

Commentary on Ezekiel 31-35

by Chuck Smith

Transcript

Shall we turn now to Ezekiel, chapter 31.

In chapters 29 and 30 of Ezekiel, he was prophesying concerning the judgment of God that was to come against the nation of Egypt, who was like a reed when Israel sought to lean upon it, it broke and only injured Israel. They were, of course, warned about leaning upon Egypt, but the warnings were not heeded and thus Egypt became as a broken staff and did not really help Israel except only temporarily when Pharaoh Haaibre came against Babylon for a time and they stopped the siege against Jerusalem for a short period.

Now in chapter 31 he begins a prophecy against the Pharaoh himself. And in this prophecy against the Pharaoh, he turns to more or less a parable in which he likens the Egyptian leader to a great cedar tree in Lebanon. Now Lebanon used to be famous for its huge cedar trees. And, of course, you remember that the king of Tyre, Hiram, made a covenant with Solomon to provide the cedars, with David and with Solomon to provide the cedars for the building of the temple in Jerusalem. And so in a parabolic way, the Lord speaks of the parable, really, of the Pharaoh as a giant cedar in Lebanon.

It came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month (Eze 31:1),

This would be the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, or 586 B.C.

The word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Who are thou like in greatness? (Eze 31:1-2)

Egypt, of course, was a great, powerful empire in the ancient world. It was one of the world empires, or the world-dominating, or leading empires, and always a force to be reckoned with. "Who are you like?" And he likens them unto the Assyrians, who were also a great world power. It was the Assyrians who conquered over the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And so they are like unto Assyria.

[They are like] a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and a shadowing shroud, of high stature; the top among the thick boughs. And the waters made him great (Eze 31:3-4),

That would be the Nile River.

the deep set him on the high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto the trees of the field (Eze 31:4).

The tributaries and the delta area where the Nile spread out in the delta and that rich farm land.

Therefore his height was exalted above the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. And all of the fowls of heaven made their nest in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations (Eze 31:5-6).

So Egypt was one of the great nations and overshadowed the other nations. Notice the parable here, the birds lodged in the branches. This is also said by Daniel of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian kingdom. But bringing it into the New Testament, we remember Jesus gave a kingdom parable, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a mustard seed, which is a small little seed, but it was planted and it grew into a tree. And the birds of the air came and lodged in it" (Luke 13:19). Now, in a parabolic way, birds are always thought of in an evil sense. You remember that when the seed was planted and it fell by the wayside, the birds of the air plucked it up so that it wasn't

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