

Jer. 46-51, The Prophecies Against the Nations
Ch. 46, The Prophecies Against Egypt
May 1, 1991
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Overview

1. Place in the Book: Recall overall chiasm.
 - a) ch. 1, Historical Prologue
 - b) ch. 2-25, Judgment on Judah
 - c) ch. 26-29, Opposition from the Religious Establishment
 - d) ch. 30-33, Promise of Blessing
 - e) ch. 34-45, Opposition from the Political Establishment
 - f) ch. 46-51, Judgment on the Nations
 - g) ch. 52, Historical Epilogue.These prophecies balance the judgments on Judah in 2-25, emphasizing ch. 25 in particular, and show that while God does chasten his own people, he is not blind to the sins of the pagans.
2. Inner order of the nine oracles:
 - a) Geographically, they move inexorably toward Babylon.
 - b) The first and last oracles (Egypt and Babylon, respectively) are special:
 - 1) Both are multiple oracles;
 - 2) Both include blessings on Israel.
 - c) NB: The different time notices attached to these prophecies show that these were not given as a unit, or even necessarily in this order. They have been collected together because of their structural role.
3. Structure of the Oracles against Egypt: Three main oracles.
 - a) 2-12 describes Egypt's abortive attack on Babylon at Carchemish, 609-605 BC. Originally delivered under Jehoiakim. *Lesson:* Don't look to Egypt for deliverance.
 - b) 13-24 describes Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt, 568 BC, the subject also of ch. 43. *Lesson:* Don't flee to Egypt.
 - c) 25-28 promises the restoration both of Egypt and of Judah. *Lesson:* The God who chastises is the same one who is able to restore. Trust in him.

A. 2-12, First Oracle: Egypt Defeated at Carchemish

1. 2, Historical background
 - a) In 609 BC, Pharaoh Necho sought to extend his control over all of Syria by attacking Carchemish on the upper Euphrates. It was in this campaign that Josiah challenged him and died, 2 Chron. 35:20ff. The people replaced him with his son Jehoahaz, but Necho deposed him and installed Jehoiakim.

- b) This verse records the defeat of Necho by Nebuchadnezzar at the very beginning of his reign, four years later, 605, therefore the fourth year of J'kim.
 - c) Political significance: marks the ascendancy of Babylon. Two important events in Jer date to this year: ch. 25 (the oracles against the nations), and ch. 36 (the scroll burned by J'kim; the first edition of the book of Jer).
2. Synopsis: The body of this oracle alternates between reports of Egypt's attack and descriptions of her defeat.
3. 3-4, Attack
 The prophet lets us eavesdrop on the Egyptian camp as the captains prepare their troops for battle.
- a) Buckler = small hand shield
 - b) Shield = covers full body
 - c) Furbish = polish
 - d) Brigandine = coat of mail
4. 5-6, Defeat
 The prophet asks a question, recalling a similar question in 30:6 against Judah: why is such a well prepared army routed? In answer, we hear the commands of another General, the Lord God, and then witness the outcome of His campaign.
- a) The Lord's Command
 - 1) "Fear was round about." Note italics on "was"; I prefer to read this as a jussive, "Let there be fear round about."
 - a> The motto originates in Ps. 31:14 (ET 13), where it expresses the suffering of God's people.
 - b> Jer picked it up from there to describe his own suffering in 20:10.
 - c> It describes the terror of Judah in 6:25, an oracle probably delivered about the time of Josiah (3:6).
 - d> Jer turns it into a nickname for his persecutor Pashur in 20:3.
 - e> Here and 49:29, it describes the experience of the pagans under God's judgment.
 - 2) In v.6, the Lord commands that none of the enemy be allowed to escape.
 - b) As a result of the terror that the Lord sends among the Egyptians and the hindrances he puts before their flight, we see the final outcome: the Egyptian army has fallen on the banks of the Euphrates.
 - c) *Applications:*
 - 1) It is futile to fight against the Lord. The best preparations in the world cannot thwart his plans. Rom. 8, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"
 - 2) The citations of 30:6 and Ps. 34:13 here remind us

explicitly that whatever God allows to come against his people, he will bring in spades against the heathen.

