



# The **Fiery** Bones

Jeremiah 20:9

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Text

Jeremiah 46:1-28

Topic

The Jews refused to believe Jeremiah that they would find no refuge from King Nebuchadnezzar by fleeing to Egypt

Title

*"Jews of DeNile"*

## Introduction

Egypt has been prominent in the news. President Hosni Mubarak was forced out of office during a movement that has been called the Arab Spring. Since then the organization called the Muslim Brotherhood has become the most powerful political force there. It won control of Egypt's parliament; one of its leaders, Mohamed Morsi, became president; and the party dominated the drafting of a constitution that Morsi then pushed to ratification.

Some analysts have said that the Arab Spring quickly turned into Sharia Winter. It's a reference to the Muslim Brotherhood's desire to implement Sharia law, the moral and religious code of Islam.

Among other things it makes conversion to another faith, e.g. Christianity, a crime punishable in some cases by death. Coptic Christians are already feeling the pain of severe religious persecution.

The dominant headline lately is our governments decision to send huge aid to these guys.

I've got an even bigger headline. **In the future Egypt will reject Islam and turn to Jesus Christ.**

Isaiah 19:19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border.

Isaiah 19:20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them.

Isaiah 19:21 Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it.

Isaiah 19:22 And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

When, exactly, is "that Day" going to arrive? It is after the future seven year Great Tribulation at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth for one thousand years. We call it the Millennial Kingdom - millennial meaning *thousand years*.

In "that Day," Egyptians will turn to Christ for salvation and the nation of Egypt will be an ally with Israel.

We are confident that human history is being directed by God to His predetermined end of the Second Coming and the Kingdom. God is constantly working to providentially direct a world of free creatures towards His sovereignly established end.

The final chapters of Jeremiah contain a series of prophecies dealing with ten nations surrounding Israel and Judah, including Egypt. While we may not be super interested, at first, in a prophecy against Moab or Ammon or Edom or Kedar or Hazor or Elam, we should be, because when we see in history that God directed and disciplined nations just as He said He would, it proves He will accomplish in the future what He has prophesied He will do.

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We start in Egypt. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 God, Egypt & Israel In History, and #2 God, Egypt & You In Holiness.

## #1 God, Egypt & Israel In History

(v1-28)

The first verse of chapter forty-six introduces the next 600+ verses:

Jeremiah 46:1 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the nations.

Regardless the literal history of a particular nation on the earth, we are told in the Bible that "From one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live" (Acts 17:26).

In particular God established one nation, Israel, to reveal Himself to all the other nations, tribes, tongues, and peoples on the earth.

In Isaiah 43:12 God said to Israel, "therefore you are My witnesses... that I am God."

They were the recipients of, and custodians of, God's written revelation. They were given the Law of God and the Tabernacle with its system of worship. Through them God brought His Son, their Messiah, to be the Savior of all men - especially those who believe.

Their witness did not cease with the first coming of Jesus. Their regathering in the twentieth century, in direct and I would say miraculous fulfillment of Bible prophecy, is a witness to the nearness of Jesus's Second Coming, and the focus for the revelation of God's power to save them from international aggression. This will cause God's Name to be known among all nations, and will establish Jerusalem as the capital of the Millennial Kingdom.

While at certain moments in history an Egyptian or an Assyrian or a Babylonian or a Persian or a Greek or a Roman... or an Ottoman Turk or an Englishman or even an American... might think that their nation is the most prominent one on the earth, its true import and impact is measured from Heaven by its relationship to Israel.

That's the big picture. In the sixth century Egypt and Israel's southern kingdom of Judah were allies trying to overthrow the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. God's message to his people through Jeremiah was to submit to Babylon and not make an alliance with Egypt. He was raising-up Babylon as an instrument of His discipline, to conquer the Jews and hold them captive for a period of seventy years.

The Jews rejected Jeremiah and his prophecies and allied with Egypt. It seemed to be working when the Chaldean armies of Nebuchadnezzar withdrew from their siege against Jerusalem to deal with an advancing Egyptian army to their rear.

In verses two through twelve we see that boastful army of Egypt humbled by Babylon.

Jeremiah 46:2 Against Egypt. Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was by the River Euphrates in Carchemish, and which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

Jeremiah 46:3 "Order the buckler and shield, And draw near to battle!

Jeremiah 46:4 Harness the horses, And mount up, you horsemen! Stand forth with your helmets, Polish the spears, Put on the armor!

Jeremiah 46:5 Why have I seen them dismayed and turned back? Their mighty ones are beaten down; They have speedily fled, And did not look back, For fear was all around," says the LORD.

Jeremiah 46:6 "Do not let the swift flee away, Nor the mighty man escape; They will stumble and fall Toward the north, by the River Euphrates.

