

Prophecies against foreign nations are grouped together in other prophets also (*Is 13-23; Jer 46-51; Amo 1; 2; Zep 2:4-15*)

MAJOR ORACLES AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONS						
	Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Amos	Obadiah	Zephaniah
Ammon		49:1-6	25:1-7	1:13-15		2:8-11
Moab	15—16	48	25:8-11	2:1-3		2:8-11
Edom	21:11-12; 34:5-17	49:7-22	25:12-14; 35	1:11-12	1-21	
Philistia	14:29-32	47	25:15-17	1:6-8		2:4-7
Tyre and Sidon	23		26:1—28:19 28:20-24	1:9-10		
Egypt	19	46:1-26	29—32			
Damascus	17	49:23-27		1:3-5		
Babylon	13:1— 14:23	50—51				
Ethiopia						2:12
Assyria						2:13-15

Jonah and Nahum spoke to the situation in Assyria, and Daniel foretold the fate of Babylon and other nations. All the prophetic books in the Old Testament, except Hosea, contain some references to the future of the nations.

Outline of Ezekiel

Chapter	
1–3	The Call of the Prophet
4–24	God's Judgment on Jerusalem (Given before the siege of Jerusalem)
25–32	God's Judgment on the Nations (Given during the siege)
33–48	The Restoration of the Jews (Given after the siege)
33–36	They return to their land
37	They experience new life and unity
38–39	They are protected from Gog and Magog
40–48	The Millennial Kingdom

Judgment Upon the Nations

- 1) Ammon • 25
- 2) Moab • 25
- 3) Edom • 25
- 4) Philistia • 25
- 5) Tyre • 26, 27, 28:1-10
(Satan) • 28:11-19
- 6) Sidon • 28:20-24
- 7) Egypt • 29, 30, 31, 32

Ezekiel mentioned 7 nations, as did Jeremiah and Amos.

The Jews regarded seven of anything as a complete number, dating back to God's creation of the cosmos in seven days.

These 7 nations and city-states would have signified to the Jews that God would judge all such hostile pagan nations, not just these seven.

Ezekiel did not record an oracle against Babylon because God did not give him one. It would have been dangerous for him and the rest of the Jews to denounce Babylon while in captivity in Babylon.

7 Oracles Against Egypt (Ezek 29:1-32:32) ⁵

- 1) Pharaoh as a sea-monster or crocodile is to be cast out to be devoured, and the nation is to be restored to lowly status after 40 years (*Ezek 29:1-16*).
- 2) Egypt is to be given to Nebuchadrezzar as a recompense for his futile siege of Tyre (*Ezek 29:17-21*).
- 3) Egypt will be overthrown, together with its allies, wealth, princes, and cities (*Ezek 30:1-19*).
- 4) The arms of Egypt will be broken by the arms of the king of Babylon (*Ezek 30:20-26*).
- 5) Pharaoh, the mighty cedar, is cut down and enters the underworld in disgrace (*Ezek 31:1-18*).
- 6) A lament over Pharaoh, the crocodile of Egypt, destroyed by the king of Babylon (*Ezek 32:1-16*).
- 7) A dirge sung at the descent of Egypt into the underworld (*Ezek 32:17-32*).

Egypt ⁶

Other curses against Egypt: *Isa 19; Jer 46; Zech 14:18, 19*.

- Egypt's sin was its pride (*Ezek 29:3, 9b; 30:10*) and its leading Israel away from the Lord (*Ezek 29:6-9a*).
- Since Egypt was a great world power, ruling nations and aspiring to universal dominion (*Ezek 29:15*), the prophet treats of it on a cosmic scale
- The judgment of Egypt was to be “the Day of the Lord” (*Ezek 30:3*)
- The fall of that great nation would be felt throughout the world (*Eze 32:10*), while even creation would shudder (*Eze 31:15*).
- The world was to know that God is the Lord (*Ezek 30:19, 26*).

Ezekiel 29:1-16 ⁷

Oracle 1

Pharaoh as a sea-monster or crocodile is to be cast out to be devoured, and the nation is to be restored to lowly status after 40 years.

Ezekiel 29:1-2 ⁸

- 1] *In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,*
- 2] *Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt:*

This is another dated prophecy.

It came to Ezekiel in the year before his first oracle against Tyre (*26:1*).

January 586 (or 587) BC, 7 months before the fall of Jerusalem.

“...**Pharaoh, King of Egypt**...”: Apries or Hophra, of the 25th Dynasty (588–569 BC).

Often in such prophecies, the king is a metonym (a figure of speech) for his nation.

Ezekiel 29:1-2

9

"This was [Pharaoh] Hophra's ([Gr.] Apries') arrogant self-image.

Herodotus implied that Pharaoh Apries was so strong in his position that he felt no god could dislodge him.

In his reign:

- he sent an expedition against Cyprus,
- besieged and took Gaza (cf. *Jer 47:1*) and
- the city of Sidon,
- was victorious against Tyre by sea,
- and considered himself master over Palestine and Phoenicia. . . .