5. 7-9, Attack

Once again, we see Egypt rising to the attack. Like the last para, this one is structured as a question and the corresponding answer.

a) 7, Question: What is this approaching force?

"Flood" is the word for "Nile," which floods every year. Egypt's flooding river is here used to describe the nation itself as it surges through the Levant against Babylon.

b) 8-9, Answer: It is Egypt.

Again we eavesdrop on the Egyptian plans. First (v.8) we hear the generals plotting in the HQ tent, then (v.9) the commands to the allied Egyptian troops go out, troops from Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lud.

6. 10-12, Defeat

First we hear an announcement of the Lord's day of vengeance, then advice to Egypt that she give up hope.

a) 10, This day, the day of Necho's defeat at Carchemish, belongs to the Lord God (not, as men might think, to Nebuchadnezzar). In fact, the slaughter of the troops is described as the Lord's sacrifice. The reference to the location parallels the one at the end of v.6, the earlier description of defeat.

b) 11, The address turns to Egypt for the first time. No matter how hard she tries, she will not be able to be healed. Last four words of v.11 are same as those of 30:13; ref to balm of Gilead in 8:22 as well as here. The earlier parts of the book emphasize how futile it was for Judah to seek material solace when she was under God's chastening hand. Now the same is seen to be true of Egypt.

c) 12, The nations will hear the news of E's defeat, as her soldiers fall defeated to the ground.

7. *Application*: Judah had the benefit of this prophecy in the fourth year of J'kim. Yet they continued to seek the help and protection of Egypt against Neb; they would not accept that it was the Lord who had defeated Egypt, and who could protect them. So we need to see the hand of the Lord behind all that happens in the world, and look to him alone for protection and help.

B. 13-24, Second Oracle: Egypt Invaded by Nebuchadnezzar

1. 13, Historical Background

Ch. 43 prophesies that Neb will invade Egypt, an event recorded by the ancient historian Berossus. A fragmentary

cuneiform tablet records that this happened in Neb's 37th year, therefore 568 (ANET 308).

2. Synopsis: Each of the two major paragraphs of this oracle begins with a command. In between, the invading Babylonian is pictured as a towering mountain. The first paragraph emphasizes that it is the Lord who defeats Egypt. The final one shows the role of the Babylonian under two metaphors.
3. 14-17, The Lord challenges Egypt to take a stand and fight, even though it's futile. Calls to mind Goliath's challenge to David, except this time the Lord is Goliath and Egypt is the puny runt, and this time the giant wins.

As we see the defending Egyptians running away (15), we overhear two sets of comments.

- a) v.16b is from foreigners allied with Egypt, either as part of the army (cf. v.9), or as merchants there to prosper from her power. They abandon her.
- b) v.17, people in Egypt now realize that Pharaoh is powerless. "He hath passed the time appointed:" during the 37 years between the defeat of Necho at Carchemish and the invasion of Egypt by Neb, they could have turned to the Lord. They had a respite in which they could have meditated on their disaster and sought the Lord. But they did not, and now it is too late.

Application: 2 Cor. 6:2 shows that each of us stands where Egypt did after its defeat at Carchemish. We see daily tragedy in our lives, but God withholds the final judgment to give us time to recognize that we have sinned against him, and to turn to him. If we delay too long, the opportunity is gone. It passed for Judah, when the clay of the potter's bowl hardened into the bottle that could only be smashed, between J'kim and Zedekiah. It passed for Egypt, somewhere between 605 and 568. Don't let it pass for you.

