

God's Judgment Against Egypt's Allies

Ezekiel 30

Ezekiel 30:1-19 – *“The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, ²“Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Wail, ‘Woe to the day!’ ³For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near; It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.*

⁴The sword shall come upon Egypt, and great anguish shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain fall in Egypt, and they take away her wealth, and her foundations are broken down. ⁵“Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, all the mingled people, Chub, and the men of the lands who are allied, shall fall with them by the sword.”

⁶‘Thus says the Lord: “Those who uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down. From Migdol to Syene those within her shall fall by the sword,” says the Lord God. ⁷“They shall be desolate in the midst of the desolate countries, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are laid waste.

⁸ Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have set a fire in Egypt and all her helpers are destroyed.

⁹ On that day messengers shall go forth from Me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great anguish shall come upon them, as on the day of Egypt; For indeed it is coming!”

¹⁰ ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will also make a multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. ¹¹ He and his people with him, the most terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land; they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.

¹² I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; I will make the land waste, and all that is in it, by the hand of aliens. I, the Lord, have spoken.”

¹³ ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will also destroy the idols, and cause the images to cease from Noph. There shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt; I will put fear in the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ I will make Pathros desolate, set fire to Zoan, and execute judgments in No. ¹⁵ I will pour My fury on Sin, the strength of Egypt; I will cut off the multitude of No,

¹⁶ And set a fire in Egypt; Sin shall have great pain, No shall be split open, and Noph shall be in distress daily.

¹⁷ The young men of Aven and Pi Beseth shall fall by the sword, and these cities shall go into captivity. ¹⁸ At Tehaphnehes the day shall also be darkened, when I break the yokes of Egypt there. And her arrogant strength shall cease in her. As for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.

¹⁹ Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.”””

Background Notes

Ezekiel 29-32 reveal God's pronouncements of judgment on Egypt in a series of seven prophetic oracles. All the oracles begin with the words: *“the word of the Lord came to me.”*

We studied two of the prophetic oracles in chapter 29. Chapter 30 has two more: one in verses 1-19 and the other in verses 20-26. All seven oracles were dated precisely by the year, month and day they were given, except for the one in verses 1-19. We don't know why this oracle is not dated. It may actually have been the last of the seven oracles, because verse 5 seems to indicate that Jews were by then living in Egypt. The phrase "*the men of the lands who are allied*" could be translated "*people of the covenant land*" - meaning Jews.

If this verse were referring to Jews who were living in Egypt, they would have been the Jews who went to Egypt with Jeremiah after the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC. They went to Egypt hoping to escape any further invasions of Nebuchadnezzar – but they went to Egypt in direct disobedience to the word of the Lord through Jeremiah. In fact they actually forced Jeremiah to accompany them to Egypt. Jeremiah predicted that they would die in Egypt at the hands of the Babylonians - the very threat that they were trying to escape. You can read about these events in Jeremiah 42-44.

Here in Ezekiel 30 this same prediction was made. The Jews in Egypt would fall by the sword along with Egypt and her allies (v5).

A word about the phrase, "***the day of the Lord***": "*For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near*" (v3). "The day of the Lord" could be defined as any time that the Lord intervenes in the affairs of nations for judgment or for blessing. However, in the prophetic Scriptures, "the day of the Lord" usually refers to the ***eschatological aspect*** of the day of the Lord – that time in the future when the Lord will return in judgment of the nations. He will then restore Israel to a place of blessing and set up His millennial earthly kingdom.

But there is also an ***historical aspect*** to the day of the Lord in the prophets, and that's what we have in Ezekiel 30. The day of the Lord here refers to the time when the judgment of God would fall upon Egypt at the hands of the Babylonians. Look once again at verses 9-10: "*On that day messengers shall go forth from Me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great anguish shall come upon them, as on the day of Egypt. For indeed it is coming!*"

So the day of the Lord in Ezekiel 30 was the day that would come within a few years from this prophecy. On that "day of the Lord," Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt, conquered the nation and devastated the land.