This arrogance had also shown itself in an attempt to interrupt Babylonia's siege of Jerusalem-an attempt thwarted by God."

9

Ezekiel 29:3

10

3] *Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the **great dragon** that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.*

"...**great dragon**...": *tanim*, any large aquatic animal, here it may reference the crocodile, which on Roman coins is the emblem of Egypt. By some, it is associated with:
Leviathan (*Isa 27:1; Job 41:1; Ps 74:14*) and
"Rehab" (*Isa 51:9; Job 26:12, 13*).

Like the king of Tyre and his people, Pharaoh and Egypt had also been guilty of pride.

He had become like a great river monster taking credit for the lifeblood of the nation, the Nile River, thinking it was his rather than giving God thanks for this resource

Pharaoh had proudly claimed responsibility for it as his doing...

10

Great Dragon (Crocodile)

11

In the delta region of Egypt, the Egyptians worshipped the crocodile as a god, Sebek, which they believed protected their nation (*32:2; Ps. 74:13; Isa. 27:1; 51:9*).

Thus God promised to destroy Pharaoh, Egypt, and the god supposedly responsible for their protection.

They went through all kinds of bizarre episodes in terms of the various things they held sacred.

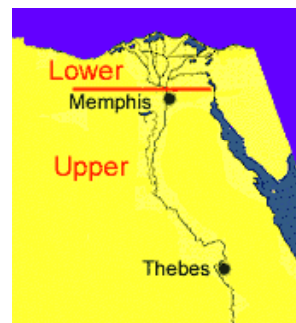
The enterprising son of Cyprus the Great of Persia had done his homework and found that the Egyptians regarded dogs and cats as being sacred.

So when he was in a military confrontation with them, he placed before his army dogs and cats, and the Egyptians would not attack. --Herodotus

11

The Blessing of the Nile

12



The original seat of power had been Upper Egypt;

Pharaoh Hophra set up his headquarters in Lower Egypt, in the heart of the delta area.

He made many improvements there which caused Egypt to prosper in commerce relative to their neighbors.

His pride in those accomplishments led to his boast.

Pharaoh Hophra was recorded in Scripture, and by Herodotus, as being known for his boasts and arrogant pride.

Here he was taking credit for the benefits of the Nile.

12

Pharaoh Hophra

13

Also called Apries in the Greek, Hophra was the grandson of Pharaoh Necho, who defeated King Josiah of Judah at Megiddo.

King Josiah was slain in that battle.

Kings Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah all turned to Pharaoh Hophra when Jerusalem was besieged.

The Egyptian army came up, went through Phoenicia, and forced the Chaldeans to release their siege of Jerusalem.

The prophet Jeremiah announced the doom of Pharaoh Hophra (*Jer 46:25-26*).

13

Ezekiel 29:4

14

4] But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

“I will put hooks in thy jaws...”: Repeated phrase in Ezekiel (*Ezek 38:4* → in reference to Gog).

In the Assyrian sculptures, prisoners are represented with a hook in the underlip, and a cord from it held by the king.

The Lord promised to remove Pharaoh and his people from their land, as a fisherman pulls a crocodile out of the water with hooks.

Normally crocodiles were caught by setting baited hooks in their jaws and then dragging them onto land where they killed them.

God would remove the river-dragon along with the lesser fish that would cling to it.

These fish probably refer to the neighbor nations and allies of Egypt that relied on her.

14

Ezekiel 29:5

15

5] And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.

Improper burial was considered a fearful fate.

This was especially true for the Egyptians in view of their meticulous care of the dead (*Ezek 32:4, 5; Jer 22:18-19*).

Hophra (588-569 BC) would not receive a royal burial.

Ahmose II (Gr. Amasis), another Egyptian leader, strangled Hophra and took his place.

The Lord would carry the dragon into a **wilderness** along with its dependent fish where they could not return to water.

There the beasts and birds would devour Egypt.

15

Ezekiel 29:6-7

16

6] And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

7] When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

Another offense with which Egypt was charged was that they failed in the role of being a staff to Israel politically

“...a staff of reed”: A staff to lean on.

A reed would collapse under your weight.

The idiom here implied weakness, disappointment.

16

Ezekiel 29:6-7

17

6] *And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.*

7] *When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.*

On several prior occasions Israel had made alliances with Egypt for their protection but Egypt had proved to be as weak a support as one of the reeds that grew along the banks of the Nile (*Exod. 2:3*).

People used a staff as a cane or walking stick for support when they walked on rough terrain (*Zech. 8:4; Mark 6:8; Heb. 11:21*).

The Israelites, of course, should not have trusted in Egypt, but this did not excuse the Egyptian's for breaking their covenants with Israel.

When the Judahites had relied on the Egyptians this ally had broken and had even injured God's people (*2Kg 18:21; Is 36:6; Jer 37:7*).

