

Pentwater Bible Church

Ezekiel Message 65
January 1, 2017



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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Ezekiel

Message Sixty-Five

THE PROPHECY AGAINST EGYPT PT. IV

January 1, 2017

Daniel E. Woodhead

Ezekiel 30: 20-31:9

²⁰And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²¹Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it hath not been bound up, to apply healing medicines, to put a bandage to bind it, that it be strong to hold the sword. ²²Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong arm, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand. ²³And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. ²⁴And 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 shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man. ²⁵And I will hold up the arms of the king of Babylon; and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt. ²⁶And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.

31 *And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²Son of man, say unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude: Whom art thou like in thy greatness? ³Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a forest-like shade, and of high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs. ⁴The waters nourished it, the deep made it to grow: the rivers thereof ran round about its plantation; and it sent out its channels unto all the trees of the field. ⁵Therefore its stature was exalted above all the trees of the field; and its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long by reason of many waters, when it shot them forth. ⁶All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; and under its branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young; and under its shadow dwelt all great nations. ⁷Thus was it fair in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its root was by many waters. ⁸The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it; the fir-trees were not like its boughs, and the plane-trees were not as its branches; nor was any tree in the garden of God like unto it in its beauty. ⁹I made it fair by the multitude of its branches, so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied it (ASV, 1901).*

BABYLON DEFEATS EGYPT

Ezekiel 30:20-21

²⁰And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ²¹Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, it hath not been bound up, to apply healing medicines, to put a bandage to bind it, that it be strong to hold the sword (ASV, 1901).

This is the fourth of seven prophecies given to the prophet Ezekiel by the God of the universe regarding Egypt. It was on April 29, 586 B.C. that he received it. The essence of this particular prophecy against Egypt was the Babylonian's defeat of Egypt and Pharaoh Hophra. Since the "arm" is a term for military power. Breaking it refers to an armed assault which ends the military power of Egypt. The text goes on to elaborate on the imagery of the arm. "*it hath not been bound up, to apply healing medicines, to put a bandage to bind it*" is a direct reference to Egypt's military power being unable to be restored so, *that it be strong to hold the sword*. That is it is ruined to the point of no longer having any power and cannot be revived. This can be traced as the defeat of Pharaoh Hophra who ruled Egypt from 589 to 570 B.C.

