

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious

Part XLIII: God's Punishment Of Egypt For Being An Idolatrous Crutch For Israel (Ezekiel 29:1-16)

I. Introduction

- A. The first two directives of the Ten Commandments deal with God's opposition to idolatry, Exodus 20:1-6. He is very opposed to our worshiping other gods, for He is jealous of our devotion to Him.
- B. However, we can contribute to other people practicing idolatry by allowing them to view us as a little god they admire, a sin church leaders have often practiced with those who admire them instead of glorifying the Lord.
- C. Egypt was punished by the Lord in part for letting herself become an idolatrous crutch for Israel, what Ezekiel 29:1-16 reveals, and we study this passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Punishment Of Egypt For Being An Idolatrous Crutch For Israel, Ezekiel 29:1-16.

- A. This prophetic oracle against Egypt came on "the 10th year, in the 10th month on the 12th day," or January 5, 587 B. C., nearly a year after the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem had begun, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1285.
- B. Pharaoh Hophra reigned at that time, and he had promised to assist Judah were she to break her submission to Babylon, contributing to Judah's rebellion against God's will to submit to Babylon and in turn leading to the Babylonian invasion of Judah. God thus had a significant punishment in mind for Egypt and her ruler, *Ibid.*
- C. God's message was against Pharaoh who was like a giant sea monster (*tannin*) living in the Nile River, *Ibid.*; Ezekiel 29:1-3a. This Hebrew word can mean any large reptile like a serpent (Exodus 7:9-10) or a sea monster (Gen. 1:21) and likely also included crocodiles that were profuse in the Nile, *Ibid.* Ancient Semitic mythology describes such a "chaos-monster" of the sea that was destroyed when the world was created, and the Egyptians believed their Pharaoh could destroy such a "chaos-monster," *Ibid.*
- D. Accordingly, the Lord addressed the proud Pharaoh who likened himself to a type of fierce monster fish in the Nile River who owned the Nile and claimed to have made it for himself, and God said He would put hooks into the fish's jaws, causing the other fish in the river to cling to his scales and draw him up out of the river leave him flung off into the wilderness with all of his fish, his people, and there they would become prey to the beasts of the field and fowls of the air, a reference to the destructive Babylonian invaders, Ezekiel 29:4-5.
- E. The people of Egypt would know that the Lord was God, the Creator in complete domination over Pharaoh, for Pharaoh had become a walking stick of reeds for the house of Israel, a source of dependence for His people in false idolatry, Ezekiel 29:6; *Ibid.*
- F. When Judah had leaned on Egypt for support from Babylon, Egypt like a staff made of fragile reeds that grew along the Nile River had suddenly snapped, and Judah had then found herself unable to stand as the breaking of the staff had torn the muscles of her shoulders and made her loins shake in fear, Ezekiel 29:7 *ESV*; *Ibid.*
- G. In punishment, God would bring a sword upon Egypt, slaying man and beast, and the Egyptians would learn that God was the Lord instead of Pharaoh who claimed the Nile River was his, that he had made it, Ezek. 29:9.
- H. Egypt would be wasted from Migdol on its Northeastern border to Syene at its southern border, leaving the entire land uninhabited for 40 years, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Ezekiel 29:10; Ezekiel 29:10-12. In fulfillment of this prediction, Nebuchadnezzar took many Egyptians captive when he invaded Egypt, *Ibid.*
- I. However, after 40 years, God promised to cause the Egyptians to be regathered from the nations to which they were scattered, but in returning, they would be only a lowly kingdom, no more a powerful ruler other lands that could no longer tempt His people idolatrously to rely on her versus Him for support, Ezekiel 29:13-16.

Lesson: *Pharaoh of Egypt had proudly lured the people of Judah idolatrously to rely on him and cease being submissive to Babylon opposite God's will, only to see Egypt break like a brittle reed of the Nile when Judah leaned on her in vain for support, also leading to Judah's punishment of the Babylonian invasion. God would punish Pharaoh and Egypt, humbling them to be conquered and taken captive only to be returned 40 years later as a lowly kingdom, no more proud and powerful and tempting as a source of idolatrous dependence for God's people.*

Application: *(1) May we never let another party idolatrously lean on us instead of God for blessing, for that is the sin of idolatry, and God will surely, painfully and in humiliation remove us from being such an idol in the mind of the other party involved! (2) If we are looking to another party instead of the Lord for blessing in any way, may we realize we are committing idolatry, that relying on that party can only disillusion us when that party inevitably fails to be the "god" we had initially envisioned him or her to be! (3) May we always exalt the Lord as our ONLY God!*