

## ~NILE (478)

[Hebrew, *ye'or*]

- The Course Of The Nile
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- The **Greek** name given to the river, the northern part of whose valley formed the land of ancient Egypt, making that land essentially a river oasis. In the Hebrew Scriptures the river is regularly referred to by the term *ye'or*, sometimes *ye'ohr*. The word itself means, stream or canal.
- And I saw, I Daniel, and, look! There were two others standing, one on the bank here of the **stream** and the other on the bank there of the stream. (**Daniel 12:5**)
- But there the Majestic One, Yehowah, will be for us a place of rivers, of wide **canals**. On it no galley fleet will go, and no majestic ship will pass over it. (**Isaiah 33:21**)
- Or **water-filled gallery**, a shaft made in mining, as at;
- Into the rocks he has channeled **water-filled galleries**, and all precious things his eye has seen. (**Job 28:10**)
- In one case *ye'or* is used to refer to the Tigris River, Biblical Hiddekel, of Mesopotamia.
- And I saw, I Daniel, and, look! There were two others standing, one on the bank here of the **stream** and the other on the bank there of the stream. (**Daniel 12:5**)
- Then one said to the man clothed with the linen, who was up above the waters of the stream; How long will it be to the end of the wonderful things? (**Daniel 12:6**)
- And I began to hear the man clothed with the linen, who was up above the waters of the stream, as he proceeded to raise his right hand and his left hand to the heavens and to swear by the One who is alive for time indefinite. It will be for an appointed time, appointed times and a half. And as soon as there will have been a finishing of the dashing of the power of the holy people to

pieces, all these things will come to their finish. (**Daniel 12:7**)

- And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I myself happened to be on the bank of the great river, that is, Hiddekel. (**Daniel 10:4**)
- All other occurrences, the context indicates, apply to the **Nile** or, when in the plural form, to the **Nile canals**.
- And how he began changing to blood their **Nile canals**, so that they could not drink from their own streams. (**Psalms 78:44**)
- And it must occur in that day that Yehowah will whistle for the flies that are at the extremity of the **Nile canals** of Egypt and for the bees that are in the land of Assyria. (**Isaiah 7:18**)
- The **Egyptian** name, *jrww*, for the river, at least from the so-called Eighteenth Dynasty on, corresponds closely to the **Hebrew**.

## •• The Course Of The Nile

- The **Nile** is generally ranked as the longest river on earth. Its length of 6,671 kilometers (4,145 miles) is measured from its sources, which take their rise in the lake regions of modern Rwanda and Burundi.
- These sources flow into Lake Victoria, and from here a river passes over to Lake Mobutu, farther north the stream is known as the **White Nile**.
- At Khartoum, the **White Nile** is joined by the **Blue Nile**, which cascades down from the mountains of northern Ethiopia. North of Khartoum the river forms the **Nile** proper, and as such receives the waters of only one more tributary, the Atbara River, its confluence with the **Nile** occurring about 300 kilometers (190 miles) Northeast of Khartoum.
- The **Nile** then winds its way through the desolate tableland of northern Sudan, passing over six separate beds of hard granite rock that create six cataracts between Khartoum and Aswan, Biblical Syene, the point where Nubia ended and ancient Egypt began.
- Finally, having lost much of its volume because of evaporation by the blazing sun and the demands of Egyptian irrigation, some 2,700

kilometers (1,700 miles) North of Khartoum the **Niles** waters empty into the Mediterranean Sea.

- The **Nile** Valley is quite narrow along most of the rivers course. Through much of Nubia the river flows through a gorge, bordered on each side by the desert.
- North of Aswan, in what was Upper Egypt, the valley broadens out, but the rocky cliffs on either side are never much more than about 20 kilometers (12 miles) apart.
- However, when the river reaches the region just North of modern Cairo it divides into two main branches, now called the Rosetta and the Damietta, after the names of the port cities situated at the mouths of these branches on the Mediterranean coast.
- This fanning out of the Niles waters creates the swampy **Nile Delta**. In ancient times the river had other branches, the classical Greek historians and geographers making mention of from five to seven.
- These branches and some of the canals have since become silted up and either greatly reduced or eliminated.

### .. Importance Of Annual Flooding

- A unique characteristic of this major river is the regularity of its rise each year and the consequent flooding of its banks, that are lined with agricultural villages.
- This is produced by the winter and spring rains, as well as the melting of snow from the mountains, in Ethiopia, which convert the **Blue Nile** into a torrential stream rushing toward its junction with the **White Nile**, carrying with it rich silt from the Ethiopian highlands.
- The Atbara River also adds an increased flow to swell the volume of the **Nile**. Prior to the construction of the Aswan High Dam, this caused the river to begin to rise in Egypt from June onward, cresting in September and thereafter gradually receding.
- On receding, the waters left behind a deposit of highly fertile soil in the form of a thin layer of mud.

