

of Thebes in Jer. 46:25 and Ezek. 30:15; and that Thebes will be rent asunder and Memphis will have distresses daily (Ezek. 30:16). But there is one prediction about Memphis (Noph) that has no counterpart in the predictions about Thebes -- "Thus saith the Lord GOD: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease from Memphis" (Ezek. 30:13).

A thousand years after the book of Ezekiel was written Thebes and Memphis still contained hundreds of idols and images of all sorts. Each of them had been the capital city of many Pharaohs. Even today the site of ancient Thebes is one of the greatest outdoor museums in the world. When I stood in front of one of the dozens of huge statues that line a long "procession street" in Thebes, my head barely reached its knees. There are still idols to be seen in the many temples that have survived. The city was "rent asunder" on more than one occasion, but hundreds of statues and dozens of idols are still in place. (It is now customary to call the place Luxor, and to speak of its greatest temple as "the temple of Karnak".) Ezekiel did not say that the images and idols of Thebes would disappear. That part of the prediction applied only to Memphis.

A thousand years after Ezekiel wrote this prophecy both cities were filled with images and idols. Today a visitor to the place in northern Egypt once occupied by Memphis sees little more than a trace of the thousands of images and idols that were there for so many centuries. Out of all of them, nothing remained when I visited Egypt in 1929 but one small sphinx and a gigantic figure of the Pharaoh named Rameses II, broken into three parts and lying on its back.

What made the enormous difference in the fate of the two great capitals of ancient Egypt? More than a thousand years after Ezekiel made his prophecy, Mohammed began a movement in Arabia that developed into a great military force and conquered most of the nations in that part of the world.

There is one feature with which we can agree -- its hatred of idolatry. In A.D. 640 the Mohammedans conquered Egypt and desired to build a new capital where idolatry would never have existed. So they built a new city called Fostat, a few miles north of Memphis. The great palaces and temples of Memphis, with their many images and idols, were a great source for building