

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **Ezekiel: Effective Ministry To The Spiritually Rebellious Part XLVII: God's Precedent In Proud Assyria Of Egypt's Fall In Judgment (Ezekiel 31:1-18)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. God punishes the sin of pride: Satan's heart was lifted up in pride and he fell, and all like him who are lifted up in pride will fall, for as God's Word declares, pride comes before a fall, Proverbs 16:18.
- B. However, a party that is humanly well-established and proud can seem impervious to the threat that his pride will lead to his fall, so God has an effective way of communicating the reality of His punishment on pride.
- C. That communication is provided for us in Ezekiel 31:1-18, so we view it for our insight and application:

#### **II. God's Precedent In Proud Assyria Of Egypt's Fall In Judgment, Ezekiel 31:1-18.**

- A. Less than two months after God's prediction in Ezekiel 30:20-26 that Egypt would fall to Babylon, the Lord gave Ezekiel another prediction about Pharaoh and Egypt, Ezekiel 31:1; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1289.
- B. The structure of this new prophecy reveals its **reason** for being given, so we view that structure (as follows):
  - 1. The prophecy opens and closes with a reference to Pharaoh and his multitude, Ezekiel 31:2a, 18c.
  - 2. As the prophecy opens, it asks the question of Pharaoh, "Whom are you like in your greatness?" (Ezekiel 31:2b ESV) and the bulk of the prophecy then refers to Assyria whom God had already punished, v. 3-17.
  - 3. Assyria offered a good example for Egypt to use in comparing herself, for (a) Assyria was the only Mesopotamian nation that had invaded Egypt and destroyed its capital of Thebes, making her Egypt's equal in might and power, and (b) Assyria had been destroyed by Babylon, the nation Ezekiel had predicted would invade and destroy Egypt, *Ibid*.
  - 4. The only cause given in this Ezekiel 31:1-18 prophecy for God's destroying Assyria is supplied in Ezekiel 31:10, that reason being the sin of Assyria's great pride in its exaltation as a nation.
  - 5. Accordingly, since Pharaoh and Egypt considered themselves very great, this prophecy was given by God as the precedent for the destruction of Egypt's peer in greatness in the nation Assyria by Babylon as cause for Egypt to fear her own destruction by the same nation of Babylon!
- C. The Ezekiel 31:2b-18 ESV prophecy thus proceeds as follows:
  - 1. God asked whom Egypt and his great multitude was like in her greatness, Ezekiel 31:2b.
  - 2. Fittingly, as we discussed in section "B" above, the Lord answered that it was Assyria (Ezekiel 31:3a), and then He described how Assyria in spite of her greatness had still been destroyed by Babylon, Ez. 31:3b-17:
    - a. Assyria had been like a great, flourishing cedar of Lebanon with beautiful branches, forest shade, its top towering seemingly up to the clouds, Ezekiel 31:3b, c.
    - b. The tree of Assyria was well-watered so that it became greater than all the surrounding trees with all the birds of the heavens nesting in its branches and the beasts of the field giving birth under its shade, v. 4-6.
    - c. God even declared that Assyria as a cedar was so great that it surpassed in beauty and greatness the trees of the Garden of Eden, the trees of Eden even figuratively envying it, Ezekiel 31:7-9.
    - d. Nevertheless, because Assyria was exalted in pride, God decided to give it into the hand of a mighty one who would deal with it in accord with the wicked pride the Assyrians exhibited, Ezekiel 31:10-11.
    - e. Foreigners, the ruthless Babylonians, would cut the tree down and leave it, its branches falling off and its boughs dropping into the ravines and all the people who had sought its shade leaving it, Ezek. 31:12.
    - f. Indeed, the birds would dwell on its broken trunk and the beasts on its fallen branches so that no trees would reach up to the heavens again in pride, and Assyria would go into the underworld, Ezek. 31:13-14.
    - g. Assyria and all other evil nations, including Egypt, would go down to Sheol with fallen Assyria so that in the end, no nation would be able to exalt itself in pride over any other nation, Ezekiel 31:15-17.
  - 3. Having described the fall of Assyria, Egypt's peer, in divine judgment under Babylonian invasion, God applied the case of Assyria to Egypt, claiming Egypt would also be brought down in death, Ezek. 31:18a.
  - 4. Thus, Pharaoh and his multitude would surely be destroyed like Egypt's past equal Assyria, Ezek. 31:18b.

***Lesson:*** *To convince Pharaoh and Egypt that their doom was sure because of pride, God referred to the precedent of the fall of Egypt's equal Assyria to Babylon as evidence that Egypt would fall to Babylon for her great pride.*

***Application:*** *If we ever think we are above God's discipline due to some greatness in us, we must recall other great people whom God has severely punished for their fall into sin, and thus quickly get humble and repent!*