As a crutch, Egypt was worse than useless.

17

Ezekiel 29:8-9

18

8] *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee.*

9] *And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD: because he hath said, The river is mine, and I have made it.*

God's judgment for the blasphemous boast repeated here from *Ezek 29:3*.

I will:

- bring a sword (war) upon Egypt
- cut off (slay) man and beast out of thee
- the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste;

Result → and they shall know that I am the LORD

18

Ezekiel 29:10

19

10] *Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from **the tower** of **Syene** even unto the border of Ethiopia.*

"...**the tower**": Migdol (*tower*). Tel el-Heir, 12 miles SW of Pelusium, the NE border of Egypt (*30:6; Ex 14:2; Jer 44:1*). Migdol was in the Delta region in northern Egypt. (lower Egypt – lower in altitude, not N or S)

"...**Syene**...": Egyptian *Sun* (prob. meaning "elephant"), Aswan was at the first cataract in southern (upper) Egypt was the southern boundary between Egypt and Cush (Josephus, *Wars IV. 10. 5*). Cush corresponds to present-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia.

19

Ezekiel 29:11-12

20

11] *No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.*

12] *And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.*

- Egypt would not be inhabited for 40 years – like Israel in the wilderness (*4:6*)
- Egypt would be desolate in the midst of the Arabian and Libyan deserts on either side (*Ezek 30:7*).
- Her cities would lie waste
- Her people would disperse among other nations and live in other countries. (*30:23, 26*).

Egypt did indeed fall to the Babylonians in 568 BC

20

Ezekiel 29:13-14

21

13] Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of **forty years** will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered:

14] And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of **Pathros**, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.

“...**forty years**”: 17 years later, Nebuchadnezzar, came and took the Egyptians into captivity.

They were in captivity for 40 years, (not 70 years like Israel) *Jer 46:26*.

40 years after Egypt fell to the Babylonians, the Persians, per their foreign policy and who had by that time defeated the Babylonians, allowed the Egyptians to return to their homeland, the land of Pathros, Upper (southern) Egypt.

“...**Pathros**”: (*southland*): Upper Egypt (*Eze 30:14; Is 11:11; Jer 44:15*)

There the Egyptians became a lowly kingdom never regaining the greatness that they had achieved in the past (*Dn 11:36-45*). ²¹

Ezekiel 29:15-16

22

15] It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.

16] And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

Egypt would be among the lowest of the kingdoms; never again becoming a superpower in the world ruling over other nations.

Relying on Egypt would never again be temptation for Israel.

Egypt's lowly state would remind the Israelites of their folly in trusting in Egypt earlier.

Then all would know that the Lord is God.

No one can visit Egypt without becoming heart sick seeing the poverty and the low levels to which the people have sunk. ²²

Ezekiel 29:17-21

23

Oracle 2

Egypt is to be given to Nebuchadnezzar as a recompense for his futile siege of Tyre.

23

Ezekiel 29:17

24

17] And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezekiel received another message from the Lord about Egypt's judgment on April 26, 571 BC (on his New Year's day).

This was probably the 2nd to last recorded prophecy of Ezekiel, who would have been about 50 years old (*1:1-2*).

The writer inserted this oracle in the text here to inform the reader that the destruction of Egypt foretold in the first message, would come through Nebuchadnezzar.

This will help the reader to understand better the remaining oracles against Egypt.

24

Ezekiel 29:18

25

*18] Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: **every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled**: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:*

The Lord revealed to Ezekiel that Nebuchadnezzar had worked hard during the 13 years (585-573 BC) it took to defeat Tyre as Yahweh's instrument of judgment.

“Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare”

describes the chafing of helmets and the carrying of burdens for the siege-works.

Nebuchadnezzar and his army received little compensation for his labor; the spoil he took was hardly worth all the time and effort he had expended.

25

Ezekiel 29:19

26

19] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

In ancient times armies were not paid a salary or wage.

Soldiers might receive a small allowance along with their rations but that was all.

Successful soldiers were allowed to take and keep anything they could lay hands on and carry away.

Many battles took place at or near large cities or in prosperous lands where wealth was concentrated.

After defeating an enemy, an army would dig into the spoils.

Those who were fortunate enough to find gems, precious metals, or other items of great value among the possessions of their defeated foes could become instantly rich.

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt in the 37th year of his reign (568/567 BC).

26

Ezekiel 29:20

27

20] I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.

God announced that He would give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as payment for executing His judgment against Tyre.

Nebuchadnezzar would carry off the wealth of Egypt as spoil and plunder because he had labored for the Lord by defeating Tyre.

The scant historical data seems to indicate that Egypt and Tyre became allies under Pharaoh Hophra (Apries).

The extended siege of Tyre may have been due to the aid Tyre received from the Egyptians.

In such an act Hophra was going contrary to God's purposes.

27

Ezekiel 29:20

28

20] I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.