- In a virtually rainless land, Egyptian agriculture was totally dependent upon these annual inundations of the lowlands. An insufficient rise had the same effect as drought, bringing famine, while an excessive rise brought damage to the irrigation works, as well as to homes.
- The concern of the Egyptians for a desirable amount of inundation is seen in the **Nilometers**, gauges for measuring the rivers level, that have been discovered at ancient sites.
- Without these inundations the never-distant desert would press in from both sides right up to the riverbanks. Yet the **Niles** rise and fall has, with few exceptions, been so regular that Egypt throughout its history was noted for its abundant crops and agricultural wealth.
- This complete reliance of the Egyptian economy on the **Niles** waters was well illustrated in Pharaoh's dream, the seven fat cows proceeding out of the **Nile** and feeding on the **Nile** grass, while the seven thin cows came from the same source.
- This aptly represented the way good production could be eaten up by poor years resulting from insufficient inundation.
- And Pharaoh went on to speak to Joseph; In my dream here I was standing on the bank of the river **Nile**. (**Genesis 41:17**)
- And here ascending out of the river **Nile** were seven cows fat fleshed and beautiful in form, and they began to feed among the **Nile** grass. (**Genesis 41:18**)
- And here there were seven other cows ascending after them, poor and very bad in form and thin fleshed. For badness I have not seen the like of them in all the land of Egypt. (**Genesis 41:19**)
- And the skinny and bad cows began to eat up the first seven fat cows. (**Genesis 41:20**)
- So these came into their bellies, and yet it could not be known that they had come into their bellies, as their appearance was bad just as at the start. At that I woke up. (**Genesis 41:21**)
- The surging of the **Nile** waters over their banks was used to describe the forward push of marching armies.

- Who is this one that comes up just like the **Nile** River, like the rivers the waters of which toss themselves? (**Jeremiah 46:7**)
- Egypt itself comes up just like the **Nile River**, and like rivers the waters toss themselves. And it says; I shall go up. I shall cover the earth. I shall readily destroy the city and those inhabiting it. (**Jeremiah 46:8**)
- This is what Yehowah has said; Look! Waters are coming up from the north and have become a flooding torrent. And they will flood the land and what fills it, the city and those inhabiting it. And the men will certainly cry out, and everyone dwelling in the land must howl. (**Jeremiah 47:2**)
- At the sound of the stamping of the hoofs of his stallions, at the rattling of his war chariots, the turmoil of his wheels, the fathers will actually not turn around to the sons, because of the dropping down of their hands. (**Jeremiah 47:3**)
- While the prophet Amos used the rising and falling of the **Niles** waters to represent the agitation due to come upon unfaithful Israel.
- Will it not be on this account that the land will be agitated, and every inhabitant in it will have to mourn, and it will, all of it, certainly come up just like the **Nile** and be tossed and sink down like the **Nile** of Egypt? (**Amos 8:8**)
- And the Sovereign Lord, Yehowah of the armies, is the One touching the land, so that it melts, and all the inhabitants in it will have to mourn, and it will certainly come up like the **Nile**, all of it, and sink down like the **Nile** of Egypt. (**Amos 9:5**)
- Other prophets employed the figure of the **Niles** drying up to represent the disaster due to come upon Egypt as a result of God's judgment against the nation.
- The **Niles** failure would not only cripple agriculture and the raising of stock but also damage the fishing industry and the production of linen.
- The pronouncement against Egypt; Look! Yehowah is riding on a swift cloud and coming into Egypt. And the valueless gods of Egypt will certainly quiver because of him, and the very heart of Egypt will melt in the midst of it. (**Isaiah 19:1**)

