastation and desolation of Egypt as well as Hophra's downfall.

EGYPT A DESOLATION FOR FORTY YEARS

Ezekiel 29:10-12

¹⁰therefore, behold, I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from the tower of Seveneh even unto the border of Ethiopia. ¹¹No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. ¹²And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of the countries that are desolate; and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be a desolation forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries (ASV, 1901).

The ruin of the land would be so thorough that it would reach from Migdol, which was the northernmost town to Syene the southernmost town in Egypt or the entire country. Complete decimation of all plant and animal life was declared by God. Since there has never been a forty-year period of uninhabitation in Egypt it is yet future and must mean the Messianic Kingdom. Ezekiel is commanded by God to prophesy against Egypt and describe a coming dispersion of the Egyptians from their land because of their long history of mistreatment of Israel. The land of Egypt will suffer a period of total desolation which will last for forty years. During that time the Egyptians will be scattered all over the world. This will be just like Israel was in the diaspora before for 2534 years. This is the time starting with the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C. until they again became a sovereign nation again on May 14, 1948.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE PROPHECY AGAINST THE PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT CONT.

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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