

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Ezekiel Chapter 29-30

3/2/16

Ezekiel Chapter 29

Judgment on Pharaoh - Verses 1-16

¹ In the tenth year, in the tenth month on the twelfth day, the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. ³ Speak to him and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, you great monster lying among your streams. You say, "The Nile belongs to me; I made it for myself." ⁴ But I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales. I will pull you out from among your streams, with all the fish sticking to your scales. ⁵ I will leave you in the desert, you and all the fish of your streams. You will fall on the open field and not be gathered or picked up. I will give you as food to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky. ⁶ Then all who live in Egypt will know that I am the LORD. "You have been a staff of reed for the people of Israel. ⁷ When they grasped you with their hands, you splintered and you tore open their shoulders; when they leaned on you, you broke and their backs were wrenched. ⁸ "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will bring a sword against you and kill both man and beast. ⁹ Egypt will become a desolate wasteland. Then they will know that I am the LORD. "Because you said, "The Nile is mine; I made it," ¹⁰ therefore I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt a ruin and a desolate waste from Migdol to Aswan, as far as the border of Cush. ¹¹ The foot of neither man nor beast will pass through it; no one will live there for forty years. ¹² I will make the land of Egypt desolate among devastated lands, and her cities will lie desolate forty years among ruined cities. And I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries.

29:1 Chapters 29-32 contain seven prophecies, all dealing with judgment on Egypt. This is probably the first prophecy that was given by Ezekiel in 587 B.C. Hezekiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah (kings of Judah) had all sought help from Egypt despite God's warnings. This prophecy was given for three key reasons: (1) Egypt was an ancient enemy of the Jews, having once enslaved them for more than 400 years; (2) Egypt worshiped many gods; (3) Egypt's wealth and power made it seem like a good ally. Egypt offered to help Judah only because of the benefits it hoped to receive from such an alliance. When the Egyptians didn't get what they hoped for, they bailed out of their agreement without regard to any promises they had made.

29:2 Egypt had great artistic treasures, a flourishing civilization, and world-renowned military power. Unfortunately, it was also evil, egotistical, idolatrous, and it treated slaves cruelly. For those sins God condemned Egypt. At the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C., Babylon crushed Egypt along with Assyria, its rivals for the position of world ruler.

29:9-10 The Nile River was Egypt's pride and joy, a source of life-giving water cutting through the middle of the desert. Rather than thanking God, however, Egypt declared, "The Nile is mine; I made it." We do the same when we say, "This house is mine; I built it," or "I have brought myself to the place where I am today," or "I have built this church, business, or reputation from the ground up." These statements reveal our pride. Sometimes we take for granted what God has given us, thinking we have made it ourselves. Of course, we have put forth a lot of hard effort, but God supplied the resources, gave us the abilities, and provided us with the opportunities to make it happen. Instead of claiming our own greatness, as the Egyptians did, we should proclaim God's greatness and give him the credit. (Migdol is in the north of Egypt, and Aswan in the south. Thus, this meant all of Egypt.)

Verses 13-16

¹³ "Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. ¹⁴ I will bring them back from captivity and return them to Upper Egypt, the land of their ancestry. There they will be a lowly kingdom. ¹⁵ It will be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself above the other nations. I will make it so weak that it will never again rule over the nations. ¹⁶ Egypt will no longer be a source of confidence for the people of Israel but will be a reminder of their sin in turning to her for help. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD."

29:13-16 This 40-year period of desolation in Egypt is hard to pinpoint. Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt around 572 B.C. and carried many people off to Babylon, while others fled for safety to surrounding nations. Approximately 33 years later, Cyrus, king of the Persian Empire, conquered Babylon and allowed the nations that Babylon had conquered to return to their homelands. Adding a possible seven-year regrouping and travel period, this could then make up that 40-year time period. Since that time, Egypt has never returned to its previous dominance as a world power.

Nebuchadnezzar's Reward – Verses 17-21

¹⁷ In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month on the first day, the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸ "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon drove his army in a hard campaign against Tyre; every head was rubbed bare and every shoulder made raw. Yet he and his army got no reward from the campaign he led against Tyre. ¹⁹ Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will carry off its wealth. He will loot and plunder the land as pay for his army. ²⁰ I have given him Egypt as a reward for his efforts because he and his army did it for me, declares the Sovereign LORD. ²¹ "On that day I will make a horn^[c] grow for the Israelites, and I will open your mouth among them. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

29:17-18 This prophecy was given in 571 B.C. and is actually the latest prophecy in Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar had finally conquered Tyre after a long and costly 15-year siege (586-571 B.C.). He had not counted on such an expense, so he went south and conquered Egypt to make up for all he had lost in taking Tyre. Ezekiel placed this prophecy here to describe who would

bring this punishment to Egypt. God was using Nebuchadnezzar, an evil man, as an instrument of his judgment on Tyre, Judah, and Egypt—evil nations themselves. When Babylon didn't recognize God's favor, he judged it, too.

