

Ezekiel 30:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword: and these cities shall go into captivity.

Analysis

The young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword—אַוְן (‘Āwen, On/Heliopolis, sun-worship center) and פִּי-בְּסֵת (Pî-beset, Bubastis, cat-goddess Bastet worship center). בָּחוּרִים (bahûrîm, 'young men/warriors') would fall בַּחֲכָב (bahereb, 'by the sword')—military-age men killed in battle.

And these cities shall go into captivity—וְהָנָה בָּשָׁבֵי תַּלְכְּתָה (wěhēnnāh bashshēbî tēlakhēnāh, 'and they [feminine—the cities themselves] shall go into captivity'). Not just individuals but entire urban populations exiled. Heliopolis was Egypt's primary sun-worship center, home of Ra theology. Bubastis hosted annual festivals to Bastet. Both religious centers would be devastated—their young men killed, populations exiled, worship systems destroyed. God's judgment targeted Egypt's idolatrous worship, not just political power.

Historical Context

Heliopolis (biblical On, where Joseph married the priest's daughter—Genesis 41:45) was ancient Egypt's theological center. Bubastis hosted one of Egypt's largest annual festivals (Herodotus describes 700,000 attendees). Both cities declined dramatically after Babylon's invasion. Their great temples fell into ruin; their religious significance vanished. Archaeological excavations show destruction layers from the 6th century BC.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 – Judging others

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does God specifically target Egypt's religious centers?
2. What does killing 'young men' (future generation) signify about judgment's finality?
3. How does the fate of Egypt's worship centers testify to YHWH's uniqueness?

Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 41:45 (Parallel theme): And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

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