4. 18, The approaching foe. The previous para. shows that the Lord is the ultimate source of the defeat. Now, as the king, the Lord announces the coming of a prominent one to execute his judgment. Tabor stands alone and prominent over the plain of Jezreel; Carmel rises suddenly above the sea at Haifa. So Neb will tower over his surroundings and dominate them.
5. 19-24, Egypt must prepare herself for captivity. This section opens and closes with references to Egypt as a bereaved woman ("Daughter of Egypt", 19, 24) who must go into captivity ("Furnish thyself to go into captivity"; ... "she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the North"). Compare the frequent references to Judah as the abandoned "daughter of Zion." Between these we have two vivid word pictures describing

the invasion.

- a) 20-21, Egypt is a heifer, and her mercenaries are calves, all oppressed and scattered by Neb, as by a gadfly from the North.
 - 1) 20-21a presents the image. "Gadfly" is only here in the OT, "the pincer," some kind of biting insect.
 - 2) 21b describes the defeat that comes upon them as a result of this fly.
 - b) 22-23, Egypt is a serpent, whose habitat is destroyed by an advancing army of foresters. The image is quite contemporary, in view of the ecological debates of our own time.
 - 1) 22, "She sounds like a serpent who is going." As the army cuts down the forest, the snakes slither away to seek refuge elsewhere.
 - 2) 22b, 23a describe the activities of the lumbermen.
 - 3) 23b emphasizes how many there are: "It [the army] is unsearchable; that is, they are more than the grasshoppers, and are innumerable." The land will be stripped clean before them, and all who lived there will have to flee.
6. *Application*: When the Lord brings his judgment, it is overwhelming, and there is no way to stand before it. No one can thwart his plans or stand against him.

C. 25-28, Third Oracle: Restoration after Judgment

God's judgment is tempered with the promise of subsequent salvation--always for his people, and often for the nations as well. Four of the nine nations against whom judgment is announced in these oracles are promised restoration, and Egypt is one of them. In this final word, God promises to restore Egypt, and also Judah.

- 1. 25-26, Egypt.

Egypt is promised a restoration after her destruction in all three prophets who raise oracles against her: here, Ezek. 29:8-14; and Isa. 19:23-25. During Messiah's kingdom, some of the ancient nations will turn to the Lord, and be established once again as political entities. Egypt is one of these.
- 2. 27-28, Judah.

The two verses are closely parallel. Each begins with an instruction for Jacob not to fear, and each gives a reason.

 - a) The first reason is that the Lord will work out everything all right. It encourages them to hope because in the end God will bless them.

This is certainly a valid reason to hope in the Lord. When we get to heaven, we will be free from fear. But sometimes, in

the turmoil of our present life, it's hard to look that far ahead. So the Lord gives them a second word of encouragement.

- b) The second reason is that the Lord is with them, and even though he may chastise them and allow them to suffer, he will not make a full end of them. He is in control of their suffering, and will contain it so that it will benefit them, but not overwhelm them.

This is the source of our comfort now--not that God will bless us in this world, but that in the midst of our sufferings, he is with us.

Summary

1. The basic lesson of these oracles, that God in chastening his people does not overlook the sins of the pagans, is emphasized by drawing from the oracles against Judah to describes Egypt's fate:
 - a) 5 "Why do I see...", 30:6
 - b) 5 "Terror round about," Ps. 34:13 and numerous citations in Jer
 - c) 11 "balm of Gilead," cf. 8:33
 - d) 11 ineffective medical help; "no healing," 30:13
 - e) 11, 19, 24, "daughter of Egypt," cf. the frequent title "daughter of Zion" used to describe Judah in her desolation.
2. "The most High rules ... among the inhabitants of the earth," Dan. 4. The political fortunes of nations are the outworking of his sovereign pleasure.
3. Finally, he promises blessing to his chosen ones. Ultimately, we will rejoice forever in heaven--and until then, in this present evil world, we have the assurance of his loving presence with us, and his guarantee that though for our good he may permit us to suffer, he will never let it get out of control.

Psalm: 73

Analysis

Three main oracles. The first describes Egypt's abortive attack on Babylon at Carchemish, 609-605 BC. The second describes Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt, 568 BC, the subject also of ch. 43. The third promises the restoration both of Egypt and of Judah.