Ezekiel Chapter 30

A Lament Over Egypt

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, prophesy and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'Wail and say, "Alas for that day!" ³ For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near—a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. ⁴ A sword will come against Egypt, and anguish will come upon Cush. When the slain fall in Egypt, her wealth will be carried away and her foundations torn down. ⁵ Cush and Libya, Lydia and all Arabia, Kub and the people of the covenant land will fall by the sword along with Egypt. ⁶ "'This is what the LORD says: "'The allies of Egypt will fall and her proud strength will fail. From Migdol to Aswan they will fall by the sword within her, declares the Sovereign LORD. ⁷ "'They will be desolate among desolate lands, and their cities will lie among ruined cities. ⁸ Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I set fire to Egypt and all her helpers are crushed. ⁹ "'On that day messengers will go out from me in ships to frighten Cush out of her complacency. Anguish will take hold of them on the day of Egypt's doom, for it is sure to come. ¹⁰ "'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'I will put an end to the hordes of Egypt by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. ¹¹ He and his army—the most ruthless of nations—will be brought in to destroy the land. They will draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain. ¹² I will dry up the waters of the Nile and sell the land to an evil nation; by the hand of foreigners I will lay waste the land and everything in it. I the LORD have spoken. ¹³ "'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'I will destroy the idols and put an end to the images in Memphis. No longer will there be a prince in Egypt, and I will spread fear throughout the land. ¹⁴ I will lay waste Upper Egypt, set fire to Zoan and inflict punishment on Thebes. ¹⁵ I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium, the stronghold of Egypt and wipe out the hordes of Thebes. ¹⁶ I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium will writhe in agony. Thebes will be taken by storm; Memphis will be in constant distress. ¹⁷ The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis will fall by the sword, and the cities themselves will go into captivity ¹⁸ Dark will be the day at Tahpanhes when I break the yoke of Egypt there her proud strength will come to an end. She will be covered with clouds, and her villages will go into captivity. ¹⁹ So I will inflict punishment on Egypt, and they will know that I am the LORD.'"

30:1 This is a lament for Egypt and its allies. Because of the Egyptians' pride and idolatry, they would be brought down.

30:12 Egypt's pharaohs claimed that they had made the Nile—the river on which the entire nation depended. If God dried up the Nile, the nation would be doomed.

30:13 The list of cities to be destroyed shows the breadth of the destruction; the drying up of the Nile (30:12) shows its depth. Egypt would be completely incapacitated. This was a clear message to Judah not to trust Egypt for help against the Babylonians.

30:20-21 This message came in 587 B.C. while Jerusalem was under attack from Babylon. Judah had rebelled against Babylon and made an alliance with Egypt in spite of God's warnings (Jeremiah 2:36-37). Pharaoh Hophra made a halfhearted attempt to help Jerusalem, but when Nebuchadnezzar's army turned on him, he fled back to Egypt (Jeremiah 37:5-7). This defeat is what Ezekiel meant when he said that God had "broken the arm of Pharaoh."

Pharaoh's Arms Are Broken

²⁰ In the eleventh year, in the first month on the seventh day, the word of the LORD came to me: ²¹ "Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. It has not been bound up to be healed or put in a splint so that it may become strong enough to hold a sword. ²² Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break both his arms, the good arm as well as the broken one, and make the sword fall from his hand. ²³ I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries. ²⁴ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a mortally wounded man. ²⁵ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall limp. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he brandishes it against Egypt. ²⁶ I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

30:21-26 This prophecy was given to Ezekiel in 587 B.C. God destroyed Egypt's military superiority and gave it to Babylon. God allows nations to rise to power to accomplish a particular purpose, often beyond our immediate understanding. When you read about armies and wars, don't despair. Remember that God is sovereign and in charge of everything, even military might. Besides praying for your military and government leaders, pray that God's greater purposes would be carried out and that his will would be done "on earth as it is in heaven" (see Matthew 6:10).