Not only was the siege prolonged by Egyptian support, but some believe that Egypt's maritime aid enabled Tyre to move her wealth away to Egypt during the siege for safe keeping.

When Tyre surrendered about 573 BC . . . , Babylonia gained almost no spoils from the long siege (*v.18*).

God declares He would recompense Nebuchadnezzar since he was carrying out God's will even though he was completely unaware God or his own role in God's justice.

How much more can we count on God being fair with His own (*Gen. 18:25; Mark 9:41; Gal. 6:7*).

28

Ezekiel 29:21

29

21] *In that day will I cause **the horn of the house of Israel to bud** forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.*

When Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt, it would be as though a horn (the symbol of strength, power & authority to come) began to grow on Israel. (1Sa 2:1; 1Kg 22:11; Ps 92:10; Jer 48:25).

Psalm 132:17 → the Davidic dynasty is to be restored.

There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed

29

Ezekiel 29:21

31

21] *In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and **they shall know that I am the LORD.***

The Israelites would be more open to messages from the Lord and more able to assert themselves because their old nemesis had suffered humiliation.

All these events would teach people Yahweh's unique deity.

"...they shall know that I am the LORD." one of the main lessons of the book.

The promise occurs in the two oracles in this chapter 3x
(v6,9,16)

and in the book more than 40x.

31

Ezekiel 29:21

30

21] *In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the **opening of the mouth** in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.*

The verification of the prophet's words to his fellow exiles, that the divine judgments would be followed by new hope (*Ezek 16:63*).

The Lord would open Ezekiel's mouth among the exiles.

Earlier the Lord had restrained the prophet from speaking (3:26), but he long since (since 585 BC) had resumed speaking (33:21-22).

"...**opening of the mouth**": Symbolizing Israel's restoration to power (1 Sam 2:1, 10; Ps 92:10; **132:17**).

30

Ezekiel 30:1-19

32

Oracle 3

All Phases of Egypt's Life
To Be Punished on the Day of the Lord(!)

32

The destruction of Egypt and her allies 30:1-19³³

Most of the commentators assumed that Ezekiel gave it in 587BC, the same year as the first through third oracles.

He might have given it in 571BC after his 6th oracle (29:17-21) because both of them contain specific references to Nebuchadnezzar.

Knowledge that Nebuchadnezzar would be God's instrument in judging Egypt is helpful in interpreting the remaining oracles against Egypt.

If this chronology is correct, this would have been the last prophecy that Ezekiel gave or at least the last that this book records.

Ezekiel 30:1-3³⁴

- 1] *The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,*
- 2] *Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!*
- 3] *For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.*

This section is *eschatological* and is the only one not dated (it may be chronologically related to *Ezek 29:1-16*).

It consists of four oracles, each beginning with, “**Thus saith the Lord**” (*vv. 2,6,10,13*).

“...**the day of the Lord**”: The “day of wrath” (*7:7; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:7, 14; Isa 13:6; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2 et al.*).

This is the day of judgment on sin and the final doom of the heathen world, of which Egypt is representative.

This judgment would come on Egypt soon.

Ezekiel 30:1-3³⁵

- 1] *The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,*
- 2] *Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!*
- 3] *For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.*

“...**the heathen**”: This is a time of wailing and mourning, a lamentation, for the *nations*.

The Nations ...taking vengeance on them.

The judgment on Egypt is the beginning of a world-wide judgment on all the heathen enemies of God

(*Is 13:6, 9; Joe 1:15, 2:11, 3:14; Amo 5:18, 20; Oba 1:15; Zep 1:7, 14; Zec 14:1; 1Th 5:2; 2Th 2:2; 2Ptr 3:10*).

Ezekiel 30:4³⁶

- 4] *And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.*

“...**great pain**”: Literally, “pangs with trembling as of a woman in childbirth.”

“...**her foundation**”: The political and social institutions in which Egypt's strength lay (*v.6,8,13,15,17*).

It is believed by many conservative scholars that Moses, when he was Pharaoh's daughter's son, would have been the next Pharaoh, and that he actually led an expedition against Ethiopia.

Ezekiel 30:5

5] *Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.*

“...mingled people...and the men of the land that is in league”:

The allies of Egypt were to be overthrown.

“...the men of the land that is in league...” Literally, *and the sons of the land of the covenant with them*; that is, the Jews who migrated to Egypt and carried Jeremiah with them (*Jer 42:1-44:30*).

Even *they* shall not escape (*Jer 42:22; 44:14*).

A reference to Egypt's allies rather than to Jewish mercenaries in the army of Psamtik II (594-588)(?) [*Letter of Aristeas*, ch. 13.]

“Mingled People”?

The mercenary troops of Egypt from various lands, mostly from the interior of Africa?

Ezek 27:10; Jer 25:20, 24

Mingled → different but joined together

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. Daniel 2:43

Ezekiel 30:4-5

An enemy would invade Egypt, slay many of her people, take away her wealth, and tear down her national foundations.

