

Pride Defined Ezekiel 7:10

From John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. Thomas Myers (Edinburgh, Scotland: Calvin Translation Society, 1843), Vol. I, 250-252, emphasis added; updated to modern American English.

All the proud strive to substitute themselves in the place of God. . . . God everywhere announces Himself as the enemy of the proud. . . . God declares war on all the proud, because we cannot set ourselves up even a little, without declaring war on God.¹

God's wrath is poured out on the *prideful* Israelites.

Ezekiel 7:10

"Behold the day, behold, it is come; the morning is gone forth; the rod has blossomed; pride has budded."

Now Ezekiel uses another figure, but to the same purpose. He repeats what he had said before: *the day is come*, and he adds another part, that *the morning had advanced*. But we said that the impious, when God connives at their sins, exult as it were in darkness without shame or fear.

Since therefore they were as wanton as if they had obtained the license of night, the Prophet denounces that morning is at hand, because God would suddenly bring to light what they thought would be always hidden. Since therefore, when God retired, they supposed themselves in complete darkness, the Prophet recalls them to the consideration of the daily order of things: for light emerges immediately from the dawn.

Thus he laughs at their folly, because they thought that God had His eyes shut, when for the time He dissembles. This therefore is the reason, as was fully explained yesterday, why the Prophet calls the sudden change *morning*.

Therefore *the morning has arisen*, afterwards, *the rod has blossomed*, *pride has flourished*. It is not doubtful that he means Nebuchadnezzar by the rod, but interpreters vary on the context; for many refer the following verse to the king of Babylon: but others, in my judgment rightly, take it of the Israelites themselves.

As to his saying *the rod has blossomed*, it refers to God's forbearance. For when the Israelites had sinned a long while with impunity, they thought, as I said yesterday, that their peace with God would be perpetual. But here Ezekiel pronounces in opposition to this, that God had as it were a hidden root; as he who plants a tree waits for the time, till it rises to a just magnitude. Hence he compares Nebuchadnezzar to a rod which was growing. God could indeed without man's assistance destroy the Israelites, and could also compel others to obey Him: for all creatures are at hand to fulfill His commands; but here Ezekiel commends God's forbearance, though He had planted the tree, from which the rod was to spring up with which He would smite the Israelites. So he

¹ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, trans. Thomas Myers (Edinburgh, Scotland: Calvin Translation Society, 1843), Vol. I, 288.

reproves their sloth, because they did not reflect upon the time of their visitation, which God had determined in His secret counsel.

On the whole, in saying *the rod has flourished*, he refers to those steps which God takes in executing His judgments. For He does not act hastily after the manner of men, but just as a husbandman in sowing and planting. Hence God provides for His own use ministers of vengeance, and permits them to increase and to arrive at maturity.

If therefore God does not hasten as we wish, we may know that He still has rods prepared, and if they are not yet grown to maturity, it is because the time which the Almighty has previously fixed is not yet arrived.

Now it follows, *that pride has budded*. I have just said that some referred this to the Babylonians, but I rather understand it of the Israelites. Hence God shows how the staff grew in Chaldea by which the Israelites were to be struck, and yet the root was among themselves.

For here **the noun “pride” is to be taken as usual in a bad sense: it does not denote simply haughtiness or arrogance, but that licentiousness which springs from a contempt of God.**

But this does not suit the Babylonians as far as God governed them with His hand, when He wished to take vengeance on the Israelites. But in this sense there is nothing forced, *that the staff with which the Israelites were to be struck had increased*, and yet it had no other origin than their sins, and hence that no other root need be sought for than this. Hence *it flourished*, but from where did it spring? from pride.

The seed therefore of this staff was the pride of the Israelites. But this pride is akin to impiety, and we know that they were blinded by their confidence when they despised God, and treated all his threats as vain. **Hence the Prophet points out pride as the fountain of all evils.**

Four Definitions of Pride

1. **Haughtiness**
2. **Arrogance**
3. **That licentiousness which springs from a contempt of God.**
4. **Impious, vain confidence**

In sum, pride is the fountain of all evils.

Regardless of how the world defines pride, God’s Word condemns pride and warns of its evil nature and tendency.

Ezekiel 16:49 "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride..."

Proverbs 16:18 warns, "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."