The Battle of Carchemish is well-known to historians. Jeremiah wrote this part of the chapter after the defeat of Egypt; it wasn't a prophecy. But it is full of the understanding that God orchestrated Egypt's defeat to suit His purposes regarding the Jews.

Jeremiah 46:7 "Who is this coming up like a flood, Whose waters move like the rivers?"

Jeremiah 46:8 Egypt rises up like a flood, And its waters move like the rivers; And he says, 'I will go up and cover the earth, I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.'

If you went to high school in Egypt there was a good chance that your football team was called *The Flood*. Like the annual flooding of the powerful Nile River, the Egyptian army compared their advance against enemies as a flood that would overwhelm them.

Jeremiah 46:9 Come up, O horses, and rage, O chariots! And let the mighty men come forth: The Ethiopians and the Libyans who handle the shield, And the Lydians who handle and bend the bow.

Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, A day of vengeance, That He may avenge Himself on His adversaries. The sword shall devour; It shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood; For the Lord GOD of hosts has a sacrifice In the north country by the River Euphrates.

The Egyptian army was populated with mercenaries from these mentioned countries. No matter how many bad dudes they hired; this was a battle whose outcome was determined by The Lord.

Jeremiah 46:11 "Go up to Gilead and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt; In vain you will use many medicines; You shall not be cured.

Jeremiah 46:12 The nations have heard of your shame, And your cry has filled the land; For the mighty man has stumbled against the mighty; They both have fallen together."

Egypt was renowned for its medical prowess and its medicinals. Her defeat by the Babylonians would leave the Egyptians severely wounded; her medicines would be useless.

After Carchemish the Chaldean army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon returned to finish its siege against Jerusalem. When the city fell Jews fled to Egypt in disobedience to God.

The next few verses speak of Nebuchadnezzar invading Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish in 605BC but he did not invade the land of Egypt until approximately 571-567BC. These verses, then, were prophetic.

Jeremiah 46:13 The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come and strike the land of Egypt.

Jeremiah 46:14 "Declare in Egypt, and proclaim in Migdol; Proclaim in Noph and in Tahpanhes; Say, 'Stand fast and prepare yourselves, For the sword devours all around you.'

Jeremiah 46:15 Why are your valiant men swept away? They did not stand Because the LORD drove them away.

Jeremiah 46:16 He made many fall; Yes, one fell upon another. And they said, 'Arise! Let us go back to our own people And to the land of our nativity From the oppressing sword.'

Jeremiah 46:17 They cried there, 'Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is but a noise. He has passed by the appointed time!'

Jeremiah 46:18 "As I live," says the King, Whose name is the LORD of hosts, "Surely as Tabor is among the mountains And as Carmel by the sea, so he shall come.

Jeremiah 46:19 O you daughter dwelling in Egypt, Prepare yourself to go into captivity! For Noph shall be waste and desolate, without inhabitant.

God wanted the Jews who remained in Judah to stay put. It would be hard to rebuild; that's an understatement. But He would minister to them. They refused and fled to Egypt. So to Egypt God sent the Babylonians.

Jeremiah 46:20 "Egypt is a very pretty heifer, But destruction comes, it comes from the north.

Jeremiah 46:21 Also her mercenaries are in her midst like fat bulls, For they also are turned back, They have fled away together. They did not stand, For the day of their calamity had come upon them, The time of their punishment.

Jeremiah 46:22 Her noise shall go like a serpent, For they shall march with an army And come against her with axes, Like those who chop wood.

Jeremiah 46:23 "They shall cut down her forest," says the LORD, "Though it cannot be searched, Because they are innumerable, And more numerous than grasshoppers.

Jeremiah 46:24 The daughter of Egypt shall be ashamed; She shall be delivered into the hand Of the people of the north."

Jeremiah used several illustrations to picture Egypt's fall to Babylon.

1. First, he compared Egypt to a beautiful heifer. This is especially striking since Apis, one of Egypt's gods, was a bull. However, "a gadfly... from the north" (Babylon) was coming to bite her.
2. Second, he compared the mercenaries in Egypt's ranks of soldiers to fattened calves who had been prepared for their



slaughter. They would turn and flee when the day of disaster came.

3. Third, Jeremiah compared Egypt to a fleeing serpent that could do little more than hiss at her enemy as she slithered away to avoid the axes of these mighty woodcutters who had come to chop down her forest.
4. Fourth, he compared the size of Babylon's army to a swarm of locusts which were too numerous to be counted.

The point of every illustration was the same: Egypt would be put to shame because God had handed her over to the people of the north.

Jeremiah 46:25 The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Behold, I will bring punishment on Amon of No, and Pharaoh and Egypt, with their gods and their kings - Pharaoh and those who trust in him.