A. 2-12, First Oracle: Egypt Defeated at Carchemish

After the IF, the oracle is an alternation of two panels, each giving first the description of Egypt's attack, then a record of her defeat.

1. Addressee:
 - a) 46:2 L:/MIC:RAYIM
 - b) comment p
 - 1) text: (AL-X"YL P.AR:(OH N:KOW MELEK: MIC:RAYIM
 - 2) comment-1 XYL:):A\$ER-HFYFH (AL-N:HAR-P.:RFT B.:/KAR:K.:MI\$

3) comment-2 XYL:):A\$ER HIK.FH N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR MELEK: B.FBEL
B.I/\$:NAT HF/R:BIY(IYT LI/YHOWYFQIYM B.EN-YO)\$IY.FHW.
MELEK: Y:HW.DFH

2. 3-4, Attack: Commands to prepare for war

- a) 46:3 (IR:KW. MFG"N W:/CIN.FH
- b) W./G:\$W. LA/M.IL:XFMFH
- c) 46:4)IS:RW. HA/S.W.SIYM
- d) WA/(:ALW. HA/P.FRF\$IYM
- e) W:/HIT:YAC.:BW. B.:/KOWBF(IYM
- f) MIR:QW. HF/R:MFXIYM
- g) LIB:\$W. HA/S.IR:YONOT

3. 5-6, Defeat: Question-Answer p

a) Question: AQ p: Why is Egypt routed?

- 1) AQ f: 46:5 MAD.W.(A RF)IYTIY (cf. 30:6)
- 2) AQ:
 - a> H"M.FH XAT.IYM
 - b> N:SOGIYM)FXOWR
 - c> W:/GIB.OWR"Y/HEM YUK.AT.W.
 - d> W./MFNOWS NFSW.
 - e> W:/LO) HIP:NW.

b) Answer: Execution p: The Lord has commanded it, and brought it to pass.

- 1) Command: The Lord commands Egypt's destruction.
 - a> MFGOWR MI/S.FBIYB N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 - 1> cf. 6:25 (oracle against Judah); time of Josiah (3:6)
 - 2> 20:10, Jer's lament about his persecution, from Psa. 31:14 (ET 13);
 - 3> 20:3 (against Pashur);
 - 4> 46:5 (against Egypt);
 - 5> 49:29 (against the Arabians);
 - b> 46:6)AL-YFNW.S HA/Q.AL
 - c> W:/)AL-YIM.FL"+ HA/G.IB.OWR
- 2) Execution: CFPOWNFH (AL-YAD N:HAR-P.:RFT K.F\$:LW.
W:/NFPFLW.

4. 7-9, Attack: Question-Answer p

a) Question: coordinate p: What is this approaching force?

- 1) 46:7 MIY-ZEH K.A/Y:)OR YA(:ALEH
- 2) K.A/N.:HFROWT YIT:G.F(:A\$W. M"YMFY/W

b) Answer: ampl p: It is Egypt

- 1) text: coordinate p
 - a> 46:8 MIC:RAYIM K.A/Y:)OR YA(:ALEH
 - b> W:/KA/N.:HFROWT YIT:G.O(:A\$W. MFIYM
- 2) ampl: quote p
 - a> quote f: WA/Y.O)MER
 - b> quote:
 - 1> resolve:
 - a:)A(:ALEH

b:):AKAS.EH-)EREC
 c:)OBIYDFH (IYR W:/YO\$:B"Y B/FH.
 2> commands
 a: 46:9 (:ALW. HA/S.W.SIYM
 b: W:/HIT:HOL:LW. HF/REKEB
 c: comment p:
 1: text: W:/Y"C:)W. HA/G.IB.OWRIYM
 2: comment <GBWRYM>: Egypt's partners
 A. K.W.\$
 B. W./PW.+ T.OP:&"Y MFG"N
 C. W:/LW.DIYM T.OP:&"Y D.OR:K"Y QF\$ET

