

EZEKIEL Lesson 29

Ezekiel Chapter 29

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Introduction: In last week's lesson, we studied about the judgment of the king of Tyre and then later the judgment of Zidon. As the prophet had pronounced judgment against various gentile nations, the focus now turns against Egypt. In this chapter is the foretold destruction of Egypt in verses 1-16 and a promise of mercy for Israel at end of the chapter.

I. God Directs Ezekiel To Set His Face Against Egypt's King Pharaoh

Eze 29:1 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Eze 29:2 Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt:

Eze 29:3 Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.

Again, the God spoke to Ezekiel; this time concerning Egypt and Pharaoh himself. The tenth year again references the tenth year since Jehoiachin was taken captive. The tenth month likely is the tenth Hebrew month and corresponds roughly to December and into January. On the twelfth day of that month, God spoke to Ezekiel. As God had pronounced prophecies against other gentile nations of the region, so now the prophecy is against Egypt in general and the pharaoh specifically.

God announced that He was against Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt. What a profound announcement—God is against someone! Evidently, one of the titles Hophra had taken to himself was that of the great dragon in the midst of the Nile River and the fingers of its delta. Moreover, Hophra had the audacity to proclaim that he had created the Nile himself for his own purposes.

Eze 29:4 But 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, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

Eze 29:5 And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.

With an allegorical parable, God described the downfall of Pharaoh Hophra. Like a crocodile being caught with a large hook and rope and dragged out of the river, so

Hophra would be neutralized. The fish of the river 'sticking' (i.e., clinging) to him undoubtedly refers to subordinates and common people who would be caught also.

The actual battle was between Pharaoh Hophra and a coalition of Cyrenian, Libyan, and Greek forces under one Amasis. The battle between Hophra and Amasis was in the western deserts toward Lybia. There, the Egyptian crocodile would be defeated and left to die in the desert sands.

Eze 29:6 And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

Eze 29:7 When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

Egypt would also come to learn the hard way that Jehovah was God Almighty and God alone. Egypt had been a fair-weather ally to Judah in its final years. Yet, Egypt would prove to be no better than a reed along the banks of the Nile. When one leaned upon it for support, it would promptly break. The point is that Egypt was a worthless ally for Judah. The thought is graphic. When one leans upon a reed pole (i.e., like a thin bamboo rod), it will break and the splinters thereof would pierce into the shoulder.

The application is how that Zedekiah had 'leaned' on Egypt for support when Babylon made its final incursion against Judah. Yet, Egypt proved no help and only served to infuriate the Babylonians more. The point is that Judah had turned to Egypt for help and they proved less than worthless. Rather than seeking God for help, Judah and Zedekiah sought to the world for help and it turned to their hurt.

Eze 29:8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee.

Eze 29:9 And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it.

God warned how that He would bring a sword of destruction against Egypt. First, Egypt was defeated by Amasis at Cyrene. Then, Babylon seeing Egypt greatly weakened swept in and further took advantage of the situation. The utter defeat and destruction of Egypt clearly was judgment from God.

Though its fall might be explained away by geopolitical events, the end result clearly was judgment from God. God judges wicked nations. That lesson remains and should be made clear to America.

II. Egypt to Become a Desolate Land

Eze 29:10 Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia.

Eze 29:11 No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it,

neither shall it be inhabited forty years.

Eze 29:12 And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

God announced again that He was against Egypt and would utterly destroy it from one end to the other. The tower of Syene was in the far north in the Suez region. Ethiopia was to the far south. The judgment of God would extend from one end of Egypt to the other. For forty years, Egypt would be desolate. The land, for all practical purposes, would be depopulated. Forty is a general number of judgment in the Bible and for forty years, Egypt would be desolate.

For forty years, the land of Egypt would be empty and desolate. Even as Israel had been scattered across the nations, so Egypt would be scattered for forty years.

Eze 29:13 Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered:

Eze 29:14 And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.

God foretold how that He would regather the Egyptians back to their land from whence they had been scattered. Pathros was an ancient name for the region of Egypt. God again promised to restore Egypt as a nation, but it never again would have the glory it once had. That remains true to this day.

Matthew Henry said this about these verses.

Worldly, carnal minds pride themselves in their property, forgetting that whatever we have, we received it from God, and should use it for God. Why, then, do we boast? Self is the great idol which all the world worships, in contempt of God and his sovereignty. God can force men out of that in which they are most secure and easy. Such a one, and all that cleave to him, shall perish together. Thus end men's pride, presumption, and carnal security. The Lord is against those who do harm to his people, and still more against those who lead them into sin. Egypt shall be a kingdom again, but it shall be the basest of the kingdoms; it shall have little wealth and power. History shows the complete fulfilment of this prophecy. God, not only in justice, but in wisdom and goodness to us, breaks the creature-stays on which we lean, that they may be no more our confidence.

Eze 29:15 It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.

Eze 29:16 And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

From the time after Babylon destroyed Egypt to the present, Egypt has been at best a third-rate nation. It was successively occupied by the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. Egypt languished through the dark and medieval ages and even today is part of the 'third world.' Never again would Egypt conquer other nations, especially Israel.

Moreover, never again would Israel be able to look to Egypt for help. Never again would Israel look to Egypt for deliverance rather than to Jehovah. Israel would learn the hard way that Jehovah was God and He alone.

Eze 29:17 And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Eze 29:18 Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:

The prophet jumps ahead by seventeen years to another similar prophecy, but includes it here to maintain unity of subject. The thought here looks back to when Babylon besieged Tyre and took it with great difficulty. Again Nebuchadrezzar is one and the same as Nebuchadnezzar.

Soldiers wore their helmets so long their heads became bald and their shoulders were made raw from carrying baskets of fill to build siege works around Tyre. Though winning the battle, Babylon found little spoil in proportion to the labor needed to accomplish their victory. Tradition holds that the Tyrians had sent their wealth elsewhere in anticipation of the Babylonian attack.

Eze 29:19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

Eze 29:20 I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.

After the empty victory at Tyre, God directed Babylon to head south toward Egypt. In conquering Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar would find spoil enough to pay his army. God awarded Nebuchadnezzar's forces enough spoil in Egypt for their trouble in judging Tyre on God's behalf.

Eze 29:21 In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

The prophecy looks forward to the restoration of Israel. The return of Jews under Ezra and Nehemiah no doubt are in view, possibly the end-time restoration of Israel. In that day, Jews would realize the truth of the prophecies of Ezekiel and receive them. Restored Israel will know altogether that Jehovah is God alone.

John Gill said this about verse 21.

Ezekiel 29:21

In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth,.... Not at the time of Egypt's destruction, unless it can be thought that this refers to the advancement of Daniel in the court of Babylon; or to the taking of Jehoiachin out of prison, and setting his throne above the rest of the kings; which events came to pass a little after this: but rather this respects the time of Egypt's restoration forty years after, when Cyrus came to the throne, and proclaimed liberty to the Jews to return to their own land, and build their city and temple, under the government of Zerubbabel their prince: besides, it may not be limited to either of these times, but may regard the famous day, when the kingdom of Israel, in a spiritual sense, should flourish under the Messiah, the Horn of salvation, and Branch of David, often promised to bud forth, and was fulfilled in Jesus, [Psa 132:17](#).

"in that day will I bring redemption to the house of Israel."

And I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; in prophecy among them, who after this, might deliver other prophecies, though we have no account of them; or he should have boldness and courage when he and they should see his prophecies fulfilled, by which it would appear that he was a true prophet of the Lord:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; who sent the prophet, and from whom he had these prophecies, and by whom they were fulfilled.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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