EGYPT TO BE DISPERSED

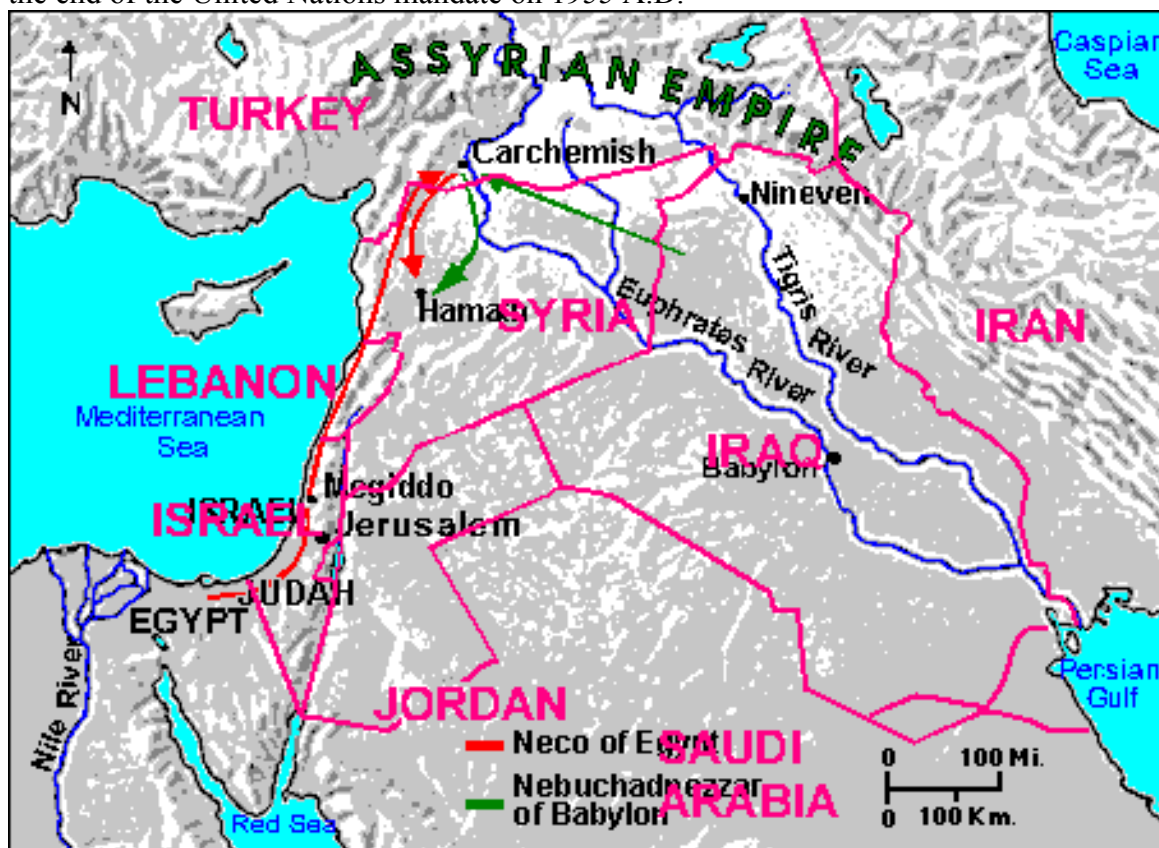
Ezekiel 30:22-24

²²Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong arm, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand. ²³And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. ²⁴And 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 shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man (ASV, 1901).

The text shifts somewhat by referencing Pharaoh's *second* arm. The text says "*I will break his arms, the strong arm, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand .*" In doing so God is making reference to a second and final military defeat of Egypt under Pharaoh Neco who lost the battle of Carchemish which was fought in May and June of 606 B.C. It was also the location of one of the decisive battles in world history. It was here that the armies of Babylon and Egypt met in battle (Jeremiah 46:2). The prophet Isaiah lists Carchemish as one of the kingdoms overthrown by Sargon II of Assyria in 717 BC (Isaiah 10:7-11). Carchemish is also mentioned in Egyptian and Assyrian texts. Egypt was allied with the Assyrians at that time, and sent their armies to help them against the Babylonians. In 609 B.C., the Egyptian army of Pharaoh Necho II was delayed at Megiddo (in Israel) by the forces of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was killed and his army was defeated II Chronicles 35:20-24. The Egyptians were again delayed at Riblah, and Necho arrived at Carchemish too late to aid the Assyrians. Nebuchadnezzar had surprised the Assyrians and had captured Carchemish. When they arrived their was no allied army to help Egypt and Nebuchadnezzar defeated them too. The Egyptian army fled and was scattered among the nations in the Middle East.¹ The Battle of Carchemish decidedly ended the Assyrian Empire and Egypt was reduced to a third rate nation with virtually no military prowess. Within a few years with no means to

¹ Wiseman, D. J. *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.)* In the British Museum, Published by the Trustees of the British Museum, London 1956, pages 24, 25

fend off any invaders they lost their sovereignty and were ruled over successively by the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens (Arabians), Turks and the British until the end of the United Nations mandate on 1955 A.D.



Battle of Carchemish from My Treasure Box at:
<https://treasureboxmy.blogspot.com/2014/12/2-chronicles-battle-at-carchemish.html#.WGiAtrE7kUE>

GOD RAISES UP NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Ezekiel 30:25-26

²⁵And I will hold up the arms of the king of Babylon; and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt. ²⁶And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries; and they shall know that I am Jehovah (ASV, 1901).

The military strength (arms) of Nebuchadnezzar would be enhanced while the Pharaoh of Egypt will fall down and they would then lose their sovereignty. All this military activity is being orchestrated by God so that all the Egyptians would know that it was God who made this happen. God reiterates the dispersion that He would bring upon the citizens of Egypt (Ezekiel 29:12). There 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.

THE ALLEGORY OF PHARAOH'S FALL

Ezekiel 31:1-2

¹ And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, ² Son of man, say unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude: Whom art thou like in thy greatness (ASV, 1901)?

This fifth prophecy regarding Egypt was given to Ezekiel on June 21, 586 B.C., just two months before the destruction of Jerusalem. This message was addressed to Pharaoh Hophra, his army, and the people of Egypt. It essentially begins with a rhetorical question about their attitude toward their security in their military prowess as well as their alliances with other countries in the Middle East. God asks them, "Who are you to be compared with in your greatness?" Egypt thought they were the most powerful nation and were invincible.

GOD DESCRIBES THE GREATNESS OF ASSYRIA

Ezekiel 31:3-9

³ Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a forest-like shade, and of high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs. ⁴ The waters nourished it, the deep made it to grow: the rivers thereof ran round about its plantation; and it sent out its channels unto all the trees of the field. ⁵ Therefore its stature was exalted above all the trees of the field; and its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long by reason of many waters, when it shot them forth. ⁶ All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; and under its branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young; and under its shadow dwelt all great nations. ⁷ Thus was it fair in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its root was by many waters. ⁸ The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it; the fir-trees were not like its boughs, and the plane-trees were not as its branches; nor was any tree in the garden of God like unto it in its beauty. ⁹ I made it fair by the multitude of its branches, so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied it (ASV, 1901).

