

EZEKIEL

“Strengthened by God”

Session 21 - Ezekiel 28:20-26 & 29

JUDGEMENT OF SIDON

28:20-23 *“And the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, set your face toward Sidon, prophesy against her and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I will be glorified in your midst. Then they will know that I am the LORD when I execute judgments in her, and I will manifest My holiness in her. For I will send pestilence to her and blood to her streets, and the wounded will fall in her midst by the sword upon her on every side; then they will know that I am the LORD.””*



Sidon is 25 miles north of Tyre. The city was founded by Canaan’s firstborn (Gen 10:15). The tribe of Asher was supposed to drive out the Sidonians as part of their land appointment but failed to do so (Judges 1:31; 10:12). While Tyre was a daughter city of Sidon, Sidon became subject to Tyre as Tyre grew to the commercial empire she became. Sidon had once been destroyed by Esarhaddon in 677 BC and both Tyre and Sidon had become subject to Pharaoh Hophra in 588 BC.

Around King Solomon’s time Sidon had become the epicenter of Baal worship along with the worship of Ashtoreth and Tammuz. Cedar used in the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem was purchased in Sidon (Ezra 3:7). Sidon became part of the Persian empire by defeat in 345 BC. and later Alexander the Great swept in and claimed Sidon in 333 BC.. It was also claimed by the Romans in 64 BC. Today the city is known as Saida.

28:24 *“And there will be no more for the house of Israel a prickling brier or a painful thorn from any round about them who scorned them; then they will know that I am the Lord GOD.”*

Verse 24 summarizes the judgement on the nations that have been so far given by Ezekiel (chps 25-28). This verse includes what has already happened in history and covers the totality of the judgements on the nations as yet to come when Jesus returns to destroy the enemies of Israel. The scorning of Israel is a very real condition in our headlines today. This is a transitional verse into the last verses of chapter 28 which is another pronouncement of the future kingdom promises to Israel that are yet to be fulfilled. The two main purposes that will be accomplished when the fullness of the judgements on the nations is reached will be 1) no more conflict from those that surround her and 2) they will all know that the Lord is God!

ISRAEL REGATHERED

28:25-26 *“Thus says the Lord GOD, “When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and will manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob. They will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live securely when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.””*

The thread woven throughout Ezekiel of the future of Israel shows up again here. Once again the reference is made concerning the regathering from the “nations”, a condition that was only possible after the diaspora of 70 AD. Notice the conditions associated with this promise:

- **The lord’s holiness will be manifest in them.** While Jesus made his first entry into Jerusalem as king, it was for the purpose of fulfilling Daniel’s prophecy. But prophecy also foretold the rebellion of Israel and the cross. Therefore the promises that the New Covenant gave concerning Israel have not yet been Fulfilled. One major condition of this Covenant is the literal holiness of Israel before the nations of the world. Notice “in the sight of the nations”. The nations have always scorned Israel and some of that scorn was due to her harlotry (Ezek 16), but this condition will be new in the sight of the nations.
- **They will live in “their land”.** The land covenant that God had promised to Abraham was specified to Jacob (Gen 28:13-15; 35: 9-12). While the world may contend over who is the rightful owners of that real estate, no amount of human wisdom, money or power will be able to stop the Lord from establishing what He has promised. It will be the King who brings this to pass at His return when the Father sets His Son as King in Zion (Psa 2).
- **They will “live in it securely”.** This promise is made after the fall of Jerusalem. No time in history since has brought secure living conditions for Israel in her land. While they are a nation today, everyday life includes threats and attacks from all around.
- **“When I execute judgements on all who scorn them...”** While this was certainly true of her neighbors at Jerusalem’s fall, there is no shortage of those surrounding Israel, who scorn her today. Jews continue to be despised throughout the world today and the hatred against her occupying her own land continues to grow.
- **“Then they will know that I am the Lord their God”.** Israel’s recognition of Jehovah being their God will be in connection with God judging their enemies. But to truly know God is to know and honor the Son, which Israel will do when He grants the surviving remnant repentance (Rm 11:25-27; Mat 23:39; Mic 5:15; etc.). Zechariah makes this connection:

“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.” Zech 12:10 (NASB)

God the Father talking here and He says that due to His grace, He will cause the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to look upon “Me” (the Father - God) whom they have pierced” The verse then connects the Son to the Father - “they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son,...” This verse directly connects the Father and the Son as God, a detail which the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; i.e. Israel doesn’t yet acknowledge.

“Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” Jhn 14:8-9 (NASB)

JUDGMENT OF EGYPT

The next four chapters deal with Egypt. While Tyre was seen as a world - wide economic, religious and political empire that impacted Israel, Egypt is by far the most influential of the nations on Israel. Israel has roots in Egypt; pagan roots that had never really been abandoned. Egypt was the land in which Israel was pictured as the discarded baby, and the mature young woman without a husband (Ezek 16). There are a total of seven oracles given against Egypt (29:1-32:32).

- 1) Pharaoh, depicted as a sea monster, will be cast out and devoured; the nation will be restored after 40 years to a much lower status (29:1-16).
- 2) Nubechadnezzar will be given Egypt “as pay” for his efforts against Tyre (29:17-21).
- 3) Egypt will be overthrown; it’s allies, wealth, princes and cities (30:1-19)
- 4) Arms of Egypt will be broken by the arms of the king of Babylon (30:20-26)
- 5) Pharaoh (the mighty cedar) cut down to enter as a disgrace into the underworld (31:1-18)
- 6) A lament given over the Pharaoh (32:1-16)
- 7) A dirge sung at the descent of Egypt into the underworld (32:17-32)

29:1-2 *“In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt.”*

There are other places in scripture that pronounce imprecations against Egypt (Isa 19; Jer 46; Zech 14:18, 19). Her sin (like most others) was pride (Ezek 29:3, 9b; 30:10) and leading Israel astray from the Lord to chase her pagan gods (Ezek 29:6-9a). Egypt was a great power ruling over many nations and had aspirations for world dominion. Some of the details given link Egypt’s judgement with the Day of the Lord (Ezek 30:3) and speak of her fall being felt throughout the world (32:10); even creation would be shaken (31:15). Through her fall the world will know that God is the Lord (30:19, 26).

In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth of the month - This is the first of the several pronouncements given to Ezekiel by the Lord. This one is given in 587 BC., seven months prior to Jerusalem’s fall.

Pharaoh - A title given to the king of Egypt meaning either “the sun” or “crocodile”. Crocodiles were worshipped as gods by the Egyptians. At this time Hophra was Pharaoh. His reign began prosperously. He took Gaza (Jer 47:1) and Zidon and made himself master of Phoenicia and Palestine, recovering much that was lost to Babylon by the victory of Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (2Ki 24:7 Jer 46:2), in the fourth year of Jehoiakim [WILKINSON, Ancient Egypt, 1.169]. After 25 years of successes, he came to believe that he was a god who was invincible. Kings Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah all turned to Pharaoh Hophra when they were attacked by Babylon. Jeremiah also announced his doom (Jer 46:25-26).

29:3 *“Speak and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers, that has said, ‘My Nile is mine, and I myself have made it.’”*

The Nile crocodile is pictured here as “the great monster” and the river is the Nile and all of its tributaries. The Nile was the source of all of the land fertility in Egypt. Hophra had come to believe that he was responsible somehow for its creation.

29:4 *“I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish of your rivers cling to your scales. and I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, and all the fish of your rivers will cling to your scales.”*

The hook is to depict captivity and any who were under Egypt’s protection or authority would be the “fish” who clung to Egypt’s scales. They would all be affected by the fall of Egypt.

29:5-7 *“I will abandon you to the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers; you will fall on the open field; you will not be brought together or gathered. I have given you for food to the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the sky. Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am the LORD, because they have been only a staff made of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of you with the hand, you broke and tore all their hands; and when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their loins quake.”*

To the Egyptian mind, details of burial were important as burial was the gateway to the after life. The picture of being laid waste in an open field as food for beast and bird would be appalling to an Egyptian. The alliances that Israel made with Egypt for protection against Babylon would prove to be as weak as a reed when leaned upon. God had warned Israel through Jeremiah that Egypt would betray their alliance (Jer 17: 5,7). Egypt betrayed Israel in a way that disabled them. That betrayal was a combination of intent and ability.