5. 10-12, Defeat: chiastic motivated command p

a) motive-1: illustration p

1) ampl p
 a> text: comment p
 1> text: 46:10 W:/HA/Y.OWM HA/HW.) LA/)DONFY Y:HWIH
 C:BF)OWT
 2> comment yowm: YOWM N:QFMFH L:/HIN.FQ"M MI/C.FRKY/W
 b> ampl:
 1> W:/)FK:LFH XEREB
 2> W:/&FB:(FH
 3> W:/RFW:TFH MI/D.FM/FM
 2) illus: K.IY ZEBAX LA/)DONFY Y:HWIH C:BF)OWT B.:/)EREC
 CFPOWN)EL-N:HAR-P.:RFT

b) commands

1) contrast p
 a> thesis: get medicine
 1> 46:11 (:ALIY GIL:(FD
 2> W./Q:XIIY C:FRIY B.:TW.LAT B.AT-MIC:RFYIM
 b> antithesis: it won't work
 1> LA/\$.FW:) {HIR:B."YTIY} [HIR:B."YT] R:PU)OWT
 2> T.:(FLFH)"YN L/FK:

c) motive-2: reason p

1) text:
 a> 46:12 \$FM:(W. GOWYIM Q:LOWN/"K:
 b> W:/CIW:XFT/"K: MFL:)FH HF/)FREC
 2) reason:
 a> K.IY-GIB.OWR B.:/GIB.OWR K.F\$FLW.
 b> YAX:D.FY/W NFP:LW. \$:N"Y/HEM P

B. 13-24, Second Oracle: Egypt Invaded by Nebuchadnezzar

1. IF: temporal p

a) text: 46:13 HA/D.FBFR):A\$ER D.IB.ER Y:HWFH)EL-YIR:M:YFHW.
 HA/N.FBIY)
 b) time: LF/BOW) N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR MELEK: B.FBEL L:/HAK.OWT
)ET-)EREC MIC:RFYIM

2. quote f: coordinate p

a) 46:14 HAG.IYDW. B:/MIC:RAYIM

- b) W:/HA\$:MIY(W. B:/MIG:D.OWL
- c) W:/HA\$:MIY(W. B:/NOP
- d) W./B:/TAX:P.AN:X"S)IM:RW.

3. contrast p: prepare to fight, though it's futile. At this point, the adversary is only the Lord. (Egypt masculine)

a) thesis: motivated command p: Take a stand in war.

1) command:

a> HIT:YAC."B

b> W:/HFK"N L/FK:

2) motive: K.IY-)FK:LFH XEREB S:BIYBEY/KF

b) antithesis: you will be defeated.

response p

1) query: 46:15 MAD.W.(A NIS:XAP)AB.IYREY/KF

2) response: reason p

a> text: LO) (FMAD

b> reason: K.IY

1> Y:HWFH H:ADFP/OW

2> 46:16 HIR:B.FH K.OW\$"L

3> G.AM-NFPAL)IY\$)EL-R"(/"HW.

4> quote p

a: quote f: WA/Y.O)M:RW.

b: quote:

1: QW.MFH

2: W:/NF\$UBFH)EL-(AM./"NW. W:/)EL-)EREC

MOWLAD:T./"NW. MI/P.:N"Y XEREB HA/Y.OWNFH

5> quote p

a: quote f: 46:17 QFR:)W. \$FM

b: quote:

1: P.AR:(OH MELEK:-MIC:RAYIM \$F)OWN

2: HE(:EBIYR HA/M.OW("D

4. The approaching foe: quote p. Focuses on the approach of Neb.

a) quote f: 46:18 XAY-)FNIY N:)UM-HA/M.ELEK: Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT \$:M/OW

b) quote: K.IY K.:/TFBOWR B.E/HFRIYM W./K:/KAR:MEL B.A/Y.FM YFBOW)