What God is about to describe is the greatness of Assyria. He is letting Pharaoh know that if mighty Assyria which was "the" world empire before it fell to the Babylonians at Carchemish they too were vulnerable. The tyrants of the world are but, the tools of providence. Men are in God's hand, His sword, sometimes to slay and kill (Psalm 17:13-14) and other times to chastise and refine. All the power that wicked men have they get from God. Pharaoh should not deceive himself into thinking that this would not happen to him too because it is God who rules in the hearts of men and their affairs. At this time Pharaoh Hophra did not realize that the Assyrian defeat by Babylon was yet future to his time. Other complexities are important to consider in Egypt's relation to Assyria. First

They invaded Egypt in 633 B.C. and destroyed the capital of Thebes (Nahum 3:8-10). In 722 B.C. they conquered the Northern ten tribes of Israel and then marched on Judah in Jerusalem. Hezekiah was king at that time and Isaiah the prophet was advising Hezekiah. Hezekiah had given tribute to the Assyrians believing that this would keep them from attacking Jerusalem. Finally after realizing that they would still attack he turns to God in prayer. Isaiah received a message from God and conveyed it to Hezekiah that Judah would be spared (II Kings 19:20). The Angel of The Lord (preincarnate Jesus) smote the Assyrians in one night and 185,000 of them died (II Kings 19:35). In his pride and not wanting to admit defeat but nevertheless acknowledge the event Sennacherib had a cuneiform prism made. Engraved on it he described his annals. It is now in the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.



The text on the prism related to his siege of Jerusalem is interesting.

¹⁸As for Hezekiah the Judahite, ¹⁹who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong, walled cities, as well as ²⁰the small towns in their area, ²¹which were without number, by levelling with battering-rams ²²and by bringing up siege-engines, and by attacking and storming on foot, ²³by mines, tunnels, and breeches, I besieged and took them. ²⁴200,150 people, great and small, male and female, ²⁵horses, mules, asses, camels, ²⁶cattle and sheep without number, I BROUGHT AWAY FROM THEM ²⁷AND COUNTED AS SPOIL. (HEZEKIAH) HIMSELF, LIKE A CAGED BIRD ²⁸I SHUT UP IN JERUSALEM, HIS ROYAL CITY. ²⁹I threw up earthworks against him— ³⁰the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery. ³¹His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and ³²to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, ³³Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bêl, ³⁴king of Gaza, I gave (them). And thus I diminished his land. ³⁵I added to the former tribute, ³⁶and I lad upon him the surrender of their land and

imposts—gifts for my majesty. ³⁷As for Hezekiah, ³⁸the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and ³⁹the Arabs and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen ⁴⁰Jerusalem, his royal city, ⁴¹deserted him. In addition to the thirty talents of gold and ⁴²eight hundred talents of silver, gems, antimony, ⁴³jewels, large carnelians, ivory-inlaid couches, ⁴⁴ivory-inlaid chairs, elephant hides, elephant tusks, ⁴⁵ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures, ⁴⁶as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female ⁴⁷musicians, which he had brought after me ⁴⁸to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute ⁴⁹and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers.

While Sennacherib's account was certainly self-serving, it corresponds remarkably well to the Biblical account. Sennacherib did indeed shut Hezekiah up "as a bird in a cage." But why did he not complete the conquest of Jerusalem? That he did not is implicitly clear from his own annals. But Sennacherib did not see fit to describe what must have been a humiliating experience, the overnight destruction of his army.

God is comparing Assyria to a cedar tree in Lebanon. Because of their strength, straightness, and height they were also compared to the leaders in Israel (Ezekiel 17). Assyria dominated the Middle East like a towering cedar tree which is *exalted above all the trees of the field*. Several cities were situated near the Tigris River which provided an adequate supply of water. Therefore Assyria grew like a mighty cedar and were nourished by the waters to that it became a protectorate for her neighbors as *the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; and under its branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young; and under its shadow dwelt all great nations*. So the great Assyria like a tall cedar tree overshadowed and protected all her neighbors. God says that even *I made it fair by the multitude of its branches, so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied it*. This was the envy of all the trees in the Garden of Eden. This country had an exulted position in the world with power and influence that exceeded Egypt's. Sennacherib's pride over his achievements is quoted by God to Isaiah.

Isaiah 10:12-14

¹²Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. ¹³For he hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I have understanding: and I have removed the bounds of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and like a valiant man I have brought down them that sit on thrones: ¹⁴and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the peoples; and as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth: and there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth, or chirped (ASV, 1901).

As so many other nations have done in their pride the Assyrian leaders did not acknowledge the God of the universe to their advancement. The essence of this message to Egypt is that if Assyria in all its splendor can fall you can too.

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

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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