

October 13

Scriptures: Read Ezekiel 28 & 29

Key Verse: "...I will cause the horn of the house of Israel to spring forth..." (Ezekiel 29:21)

Overview

Chapter 28 continues the prophecy of judgment upon Tyre, but here it focuses upon the fall of the prince (king) of Tyre. He took all the credit and glory for the great strength and wealth of his city and its suburbs, and in his pride he had the audacity to claim divinity, as did many of the ancient monarchs (28:2, 6, 9). Anyone who elevates Himself to such a degree will surely be cast down to the Pit in the most horrible manner (28:8, 10; cf. 26:7-14; Isa. 23:8-9; e.g. Acts 12:20-23). For the Lord God will not share with anyone the glory that is due Him alone (Isa. 42:8).

In a sarcastic statement, Ezekiel mocked at the king's earthly wisdom by comparing him with Daniel, who at the time of Jerusalem's fall had been in Nebuchadnezzar's court for about twenty years and whose fame for his wisdom must have spread throughout the world (28:3; cf. Dan. 1:20; 2:48; 4:18; 5:11-12). Ezekiel depicts the king of Tyre as though he were Adam in the garden of Eden; the seal of God's perfect creation (likely also spoken in sarcasm) who "became filled with violence within" and sinned in rebellion against God. The king's exceedingly great prosperity corrupted the beauty and wisdom that God had given him, and he was to be cast out forever, just as Adam was cast out of paradise (28:12-19). In some respects, this analogy may typify the fall and judgment of Satan, referred to in the Bible as the prince and god of this world, who became lifted up in pride (cf. Isa.14:13-15; Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10).

Chapter 28 closes with a pronouncement of divine judgment upon Sidon, located about 25 miles north of Tyre. Sidon, the older city, was like the mother city of Tyre. Her idolatry had a harmful influence on Israel (28:24; cf. Jud. 10:6; 1 Kings 11:33), especially during the reign of Ahab, whose queen was the wicked Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon; she introduced Baal worship to Israel (1 Kings 16:31-33). Because of their idolatry, the children of Israel did not hallow the Lord God, and this ultimately brought upon them their national destruction and dispersion among the nations. To hallow the Lord means to honour and glorify Him as the one and only Most Holy God and to live a sanctified life in obedience to Him. In the wonderful promise given here of restoration, peace, and prosperity for His people, it is a prerequisite that they hallow Him among the nations (28:25). Likewise, the Lord's people today must lift up the name of Jesus (hallow Him) and be witnesses of His glory to unbelievers before He will bring us into our promised inheritance in His wonderful Kingdom where He will reign with righteousness.

Chapter 29 begins another series of prophecies, this time directed against Egypt (chs. 29-32). The first one (29:1-16) was given to Ezekiel just one year after the Babylonians had laid siege to Jerusalem (29:1; compare 24:1-2; 2 Kings. 25:1) and about six months before it's fall (2 Kings 25:3-8). At this time, the siege had been temporarily lifted when the Babylonians went to meet the approaching army of Pharaoh. The people of Jerusalem had trusted in Egypt (rather than God) to save them from the Babylonians, for which the prophet Jeremiah strongly rebuked them (Jer. 37:5-11). Like Ezekiel, Jeremiah had prophesied that Egypt would be defeated by

Nebuchadnezzar (29:19; Jer. 46:25-26). Egypt would surely prove to be a weak “staff of reed” to the people of Israel (29:6).

The Pharaoh, like the king of Tyre, was full of pride and was guilty of elevating himself as though he were more than a mere mortal. He not only claimed to own the Nile River but to have made it! (29:3, 9). The all-powerful Lord, however, would cause the deaths of him and his people, just as easily as sea creatures die out of water (29:4-5). The Egyptians were to suffer a fate similar to that of Israel. The Babylonians would deport and scatter many, but in the providence of God, the Egyptian exiles would return after forty years, at the time Cyrus would have issued the decree allowing the Jews and others to return to their homelands. Egypt, however, was never again to reach the heights she had attained in the past. In His judgment, the Lord had a redemptive reason: that Egypt, as well as Israel, might know that He is the Lord God (29:16, 21).

The next prophecy was given more than sixteen years later, approximately around the thirty-fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (cf. 2 Kings 25:2, 8). It was shortly after the end of the siege on Tyre that the Lord told Ezekiel He would reward Nebuchadnezzar for the service he had done for Him in destroying Tyre. God would give him the riches of Egypt, since after the long and wearisome thirteen-year siege on Tyre, the Babylonians discovered there was no spoil in the city with which to pay the soldiers (29:18-20). Also, on the day that Israel saw their “staff of reed” (Egypt) crushed, they would learn to lean on the Lord as their source of help; this would lead them to abandon idolatry, which would be the first in a long process of strengthening (the growth of “the horn” of) Israel (29:21).

Prayer

Lord, we lean upon You today for guidance and direction in everything we do. “You are our strength and a very present help in times of trouble.