5. 19-24, Metaphors of destruction (Egypt feminine)

a) Opening of Inclusio: "Daughter of Egypt"

reason p

1) text: 46:19 K.:L"Y GOWLFH (:A&IY L/FK: YOW\$EBET B.AT-MIC:RFYIM

2) reason:

a> K.IY-NOP

1> L:/\$AM.FH TIH:YEH

2> W:/NIC.:TFH

3> M"/)"YN YOW\$"B S

b) interp p: Egypt as a heifer, oppressed by a gadfly

1) image: the cows and the gadfly

a> 46:20 (EG:LFH Y:P"H-PIY.FH MIC:RFYIM

b> QEREC MI/C.FPOWN B.F) B/F)

- c> 46:21 G.AM-&:KIREY/HF B:/QIR:B./FH. K.:/(EG:L"Y
MAR:B."Q
- 2) interp: defeat
 - a> K.IY-GAM-H"M.FH HIP:NW.
 - b> NFSW. YAX:D.FYW
 - c> LO) (FMFDW.
 - d> K.IY YOWM)"YD/FM B.F) (:AL"Y/HEM ("T P.:QUD.FT/FM
- c) Egypt as a serpent, whose habitat is destroyed
 - 1) 46:22 QOWL/FH. K.A/N.FXF\$ Y"L"K:
 - 2) K.IY-B:/XAYIL Y"L"KW.
 - 3) W./B:/QAR:D.UM.OWT B.F)W. L/FH. K.:/XO+:B"Y ("CIYM
 - 4) 46:23 K.FR:TW. YA(:R/FH. N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 - 5) ampl p: the numbers of the invading army
 - a> text: K.IY LO) Y"XFQ"R
 - b> ampl: par
 - 1> K.IY RAB.W. M"/)AR:B.EH
 - 2> W:/)"YN L/FHEM MIS:P.FR
- d) Close of inclusio
 - 1) 46:24 HOBIY\$FH B.AT-MIC:RFYIM
 - 2) NIT.:NFH B.:/YAD (AM-CFPOWN

C. 25-28, Third Oracle: Restoration after Judgment

- 1. quote f: 46:25)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L
- 2. quote:

- a) 25-26, Egypt's restoration
 - 1) judgment:
 - a> HIN/:NIY POWQ"D)EL-)FMOWN MI/N.O) W:/(AL-P.AR:(OH
W:/(AL-MIC:RAYIM W:/(AL-):ELOHEY/HF W:/(AL-M:LFKEY/HF
W:/(AL-P.AR:(OH W:/(AL HA/B.O+:XIYM B./OW
 - b> 46:26 W./N:TAT.IY/M B.:/YAD M:BAQ:\$"Y NAP:\$/FM
W./B:/YAD N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL
W./B:/YAD-(:ABFDFY/W
 - 2) restoration: W:/)AX:AR"Y-K"N T.I\$K.ON K.I/YM"Y-QEDEM
N:)UM-Y:HWFH S
- b) 27-28, Reassurance to Israel
 - 1) reason p
 - a> text:
 - 1> 46:27 W:/)AT.FH)AL-T.IYRF) (AB:D./IY YA(:AQOB
2> W:/)AL-T."XAT YI&:RF)"L
 - b> reason: K.IY
 - 1> HIN/:NIY MOW\$I(/:AKF M"/RFXOWQ W:/)ET-ZAR:(/:AKF
M"/)EREC \$IB:Y/FM
 - 2> W:/ \$FB YA(:AQOWB
 - 3> W:/ \$FQA+
 - 4> W:/ \$A):ANAN
 - 5> W:/) "YN MAX:ARIYD S
 - 2) reason p
 - a> text: 46:28)AT.FH)AL-T.IYRF) (AB:D./IY YA(:AQOB
N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 - b> reason:

1> K.IY)IT./:KF)FNIY
2> contrast p
a: K.IY)E(:E&EH KFLFH B.:/KFL-HA/G.OWYIM):AŞER
HID.AX:T.IY/KF ŞFM.FH
b: W:/)OT/:KF LO)-)E(:E&EH KFLFH
c: W:/YIS.AR:T.IY/KF LA/M.IŞ:P.F+
d: W:/NAQ."H LO)):ANAQ./EK.F S