- Her neighbor Ethiopia (Cush, Nubia) would despair when this happened because Ethiopia had strong ties to Egypt.

Egypt's other allies would also fall:

- **Put** (on the African coast of the southern Red Sea),
- **Lud** (Lydia in Anatolia), Arabia, and
- **Libya** (farther west on the Mediterranean coast of Africa).
- **"Arabia"** (Heb. *ha'arab*) translates one pointing of the Hebrew text while "mixed people" (Heb. *ha'ereb*) renders another. Men from Put, Lud, Arabia, and other countries served Egypt as mercenary soldiers (*27:10; Jer. 25:20, 24; 46:9, 21*).

The Judeans who had fled to Egypt from the Babylonians would have to suffer too. They would have been part of this "mixed people."

Ezekiel 30:6

6] Thus saith the LORD; They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord GOD.

The Lord announced again (*vv. 6-9*) that the nations that supported Egypt would fall with her.

Not only Israel, but all of these other nations had looked to Egypt for help, and they will all be judged together.

Egypt would suffer humiliation from north to south (*29:10*) as the enemy slew many Egyptians.

Ezekiel 30:7-8

41

7] And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.

8] And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and when all her helpers shall be destroyed.

The people and the cities of Egypt would become desolate.

Then the Egyptians would know that the Lord is God when He destroyed the land as with a fire and rendered Egypt's allies ineffective when they tried to help her.

41

Ezekiel 30:9

42

9] In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh.

The Lord's acts against Egypt were meant to warn the unsuspecting Ethiopians and the world (*Isa 18:2*).

On this day of the Lord (*v.3*), the day of Egypt's judgment, God would send soldiers against Egypt in ships, and they would frighten even the distant Ethiopians (*v.4*).

The terror and consternation of Egypt in this hour can only be likened to the time of Egypt's judgment when God delivered Israel from Egyptian servitude at the exodus (*Ex 15:12-16*).

42

Ezekiel 30:10-11

43

10] Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

11] He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.

In a 3rd message (*v.10-13*), the Lord said He would make the vast wealth of Egypt cease when He sent Nebuchadnezzar , who is identified by name, against Egypt.

Nebuchadnezzar would come with his allies and fight against the Egyptians and slay large numbers of them.

Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold in *Daniel 2*, the prophecy of the four great world kingdoms.

43

Ezekiel 30:12

44

*12] And I will **make the rivers dry**, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the LORD have spoken it.*

Drying up of the Nile would be a calamity to Egypt (*Isa 19:5*).

The irrigation canals in Egypt required constant attention and maintenance, but during war the Egyptians would not have time for that.

Consequently Egypt would stop producing food. The Babylonians, strangers to Egypt, would take over Egypt and desolate it.

A 'dry' Nile may be literal or it may refer to a loss of its productivity or both...

44

The Dependence upon the Nile

45

Their whole lives hung on the Nile and its ability to produce sustenance by its overflowing and fertilizing the fields.

God saying He would make the rivers dry would be a very scary threat to them.

This threat of letting the river dry up has happened literally in our times: the famous Aswan Dam, and the disasters it has brought ecologically.

Since the Aswan Dam has been put in place, the water is no longer muddy; it is clear, it is wonderful, they've got it all under control.

The muddy Nile before Aswan always carried nutrients down river.

The nutrients attracted the fish from the Mediterranean so that the fishing industry of Egypt was always rich and plentiful.

Since Aswan, the Nile downstream is no longer rich, and no longer providing a good harvest for fishermen, and they are all starving!

A nation of 40 million people now has a problem feeding itself.

45

Ecological Disaster

46

Also there are snails that attack the flax used to make linen and the reeds and various things upon which Egypt has been dependent for thousands of years.

These snails were previously washed away by the annual flooding of the Nile.

Since the Aswan Dam the snails have multiplied and killed off all those crops upon which Egypt used to gain enormous economic benefit.

Some have now suggested that one of the best things Egypt could do would be to blow the Dam up.

46

Ezekiel 30:12

47

*12] And I will **make the rivers dry**, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by **the hand of strangers**: I the LORD have spoken it.*

"...**the hand of strangers**": Egypt later fell later to Alexander the Great, and when he died his generals.

Cleopatra was Greek, not Egyptian. Her ancestor, the first Ptolemy, a general of Alexander's, acquired Egypt.

Most of the male members of the royal family, even brothers and all of the kings that followed were called Ptolemy;

Most of the daughters were called Cleopatra.

The famous Cleopatra in power at the time the Romans were gaining power was Cleopatra VII.

47

Ezekiel 30:13

48

*13] Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also **destroy the idols**, and I will **cause their images to cease** out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.*

All the towns mentioned in *verses 13-18* were important religious centers as well as large cities.

The Lord promised to destroy the idols of Egypt.

Some studies indicate that there were more than 1,200 gods in Egypt at one time.

