

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part XLVI: God's Punishment Of Egypt For Countering His Program (Ezekiel 30:20-26)

I. Introduction

- A. When God establishes a plan of action to fulfill His purposes regarding a particular party, He functions as an Almighty, Sovereign Lord so that no party can counter His will without facing God's punishment.
- B. Egypt sought to counter God's program for His people, so He planned to punish her for it. The prediction of this punishment appears in Ezekiel 30:20-26, and we view it for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Punishment Of Egypt For Countering His Program, Ezekiel 30:20-26.

- A. To understand the basis for the Ezekiel 30:20-26 prophecy, we note that Egypt had repeatedly and in various ways acted in opposition to God's plan to use Babylon to punish His people in Judah for their sin (as follows):
 - 1. The date this Ezekiel 30:20-26 prophecy was given was April 29, 587 B. C., nearly four months after Ezekiel's first prophecy against Egypt was given on January 5, 587 B. C. after the Babylonian army had been besieging Jerusalem for nearly a year, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1285, 1289.
 - 2. The interval between these prophecies was likely the time when Babylon lifted its siege on Jerusalem to attack Pharaoh's army that was approaching from the south to deliver Judah from Babylon, Ibid., p. 1289.
 - 3. Egypt was in league with Judah since Pharaoh Hophra had attracted Judah's king Zedekiah for an alliance (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Ezek. 17:11-21, part "(3)," v. 7), leading Judah to rely on Egypt for help from Babylon and thus to be lured not to surrender to Babylon opposite God's will, Jeremiah 38:1-4.
 - 4. Also, when Babylon finally conquered Jerusalem, some Jews moved down to Egypt for asylum from Babylon, so Egypt was countering God's will in protecting those Jews, (Jeremiah 43:1-44:30).
- B. Thus, Ezekiel 30:20-26 predicted God's plan to punish Egypt first for trying to help Judah escape Babylonian invasion and second for Babylon's sheltering of His sinful people who had fled to her land for asylum:
 - 1. God announced to His prophet Ezekiel that He had "broken the arm" of Egypt, referring to His causing Pharaoh to be defeated and return to Egypt upon facing Nebuchadnezzar's army when Egypt had tried to come to the besieged Jerusalem's aid, Ezekiel 30:20-21a.
 - 2. However, Egypt's "broken arm" would not be bound up so that it might be healed and become strong enough to hold a sword again, meaning it would not regain its former military strength, Ezekiel 30:21b.
 - 3. Rather, God declared that He was against Pharaoh, that He would figuratively break both of his arms, the strong arm and the one that had already been broken, causing the sword to fall out of Pharaoh's hand so that he would be completely vulnerable to defeat by invaders, Ezekiel 30:22.
 - 4. At that time, God would scatter the Egyptians among the nations, dispersing them while strengthening the arms of the king of Babylon and putting a sword into his hand to destroy Egypt, Ezek. 30:23-24a. Pharaoh would then groan before Nebuchadnezzar with the groanings of a mortally wounded man, Ezek. 30:24b.
 - 5. "Ezekiel's point was to contrast the recent defeat suffered by Egypt (her one 'broken arm') with the still greater defeat she would suffer. Egypt had been turned back in defeat when she tried to intervene in Babylon's attack on Judah, but she would later be destroyed by Babylon," Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 1289.
 - 6. Thus, since God had sovereignly chosen to use Babylon as His tool to punish His sinful people, not only would the rebellious Hebrews in Judah be defeated and conquered by Babylon, but the disobedient Jews who had fled to Egypt for asylum from Babylon would also face the wrath of God in the form of Babylon's conquest of Egypt! Even the Egyptians would realize God had thus punished them, Ezekiel 30:25-26.

Lesson: *When Egypt countered God's plan to use Babylon to punish His sinful people of Judah, The Lord worked to fulfill his sovereign plan to use Babylon to punish His people anyway while also severely punishing Egypt for trying to interfere with His plan.*

Application: *(1) If we see God disciplining another party for sin, may we not interfere with the process lest we counter God's will in the matter and face punishment ourselves! (2) May we obey 2 Thessalonians 3:11, 1 Peter 4:15, and 1 Timothy 5:13 and not meddle in the affairs of others and their relationships with the Lord, for each person is accountable directly to the Lord for his life and not to us, cf. Romans 14:4. (3) If someone else seeks to allure us like Egypt allured Judah's people to turn to them for balm from what we know is God's discipline, may we refuse their offer, but get right with the Lord since the matter involves us and God alone.*