Doctrinal Points

1. Egypt was defeated when the Lord strengthened the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 10: "*Thus says the Lord God: "I will also make a multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon."*

And verse 12: "*I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; I will make the land waste, and all that is in it by the hand of aliens. I, the Lord, have spoken."*

And now look at what the Lord said in verses 24-25: *“I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; but I will break Pharaoh’s arms, and he will groan before him with the groanings of a mortally wounded man. ²⁵ Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; they shall know that I am the Lord, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt.”*

Ezekiel prophesied that the Lord would strengthen Nebuchadnezzar’s arms and hands in order to defeat the Egyptians. Why was God about to bring judgment on Egypt at the hands of the Babylonians? Chapter 29 said that God would judge Egypt for her pride, and Egypt’s pride was also mentioned here, in verses 6 & 18.

Also in chapter 29 we saw that Egypt would be judged for her failure to honor her treaty with Judah. They did not come to Judah’s rescue when the Babylonians were besieging Jerusalem.

Idolatry was another reason why God would judge Egypt. Verse 13: *‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will also destroy the idols, and cause the images to cease from Noph.”*

Just as when God judged Egypt with the plagues at the time of the Exodus, in order to show that the gods of Egypt were false and powerless, so the Lord would again bring judgment on Egypt and prove that the gods of Egypt were false gods. The Egyptian cities mentioned in this chapter were religious centers where the many false gods of Egypt were worshiped. These cities (in both upper and lower Egypt) fell to Nebuchadnezzar. They were put to the sword and burned. *“Then they will know,”* God said, *“that I am the Lord”* (v8, 19, 25, & 26).

When Babylon conquered Egypt, the land was devastated. The irrigation canals from the Nile dried up because there was no one to work the land and keep the irrigation canals open (v12). The royal family was removed (v13). The young men who were the future of the nation fell by the sword and the women were taken into captivity (v17-18). Egypt was defeated when the Lord strengthened the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

2. Egypt was defeated when the Lord broke the arms of Pharaoh.

Ezekiel 30:20-26 - *“And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ²¹ “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and see, it has not been bandaged for healing, nor a splint put on to bind it, to make it strong enough to hold a sword. ²² Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Surely I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, both the strong one and the one that was broken; and I will make the sword fall out of his hand. ²³ I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them throughout the countries. ²⁴ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; but I will break Pharaoh’s arms, and he will groan before him with the groanings of a mortally wounded man. ²⁵ Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; they shall know that I am the Lord,*

when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. ²⁶ I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.”

Verses 20-26 contain another of Ezekiel's seven prophetic oracles against Egypt. From verse 20, the date of this oracle would have been about three months before the fall of besieged city of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC.

In highly figurative language, God said that He had broken one of Pharaoh's arms, and that He would break the other one as well so that Pharaoh would not be able to hold a sword. When did the two breakings of Pharaoh's arms take place? The first "breaking" may have been as early as 605 BC, when the Babylonians defeated Egypt at the well-known and historically important battle of Carchemish. It may also have been at Pharaoh Hophrah's unsuccessful advance against the Babylonians who were surrounding Jerusalem. (That defeat of Egypt was mentioned in Jeremiah 37.)

The second "arm break" would come about in 568BC, when Nebuchadnezzar invaded and conquered Egypt. At that time, all the prophetic details of these oracles were fulfilled. The sword was in the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, whose arms were strengthened by the Lord Himself. Egypt was defeated when the Lord broke the arms of Pharaoh.

Practical Application

Think through your alliances!

In this chapter we see that when Egypt would fall, her allies would fall as well. This was certainly a warning to Judah not to put their trust in their alliance with Egypt! Unfortunately the warning was not heeded.

Look once again at verses 5-6: *"Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, all the mingled people, Chub, and the men of the lands who are allied, shall fall with them by the sword."* ⁶ *'Thus says the Lord: "Those who uphold Egypt shall fall."* And verse 8: *"Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have set a fire in Egypt and all her helpers are destroyed."*

The practical application for us should be obvious: **think through your alliances!** If you're allied with the wrong people or groups or business associations, and God has to judge them, you may very likely experience God's judgment as well.

So think through your alliances. Do your friends or associates have hidden agendas? What is their value system? Is it biblical, or is it worldly? What are the potential risks and dangers of being associated with them? Are they likely to come under the judgment of God?

Carefully think through your alliances - including alliances with Christian groups as well. Check out Christian groups very carefully before joining with them or donating to them. See if their statements of faith as well as their principles and practices line up with the Word of God.

Think through your alliances!