

AGAPE 2 LESSON 5

THE LORD REBUKES PHAROAH

Put together by Bongie Kuzwayo

[Ezekiel 31:1—18] Now it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came to me saying, (2) "Son of man, say to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to his multitude:

*Whom are you like in your greatness? (3) Indeed, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with fine branches that shaded the forest, and of high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs. (4) The waters made it grow; underground waters gave it height, with their rivers running around the place where it was planted, and sent out rivulets to all the trees of the field. (5) Therefore, its height was exalted above the trees of the field; its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long because of the abundance of water, as it sent them out. (6) All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young, and in its shadow, all great nations made their home. (7) 'Thus, it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches, because its roots reached to abundant waters. (8) The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it; the fir trees were not like its boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like its branches; no tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty. (9) I made it beautiful with the multitude of branches, so that all the trees of Eden envied it, that were in the garden of God.' (10) Therefore, thus says the LORD God, 'Because you have increased in height, and it set its top among the thick boughs, and its heart was lifted up in its height, (11) therefore, I will deliver it into the hand of the mighty one of the nations, and he shall surely deal with it; I have driven it out for its wickedness. (12) And aliens, the most terrible of the nations, have cut it down and left it; its branches have fallen on the mountains and in all the valleys; its bough lie broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the peoples of the earth have gone from under its shadow and left it. (13) On its ruin will remain all the birds of the heavens, and all the beasts of the field will come to its branches— (14) so that no trees by the waters may ever again exalt themselves for their height, nor set their tops among the thick boughs, that no tree which drinks water may ever be high enough to reach up to them. For they have all been delivered to death, to the depths of the earth, among the children of men who go down to the Pit.' (15) Thus says the LORD God: "In the day when it went down to hell, I caused mourning. I covered the deep because of it. I restrained its rivers, and the great waters were held back. I caused Lebanon to mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it. (16) I made the nations to shake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to hell together with those who descend into the Pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water were comforted in the depths of the earth. (17) They also went down to hell with it, with those slain by the sword; and those who were its strong-arm dwell in its shadows among the nations. (18) **To which of the trees in Eden will you then be likened in glory and greatness? Yet, you shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the depths of the earth; you shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude,' says the Lord.***

The features outstanding in this chapter is pride, arrogance, extreme cruelty and hardened hearts.

Pharaoh, the great house.

*Pharaoh represents an **unrelenting stubborn hard heart**. God Himself **hardened** the heart of Pharaoh. In the Book of Exodus alone, the hardness of Pharaoh's heart is spoken of fifteen times. He never showed the fear of God at any given moment.*

[Romans8v6—8] For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; nor indeed can be. (8) So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Fifteen is a multiple of five (grace) and three (complete), and speaks of acts wrought by the energy of divine grace.

[Exodus14v24—28] Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the Lord looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. (25) And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." (26) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." (27) And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So, the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. (28) Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

Pharaoh, a priest, had the Nile River as His idol. Unfortunately, he operated in water spirits and wanted to feed the water spirits with the lives of new-born Hebrew boys, and used the Nile River as his altar.

[Exodus1v15—16, 22] Then the king of Egypt spoke to the midwives, of whom the name of one was Siphrah and the name of the other Puah: (16) and he said, "When you do the duties of the midwives for the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him, but of it is a daughter, then she shall live. (22) So Pharaoh commanded all his people saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.

Pharaoh's pride made him see Himself in the position of God, who is creator of all things, and claimed the Nile River as his own creation and not God.

Pharaoh himself, the great monster, was the chief principality in the Nile River.

[Ezekiel29v3—5] Speak and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, great monster who lies in the midst of His rivers, who has said, 'My river is my own; I have made it for myself.' (4) But I will put hooks in your jaws, and cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales; I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, and all the fish of your rivers will stick to your scales. (5) I will leave you in the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers; you shall fall on the open field; you shall not be picked up nor gathered. I have given you as food to the beasts of the field and to the birds of the heavens. (6) Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

The picture painted in this Scripture mirrors Leviathan (Isaiah27v1). When Israel was in the mercy of Egypt, Pharaoh put them into hard labour.

[Ezekiel 29v7] When they took hold of you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their backs quiver."

[Exodus1v13—14] So, the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. (14) And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.

Egypt, once a super-power with all the skills and education is reduced to nothing.

[Ezekiel 29v13—16] Yet, thus says the Lord God: “At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. (14) I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. (15) It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself above the nations, for I will diminish them so that they will not rule over the nations anymore. (16) No longer shall it be the confidence of the house of Israel, but will remind them of their iniquity when they turned to follow them. Then they shall know that I am the LORD God.

God’s correction is never to destroy anyone, but it is redemptive. Egypt will be brought to a position of humility, never to exalt itself above other nations ever. Power corrupts, humility is the best position to be. Only from a position of humility will God Himself exalt and lift Egypt out of the ashes.

[1Peter5v5—7] Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you, be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, ‘for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble,’ (6) Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, (7) casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

*Assyria in today’s map would be North Iraq and South Turkey. Cedars in Lebanon were the best and well known. They were lofty and towered above every tree around them. Cedar speaks of **pride**, and Lebanon speaks of **fame**.*

*Assyria = a step to go forward and advance – well known for extreme brutality, above all the ancient standards of cruelty. Assyrians knew that brutality was a very effective tool of psychological warfare; flaying and amputations were the trade-mark of Assyria. Their cruelty affected even their very soldiers who performed them. The cedar thrives in plenty water, will even pierce the rocks beneath in search for recesses of water. The cedar (Assyria) was striving and advancing over the **nations, peoples and tongues**.*

[Revelation17v15] Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues,”

Assyria against Israel: Assyria captured the Israelite’s capital of Samaria, and carried away more than 27,000 from the Northern Kingdom (ten tribes). He brought foreign nations to settle in Samaria, and distorted the very fabric of the people and created a mixture. God hates mixture of any kind.