There would no longer be a king over Egypt either; foreigners would rule over the land.

Consequently the Egyptians would be very fearful.

The Egyptians regarded their Pharaoh as the incarnation of a god.

48

Ezekiel 30:13

49

13] *Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of **Noph**; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.*

Eight principal cities will be named, **(find these on a map)**
three in Lower and
five in Upper Egypt,
are all singled out for destruction.

“...**Noph**”: *Noph* (Heb.), or *Memphis* (Gr.), or *Mennofri* (Egyptian), near *mit Rahineh*, 10 miles S of Cairo.

The home of the fire-god, Ptah, and the Apis bull.

Noph would experience daily distress during the war (v. 16).

49

Ezekiel 30:14

50

14] *And I will make **Pathros** desolate, and will set fire in **Zoan**, and will execute judgments in **No**.*

“...**Pathros**”: In Upper (southern) Egypt, (between modern Cairo and Aswan, 29:14), near “No” or Thebes as its capital (famed for its stupendous buildings, of which grand ruins remain). God would desolate Pathros.

“...**Zoan**”: Egyptian *Scnt*, Greek *Tanis*, the Hyksos capital Avaris; present day San el-Hagar, within the E Delta of the Nile, W of Pelusium. (Goshen). Zoan (Tanis) was a chief city in Lower (northern) Egypt. God would burn up Zoan.

“...**No**”: “No-Amon,” Thebes. Egyptian *Net*, capital of Upper Egypt, 400 miles S of Memphis, home of the sun-god, Amon. Thebes (or No), mentioned 3x in this passage (*Ezek 30:14-16*), was in southern (Upper) Egypt about 400 miles south of Cairo at the site of modern Karnak and Luxor. For a long time it was the country’s capital.

50

Ezekiel 30:15-16

51

15] *And I will pour my fury upon **Sin**, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of **No**.*

16] *And I will set fire in Egypt: **Sin** shall have great pain, and **No** shall be rent asunder, and **Noph** shall have distresses daily.*

“...**Sin**”: (only here in Ezekiel); God would also judge the people living in Sin (Gr. Pelusium), one of the northernmost strongholds of Egypt. It is identified as Tell Foramen located in the vicinity of Pelusium, 23 miles SE of Port Said. It is now completely buried in the sand.

“...**No**”: Thebes, the great city in the upper Nile. God would allow the walls of No (Thebes) to be breached and its people slain.

From Pelusium (*Sin*) to Thebes (*No*) is all Egypt from north to south. These cities have now disappeared altogether...

51

Ezekiel 30:17

52

17] *The young men of **Aven** and of **Pibeseth** shall fall by the sword: and these cities shall go into captivity.*

“...**Aven**”: or On = Greek Heliopolis. The present Tell Hasn, or “sun fountain,” located about 7 miles NE of Cairo; the seat of the sun-god Ra.

It was also the home of Joseph’s father-in-law (*Ge 41:45,50*)

“...**Pibeseth**”: Egyptian *Pi Bastis*, Greek *Bubastis*. Present-day Tel Basta, 30 miles NNE of Cairo. It was the house of the goddess Bast, to whom the cat was sacred.

On or Aven (Gr. Heliopolis), a major religious center in Lower Egypt, and Pi-beseth (Gr. Bubastis), another capital city 40 miles northeast of modern Cairo, would also fall in the war, and the Egyptian women would go into captivity.

52

Ezekiel 30:18

53

18] At **Tehaphnehes** also the day shall be darkened, when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.

“**Tehaphnehes**”: Elsewhere *Tahpanhes*, Greek *Daphnae*.
Modern Tell Defenneh, on the Pelusiac bank of the Nile.
An eastern frontier fortress ~30 miles SW of Pelusium.
Residence of the Pharaohs (*Is 30:4; Jer 2:16; 43:7,9; 44:1*).
Called from the queen of Egypt mentioned in *1Kgs 11:19*.
The same as Daphne, near Pelusium, a royal residence of the Pharaohs (*Jer 43:7, 9*).
Also called Hanes (*Is 30:4*).

53

Ezekiel 30:19

54

19] Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and **they shall know that I am the LORD**.

“...**they shall know that I am the Lord**” → 54X in Ezekiel.

Egypt's pride would cease, doom would overwhelm her, and her people would go into captivity.

This is how the Lord would judge Egypt, and the people would know that He is the true God.

54

Ezekiel 30:20-26

55

Oracle 4

The arms of Egypt will be broken
by the arms of the king of Babylon

55

Ezekiel 30:20

56

20] And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezekiel received this oracle against Egypt on April, 29, 587BC, less than 4 months after the Lord gave him the 1st oracle (*29:1-16*)

3 months after *Ezek 29:1*

4 months before the fall of Jerusalem.

56

Ezekiel 30:21

57

21] *Son of man, I have **broken the arm of Pharaoh** king of Egypt; and, lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword.*

“...**broken the arm of Pharaoh**”: Probably a reference to a recent defeat of Pharaoh Necho (*Jer 37:5-8; 34:21*).