- And the water will certainly be dried up from the sea, and the river itself will become parched and actually run dry. (**Isaiah 19:5**)
- And the rivers must stink, the **Nile** canals of Egypt must become low and parched. The reed and the rush themselves must mold. (**Isaiah 19:6**)
- The bare places by the **Nile River**, at the mouth of the Nile River, and every seedland of the **Nile River** will dry up. It will certainly be driven away, and it will be no more. (**Isaiah 19:7**)
- And the fishers will have to mourn, and all those casting fishhooks into the **Nile River** must express sorrow, and even those spreading fishing nets upon the surface of the water will actually fade away. (**Isaiah 19:8**)
- And the workers in carded flax must become ashamed, also the loom workers on white fabrics. (**Isaiah 19:9**)
- And her weavers must become crushed, all the wage workers grieved in soul. (**Isaiah 19:10**)
- And the land of Egypt must become a desolate waste and a devastated place, and they will have to know that I am Yehowah, for the reason that he has said; To me the **Nile River** belongs, and I myself have made it. (**Ezekiel 29:9**)
- Therefore here I am against you and against your **Nile canals**, and I will make the land of Egypt devastated places, dryness, a desolated waste, from Migdol to Syene and to the boundary of Ethiopia. (**Ezekiel 29:10**)
- And he must pass through the sea with distress, and in the sea he must strike down the waves, and all the depths of the **Nile** must dry up. And the pride of Assyria must be brought down, and the very scepter of Egypt will depart. (**Zechariah 10:11**)
- To retain some of the floodwaters for later use in irrigation during the growing season, the Egyptians built up earthen embankments to trap the muddy waters in large catch basins.

- Thus when Yehowah brought the first plague on Egypt, turning its water to blood, the Nile itself, the water in its canals and reedy pools, and the impounded waters were all converted into blood.
- Then Yehowah said to Moses; Pharaoh's heart is unresponsive. He has refused to send the people away. (Exodus 7:14)
- Go to Pharaoh in the morning. Look! He is going out to the water! And you must put yourself in position to meet him by the edge of the Nile River, and the rod that turned into a serpent you are to take in your hand. (Exodus 7:15)
- And you must say to him, Yehowah the God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying; Send my people away that they may serve me in the wilderness, but here you have not obeyed until now. (Exodus 7:16)
- This is what Yehowah has said; By this you will know that I am Yehowah. Here I am striking with the rod that is in my hand upon the water that is in the Nile River, and it will certainly turn into blood. (Exodus 7:17)
- And the fish that are in the Nile River will die, and the Nile River will actually stink, and the Egyptians will simply have no stomach for drinking water from the Nile River. (Exodus 7:18)
- Subsequently Yehowah said to Moses; Say to Aaron, Take your rod and stretch your hand out over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their Nile canals and over their reedy pools and over all their impounded waters, that they may become blood. And there will certainly be blood in all the land of Egypt and in the wooden vessels and in the stone vessels. (Exodus 7:19)
- Immediately Moses and Aaron did so, just as Yehowah had commanded, and he lifted up the rod and struck the water that was in the Nile River under the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile River was turned into blood. (Exodus 7:20)
- And the fish that were in the Nile River died, and the Nile River began to stink, and the Egyptians were unable to drink water from the Nile River, and the blood came to be in all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 7:21)

- Nevertheless, the magic-practicing priests of Egypt proceeded to do the same thing with their secret arts, so that Pharaoh's heart continued to be obstinate, and he did not listen to them, just as Yehowah had spoken. (**Exodus 7:22**)
- Hence Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not set his heart to have any regard for this either. (**Exodus 7:23**)
- And all the Egyptians went digging round about the **Nile** River for water to drink, because they were unable to drink any water of the **Nile River**. (**Exodus 7:24**)
- And seven days came to be fulfilled after Yehowah's striking the **Nile** River. (**Exodus 7:25**)

## · Other Features

- Besides supplying water for plants and domestic animals, the **Nile** was the source of drinking water for the Egyptians.
- And the fish that are in the **Nile River** will die, and the Nile River will actually stink, and the Egyptians will simply have no stomach for drinking water from the **Nile River**. (**Exodus 7:18**)
- And the fish that were in the **Nile River** died, and the Nile River began to stink, and the Egyptians were unable to drink water from the **Nile River**, and the blood came to be in all the land of Egypt. (**Exodus 7:21**)
- And all the Egyptians went digging round about the **Nile** River for water to drink, because they were unable to drink any water of the **Nile River**. (**Exodus 7:24**)
- Except during the initial stage of inundation, the water was very palatable. Along the **Niles canals** and reedy pools, papyrus plants grew in abundance, these were the source of Egyptian writing material and were used for making boats.
- It is the one sending forth envoys by means of the sea, and by means of vessels of papyrus upon the surface of the waters, saying; Go, you swift messengers, to a nation drawn out and scoured, to a people fear-inspiring everywhere, a nation of tensile strength and of treading down, whose land the rivers have washed away. (**Isaiah 18:2**)