29:8-9 *“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will bring upon you a sword and I will cut off from you man and beast. The land of Egypt will become a desolation and waste. Then they will know that I am the LORD. Because you said, ‘The Nile is mine, and I have made it,’”*

As in the case of Israel, Nebuchadnezzar is pictured here as a sword. As a result of his military efforts against Egypt, the land would be left a desolation. So much for the “god” who made it. God is jealous not only for His name but also for His glory; He will share it with no one. Think of all of the “science” today that would rob God of His glory and attribute His works to randomness. Additionally, think of those who would tamper with the human genome in an effort to “play god”.

29:10-12 *“Therefore, behold, I am against you and against your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene and even to the border of Ethiopia. A man’s foot will not pass through it, and the foot of a beast will not pass through it, and it will not be inhabited for forty years. So I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated lands. And her cities, in the midst of cities that are laid waste, will be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands.”*

GROTIUS translates, "from Migdol (a fortress near Pelusium on the north of Suez) to Syene (in the farthest south)"; that is, from one end of Egypt to the other. JEROME remarks the number forty is one often connected with affliction and judgment. The rains of the flood in forty days brought destruction on the world. Moses, Elias, and the Saviour fasted forty days. The interval between Egypt's overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar and the deliverance by Cyrus, was about forty years.

The ideal forty years' wilderness state of social and political degradation, rather than a literal non-passing of man or beast for that term, is mainly intended. Egypt mocked the Israelites as they fled into the wilderness and one has to imagine a mocking of God upon Egypt as they will now endure a scattering for forty years. While some Egyptians were indeed scattered to the nations, many remained in the land but with a total dissipation of their power.

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29:13-16 *“For thus says the Lord GOD, “At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. I will turn the fortunes of Egypt and make them return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they will be a lowly kingdom. It will be the lowest of the kingdoms, and it will never again lift itself up above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations. “And it will never again be the confidence of the house of Israel, bringing to mind the iniquity of their having turned to Egypt. Then they will know that I am the Lord GOD.”””*

After 40 years, Babylonian rule was replaced by Persian control under Cyrus. Those Egyptians who were still in Babylon were able to return to Egypt which was restored to normalcy (Jer 47:26) without ever rising again to the status it had as a world power, even though there was a small peak under the Ptolemies. Pathros, or the Thehaiti, is upper Egypt and the oldest part as to Egypt's art and civilization. Egypt is depicted as the first world empire in Daniel's vision (Dan 2:37-45) and also as seen in Revelation as one of the seven heads of the beast; “five are fallen...” (Rev 17:10).

29:17-20 *“Now in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder was rubbed bare. But he and his army had no wages from Tyre for the labor that he had performed against it.” Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. And he will carry off her wealth and capture her spoil and seize her plunder; and it will be wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor which he performed, because they acted for Me,” declares the Lord GOD.”*

Among the prophecies given in Ezekiel, the departure from chronological order occurs only here most likely for the sake of continuity. “The twenty-seventh year” would be counted from the time of Jehoiachin's captivity in 597 BC. which makes this 570 BC.. Nebuchadnezzar's army had labored from 585-573 BC. in the siege against mainland Tyre. While they succeeded against the city, all of the resources of mainland Tyre were utterly exhausted during the siege. What remained was shipped off to her colonies.

God had called Nebuchadnezzar “His instrument” and in a colorful way relates the spoils and plunder of Egypt to what is due Nebuchadnezzar and his army for their efforts against Tyre.

29:21 *“On that day I will make a horn sprout for the house of Israel, and I will open your mouth in their midst. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”*

The horn is viewed as a symbol of power and symbolizes the future restoration of Israel connected specifically with the Messiah (1 Sam 2:1, 10; Ps 92:10; 132:17). No matter what ones understanding is now, all who are around to witness the Messianic Kingdom will recall the writings of Ezekiel through which the Lord foretold of the restoration of Israel under the “Horn” - Jesus.