In *vv. 21-23* the Lord is the destroyer of Pharaoh;
In *vv. 24-26*, the king of Babylon is His agent.

God announces that He had broken Pharaoh's arm - "the strong-armed king had suffered a broken arm."

It had not been set in a splint and supported, so he could not wield a sword effectively.

Possibly at Egypt's defeat at Carchemish in 605 BC when it lost its control over the ancient Near East (*2Kg 24:7; Jer 46:2*).

Or possibly the defeat when Hophra unsuccessfully attacked the Babylonians near Judea a few months earlier (*Jer 34:1; 21:23; 37:5, 9*)

57

Ezekiel 30:22-23

58

22] *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand.*

23] *And I will **scatter the Egyptians** among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.*

“...**scatter the Egyptians**” refers to the army still in Egypt for defense and the one defeated and fleeing.

- The Lord was about to break Pharaoh's other arm and to break his previously broken arm again.
- Egypt would suffer another defeat at the hands of the Babylonians and would never again regain its former strength.
- God would scatter the Egyptians from their homeland, and they would go to live in other countries.

58

Broken arms

59

A flexed arm was a common symbol of the Pharaoh's strength.

Egyptian statues or images often showed the Pharaoh with his arm flexed, wielding a sword in battle.

A king with great biceps was especially a popular concept under the Saïtes Dynasty of Ezekiel's day.

Pharaoh Hophra took another formal title that meant 'possessed of a muscular arm' or 'strong-armed'

This oracle does not specify Nebuchadnezzar by name as the king of Babylon who would defeat Pharaoh.

The object of this oracle is not Nebuchadnezzar but God's certain and complete destruction of Egypt's power.

Ezekiel 30:24-25

60

24] *And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man.*

25] *But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt.*

The Lord described the conflict between Babylon and Egypt as a conflict between two warriors.

Nebuchadnezzar would break Hophra's arms as they battled.

Egypt would groan like a wounded soldier.

The people would know that Yahweh was God when He put His sword of power into Nebuchadnezzar's arms and strengthened him to defeat Hophra and when the Egyptians dispersed from their land (cf. *v. 17-18, 23; 29:12*).

All of this was literally fulfilled.

60

Ezekiel 30:26

61

*26] And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and **they shall know that I am the LORD.***

“...they shall know that I am the Lord”: 54X in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 31:1

63

1] And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

The Lord gave Ezekiel this oracle against Egypt on June 21, 587 BC, less than 2 months after the previous one.

(30:20-26)

Ezekiel 31

61

Oracle 5

The Lament for the Fall of Pharaoh

62

Ezekiel 31:2

64

2] Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness?

The prophet was to speak this one to Pharaoh Hophra and to the Egyptians.

Ezekiel was in Babylon and they were in Egypt, but he was to speak publicly as though he were addressing them in person.

He asked rhetorically who the Egyptians were like in their greatness.

62

64

Ezekiel 31:3

65

Assyria had been one of the greatest nations in history before its fall in 612BC, perhaps the greatest nation.

It had been the only Mesopotamian nation to invade Egypt successfully.

The Assyrians destroyed Thebes in 633 BC (*Na 3:8-10*) and eventually incorporated Egypt into its empire.

Egypt boasted in its greatness, yet Egypt wasn't as great as Assyria, and Assyria was conquered by Babylon.

The city of Nineveh fell to Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, in 612 BC, and Nebuchadnezzar crushed the rest of the Assyrian army at Haran in 609 BC.

Assyria had fallen to the Babylonians, the same enemy that now threatened and would conquer Egypt.

65

Ezekiel 31:3

66

3] Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.

They were similar to the Assyrians who had towered among the nations like one of the beautiful cedars of Lebanon (*17:1-10, 22-24; 19:10-14; 26:19-21; 28:11-19; Is 14:3-21*).

Some of the Lebanese cedars grew 80 feet high, were beautifully symmetrical, and contained thickly interwoven branches.

Ezekiel 31:4-5

67

4] The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field.

5] Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.

Like Egypt, Assyria received much of its strength and power from the waters that surrounded it, the Nile in Egypt's case and the Tigris in Assyria's.

The waters that nourished these nations enabled them to grow strong and to tower above many others.

67

Ezekiel 31:6

68

6] All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

Many peoples and nations benefited from the mighty kingdom of Assyria symbolized by the birds and beasts that took refuge under this tree (*vv. 12, 13; 17:23; Dan. 4:12; Matt. 13:32*).

In *Matthew 13* the fowls of the air nested in the branches of a mustard plant, which grew unnaturally into a monstrosity large enough to support them.

The birds there are identified as the ministers of Satan.

68

Ezekiel 31:7-9

69

7] Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters.

8] The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty.

9] I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.

Assyria was beautiful and graceful because of the waters that sustained it, waters that were solely a gift of God's grace.

