

## EZEKIEL 30

## AGAINST EGYPT, PART 2

This chapter is composed of two distinct messages. The first of them continues the words at the close of the last chapter and reaches to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> verse of this one. As we noted there in chapter 29, this prophecy was uttered at about the same time that Nebuchadnezzar had finished his operations at Tyre, and was just on the verge of marching against Egypt. These words concerning the destruction of Egypt are very full and particular, as well as very frightful. What can protect a provoking people, when the righteous God comes forth to contend with them?

This destruction is here spoken of as being very lamentable; it would be the cause of great sorrow. The people of Egypt are told to howl and cry for this terrible day! It was a day that was long dreaded, but also long deserved. It was the day of the Lord – the day in which He would manifest Himself as a God of vengeance. The oppressors of God’s people have their day now, when they trample on all around them; but Jehovah will have His day shortly – the day of the revelation of His righteous judgment (Ps. 37:13). This will be a time of reckoning with the heathen for all their heathenish practices. It is that time of which David spoke when he said that God would pour out His fury upon the heathen (Ps. 79:6), and they would sink (Ps. 9:15).

This day of destruction would be the end of Egypt, as well as of all the states and countries that were in confederacy with her. Egypt herself would fall by the victorious sword of the Babylonians, and her neighbors would also fall with her. When the slain fell so thickly in Egypt, great pain would be felt in Ethiopia and in Asia Minor. When their neighbor’s house was on fire, they could not help feeling that their own was in danger; nor were their fears groundless, for they were all to fall by the sword with Egypt. Herein we see the justice of God – for Egypt had pretended to uphold Jerusalem when she was tottering, but proved to be a deceitful reed (verse 6); and now those who supposedly upheld Egypt would prove to be no better. Neither the allies nor the idols of Egypt could prevent the pride of her power from coming down. God Himself would inflict these devastating judgments upon Egypt (verse 8) – causing them to know that He was indeed the Lord, and greater than all their false gods. The fire that consumes nations is of the Lord’s kindling; and when He sets fire to a people, neither its strength nor its multitude can help it in any way.

It was the king of Babylon and his army who were to be employed as the instruments of this destruction (verse 10). Ironically, the Egyptians had undertaken to protect Israel from the king of Babylon, but they would not even be able to protect themselves from him. God often makes one wicked man to be a

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ A continuation of the prophecy against Egypt from the last chapter – verses 1-19
- ❖ A prediction of the weakening of the king of Egypt – verses 20-26

scourge to another. No place in the land of Egypt would be exempted from the fury of the Babylonian army – not even the strongest nor the remotest.

The second vision in this chapter (verses 20-26) bears a much earlier date, having been communicated in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of the prophet's captivity – about three months before the fall of Jerusalem into the hands of the Babylonians (586 BC). This short prophecy concerning the weakening of the power of Egypt was delivered about the same time that the army of the Egyptians returned from their unsuccessful attempt to raise the siege of Jerusalem. The king of Babylon did break off the siege temporarily, and dealt with the Egyptians; but when that was finished, he renewed the siege again and eventually captured the city.

From this unhappy reversal of circumstances for Egypt, it is here foretold that their Pharaoh would grow weaker and weaker. The extent of his territories would be reduced, his wealth and power would be diminished, and he would become less able than ever to help either himself or his friends. This prophecy was already in the process of being fulfilled. "I have broken the arm of Pharaoh," says the Lord – referring to how the king of Babylon had already routed the forces of Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish (Jer. 46:2). It was not long after this king of Egypt slew righteous King Josiah that his own arm was thus broken; and it would not be bound up to be healed, for none can heal the wounds that God gives – except He Himself. The Lord sends His judgments upon people in slow and gradual degrees, so that they may have plenty of opportunity to humble themselves and return to Him in repentance. But if lesser judgments fail to humble and reform sinners, He will send greater ones upon them. And now God says, "I will break Pharaoh's arms" (verse 24). He had formerly been a cruel oppressor to the people of God, and the staff of a broken reed to them; and now, by breaking his arms, God reckons with him for both of these things. Jehovah justly breaks the power of those who are blessed with it and yet abuse it.

Here, in this chapter (as well as in several others), we behold the Lord's love for His own covenant-people in the punishment of the nations – in all of which, we ought to mark His sovereignty, and bow down implicitly before it. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Why, then, are His dealings thus directed as they are? Why is Christ – His greatest gift to humanity – held forth to one nation with a full, free, and extended hand, while others do not know the Lord in a saving way? Who shall take it upon himself to determine the answer to questions like these? Instead of probing into the deep mysteries of God that are beyond our comprehension; let us rather fall on our faces to the ground, and

thank the Lord that He *has* been pleased to mercifully bestow that great gift upon us – who were just as unworthy of His amazing love as anyone else!

*Lord, cause our nation to learn from Your lesser judgments, so that we may repent and return to You, and not be doomed to perish in our sinful rebellion! Amen.*