Jeremiah 46:26 And I will deliver them into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of his servants. Afterward it shall be inhabited as in the days of old," says the LORD.

Egypt would survive as a nation - even thrive. That's a true statement from history, is it not? It's no small thing for a nation to survive and thrive the amount of time Egypt has. I count 26 nations which have ceased to exist in the 20th century alone.

We read in Isaiah that Egypt would be allied with Israel in "that Day," the Day The Lord returns. The two verses that close this prophecy "against Egypt" are set in that future "Day."

Jeremiah 46:27 "But do not fear, O My servant Jacob, And do not be dismayed, O Israel! For behold, I will save you from afar, And your offspring from the land of their captivity; Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease; No one shall make him afraid.

Jeremiah 46:28 Do not fear, O Jacob My servant," says the LORD, "For I am with you; For I will make a complete end of all the nations To which I have driven you, But I will not make a complete end of you. I will rightly correct you, For I will not leave you wholly unpunished."

This is very obviously a prophecy that has never been fulfilled. God has not made "a complete end of the nations to which" He drove the Jews throughout their history. It's referring to God judging the nations at the Second Coming of Jesus to the earth.

(You can read about it in Matthew twenty-five; it's commonly referred to as the Sheep and Goat judgment, but it is a judgment of nations that determines who will be left alive on the earth to populate the Millennial Kingdom).

As history continues to unfold we can be certain of one thing: God will not "make a complete end" of the Jews. He will fulfill His promises to them.

Taking the end of verse twenty-six together with verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight gives you a prophecy of Egypt in the Millennium on the earth.

You look at Egypt today and think, "Egypt and Israel will never be allies!" It seems so farfetched; so impossible.

It's gonna happen because God is providentially working in history to bring it to pass.

As exciting as prophecy may be, we want, and need, every passage to speak to us with regard to our relationship with Jesus right now.

## #2 God, Egypt & You In Holiness

"Egypt" can represent many things to our Christian life. Probably the most obvious is our initial deliverance from sin when we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. The blood of the Passover Lambs was seen by God and the Jews were set free from slavery in Egypt. The New Testament tells us Jesus is **our** Passover; that He is the lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world - setting us free from sin to serve Him.

Let's stay within the context of the sixth century Jews and their relationship with Egypt to draw a few comparisons. God had decided to discipline them in Babylon. They were looking to Egypt for help and fleeing to Egypt for safety.

We can wrongly look to Egypt for help and safety. We can do this *intellectually*. One of the leading Christian psychologists defends his integration of the Bible with the psychological theories of godless men by comparing it to the children of Israel when they first were delivered from slavery to Egypt in the Exodus. He points out that the Egyptians gave them many treasures, much wealth, for their journey. He says, in that same way, godless psychologists can give their ideas and theories to Christians so we can truly help people with their spiritual needs. He calls it "spoiling the Egyptians," because God's people took their spoils.

I can only say, "That's ridiculous." The Jews took gold and silver and other material goods. They didn't take the Egyptian gods or magical arts in order to join them to the Word of God they were to receive at Mount Sinai. They didn't borrow the spiritual insights of the Egyptians.

When we go after the spoils of Egypt all it does is spoil the Word of God by contaminating it.

We can look to Egypt *morally*; or, I should probably say, *immorally*. God calls us to be separate from the world in our moral lives. He has established, for example, that marriage, as the foundational institution of all nations, is to be between one man and one woman to last their lifetimes on earth; and that His gift of sex was only to be exercised and enjoyed only within that union.

That's not what the world around us is saying. Practically anything goes when it comes to marriage and sexuality.

We do a pretty good job of not looking to Egypt when it comes to, say, homosexuality and same sex unions. We've made our stand and the world knows what it is. But we are pretty Egyptian when it comes to committing adultery and getting divorced. We are statistically not much better than the unsaved.

And if the statistics don't lie, 50% of Christian men and 20% of Christian women describe themselves as addicted to pornography. Not just tempted by it; **addicted** to it.

On a *spiritual* level, we can find ourselves being disciplined, or disciplined, and think our help can be found somewhere other than in The Lord. It's very common to try to weasel our way out of our trials.

Regarding our relationship to Egypt I've heard it put this way: After getting His people out of Egypt, God needs to get 'Egypt' out of His people.

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The children of Israel often wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough. God was each time teaching them to be sustained by His grace. They were willing to overlook the fact they were held as slaves because they missed certain delicacies - like garlic.

What will it be for you - Grace? Or garlic?

It sounds funny, but every time you look to Egypt you're settling for something so much less than God's best for you.

Moses once encouraged the Jews to "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place (Exodus 13:3).

As we close think about what you've been delivered from to serve the risen and coming King.