No tree in God's garden of nations could compare with it.

The other kingdoms were jealous of Assyria, which was preeminent in God's Eden-like collection of nations.

69

Ezekiel 31:10-11

70

10] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height;

11] I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness.

Because Assyria was a proud nation, the Lord had determined to turn it over to a strong individual who would cut it down, namely, Nebuchadnezzar.

God had driven Assyria out of His Eden as He had driven Adam and Eve out for their pride.

70

Ezekiel 31:12-13

71

12] And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him.

13] Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches:

Alien tyrants from other nations had cut off parts of Assyria and left it laying like a tree with its limbs chopped off in a valley.

Assyria had a reputation for being an extremely cruel nation, and the other nations had dealt with it ruthlessly.

The people of the earth who had taken refuge in Assyria like birds and beasts under a tree had fled from under it but continued to use its remains to their own advantage.

71

Ezekiel 31:14

72

14] To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.

This fate had befallen Assyria in part so other greatly blessed, proud nations would learn not to exalt themselves.

All nations, like trees, eventually fall down and return to the dust like human corpses do in the grave.

72

Ezekiel 31:15

73

15] Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him.

On the day that God humbled Assyria,

He caused many people and nations to mourn her demise.

He made it impossible for that nation to revive;

He did the same thing as burying it in the sea, and

He kept its lifegiving waters from revitalizing it.

The people in the area from which Assyria had come, Mesopotamia, mourned for it, and other nations (trees) wilted because of its fall.

73

Ezekiel 31:17

75

17] They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.

Some other nations fell when Assyria did;

this great tree fell on other trees and took them down with it.

Some of them had even sustained Assyria and profited from Assyria's greatness, but she fell on them.

75

Ezekiel 31:16

74

16] I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

The fall of Assyria created the same reaction among the nations as the felling of a mighty tree does in the forest;

all the other nations (trees) quaked.

The other nations also were able to grow better themselves since they no longer had to live in the shadow of mighty Assyria.

74

Ezekiel 31:18

76

18] To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

For the Lord Ezekiel asked Pharaoh and the Egyptians which of the trees (nations) in God's garden they resembled.

Egypt was obviously like Assyria in its greatness and pride and may have thought of itself as Assyria's equal.

Nevertheless God would cut down Egypt as He had felled Assyria.

76

Ezekiel 31

77

The Egyptian people would die among the uncircumcised, like barbarians (*28:10; 29:5; 32:19, 21; Jer 9:25-26*).

This was a terrible fate for people who regarded a proper burial as preparation for life beyond the grave, as the Egyptians did.

The Egyptians practiced circumcision, but the Babylonians did not.

The Egyptians despised foreigners. They would die by the strangers sword in war.

This would be the fate of Pharaoh and the Egyptians that Almighty God promised.

If Assyria could not escape Yahweh's judgment, how could Egypt?

77

Ezekiel 31

78

The story of the cedar revisits several familiar themes that occurred in the prophecies against foreign nations.

1. God hates pride because it leads people and nations to ruin (*Ezek 27:3; 28:2; Prov 16:18*).
2. The mighty fall as do the weak (*27:27-36*). When the mighty fall, it is also a loss for the weak and dependant.
3. The fall of the tree was a reminder of the mortality of human beings and individual accountability to God (*3:16-21; 18:1-21*)

If the Jewish exiles still entertained any hope that Egypt would save them from captivity, this prophecy should have caused them to abandon such a hope.

78

Nebuchadnezzar's Testimony

79

All the nations in this passage were symbolized or characterized by trees.

In Daniel Nebuchadnezzar had a vision of a great tree (*Daniel 4:1-4, 10-12, 19-22, 28-31*).

Nebuchadnezzar points out that it was due to his own pride that his kingdom was taken away for seven years (*Dan 4:36-37*).

Not only did all of this really happen to Nebuchadnezzar, but he also wrote his testimony and had it published throughout the known world!

79

Seven Oracles Against Egypt (Ezek 29:1-32:32)

80

- 1) Pharaoh as a sea-monster or crocodile is to be cast out to be devoured, and the nation is to be restored to lowly status after 40 years (*Ezek 29:1-16*).
- 2) Egypt is to be given to Nebuchadnezzar as a recompense for his futile siege of Tyre (*Ezek 29:17-21*).
- 3) Egypt will be overthrown, together with its allies, wealth, princes, and cities (*Ezek 30:1-19*).
- 4) The arms of Egypt will be broken by the arms of the king of Babylon (*Ezek 30:20-26*).
- 5) Pharaoh, the mighty cedar, is cut down and enters the underworld in disgrace (*Ezek 31:1-18*).
- 6) A lament over Pharaoh, the crocodile of Egypt, destroyed by the king of Babylon (*Ezek 32:1-16*).
- 7) A dirge sung at the descent of Egypt into the underworld (*Ezek 32:17-32*).

80