- The reedy shores and pools were the habitat of many wild birds that fed upon frogs and other small creatures.
- Later on Yehowah said to Moses; Say to Aaron, Stretch your hand with your rod out over the rivers, the **Nile canals** and the reedy pools and make the frogs come up over the land of Egypt. (**Exodus 8:5**)
- Then Moses said to Pharaoh; You take the glory over me to say when I shall make entreaty for you and your servants and your people in order to cut the frogs off from you and your houses. Only in the Nile Rive will they be left. (**Exodus 8:9**)
- To this he said; Tomorrow. So he said; It will be according to your word, in order, that you may know that there is no one else like Yehowah our God. (**Exodus 8:10**)
- In that the frogs will certainly turn away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. Only in the **Nile River** will they be left. (**Exodus 8:11**)
- Egyptian pictures show bird hunting being done from small boats. The **Nile waters** served, too, for bathing, it is recorded that Pharaoh's daughter bathed there.
- After a while Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the **Nile River**, and her female attendants were walking by the side of the **Nile River**. And she caught sight of the ark in the middle of the reeds. Immediately she sent her slave girl that she might get it. (**Exodus 2:5**)
- An Egyptian picture presents a very similar bathing scene of a noblewoman with her four female attendants. The **Nile** was also the principal highway for the entire land.
- Boats heading North traveled downstream on the current, while those heading South, upstream, were pushed along by the prevailing winds moving inland from the Mediterranean Sea on the north. Commercial ships from Phoenicia and Crete were able to go upstream all the way to Thebes, Biblical No-amon.
- Are you better than No-amon, that was sitting by the **Nile** canals? Waters were all around her, whose wealth was the sea, whose

wall was from the sea. (**Nahum 3:8**)

- **And beyond.**
- The **Nile** figured prominently in Egyptian defenses against invasion. Its cataracts to the South made the land difficult to attack from the direction of Nubia-Ethiopia, while the swampy land around the Delta region hindered the entrance of large armies from the Asiatic continent.
- Some scholars suggest that Assyrian King Sennacherib's boast of drying up all the **Nile canals** with his feet signified his confidence in his being able to overcome defensive water-filled moats around Egyptian cities and strongholds.
- I myself shall certainly dig and drink strange waters, and I shall dry up with the soles of my feet all the **Nile canals** of Egypt. (**2 Kings 19:24**)
- The **Niles** cycles served as the basis for the seasonal calendar of the Egyptians, with three four-month seasons, *'Akhet*, or Inundation, *Peret*, the Coming Forth, evidently of the land as the waters returned to their banks, and *Shomu*, the Dry season, summer.
- The period just after the waters were highest was that of the greatest activity, when low water levels prevailed, construction work was programmed to provide a measure of employment.
- The symbol of a great sea monster lying stretched out in the midst of the **Nile** canals, applied to Pharaoh in the book of Ezekiel, is thought to be drawn from the crocodiles that have inhabited the **Nile** from ancient times.
- Speak, and you must say; This is what the Sovereign Lord Yehowah has said; Here I am against you, O Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great sea monster lying stretched out in the midst of his **Nile canals**, that has said; My **Nile River** belongs to me, and I, I have made it for myself. (**Ezekiel 29:3**)
- And I will put hooks in your jaws and cause the fish of your **Nile canals** to cling to your scales. And I will bring you up out of the midst of your **Nile canals** and all the fish of your **Nile canals** that cling to your very scales. (**Ezekiel 29:4**)

- And I will abandon you to the wilderness, you and all the fish of your **Nile canals**. Upon the surface of the field you will fall. You will not be gathered up nor be collected together. To the wild beasts of the earth and to the flying creatures of the heavens I will give you for food. (**Ezekiel 29:5**)
- Frequent, too, was the hippopotamus, generally identified with the animal designated as, Behemoth at;
- Here, now, is Behemoth that I have made as well as you. Green grass it eats just as a bull does. (**Job 40:15**)
- The Egyptians worshiped the **Nile** as a god of fertility under the name Hapi. This god was depicted as basically male but with large feminine breasts, the head crowned with aquatic plants, and a fisherman's girdle around the plump waist.
- Festivals, with accompanying sacrifices, were held annually in his honor at the beginning of each inundation period. Some scholars suggest that Pharaoh's going out to the **Nile**, mentioned at;
- Go to Pharaoh in the morning. Look! He is going out to the water! And you must put yourself in position to meet him by the edge of the **Nile River**, and the rod that turned into a serpent you are to take in your hand. (**Exodus 7:15**)
- Relates to some morning devotional act, though it may have been merely for a morning walk or to examine the height of the river.