



Ezekiel - Lesson 31-32

Chapters 31-32

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- Tonight we reach the end of the first half of the book of Ezekiel
 - This first half of Ezekiel (which is actually 66% of the book) ends in Chapter 32
 - And in those 32 chapters Ezekiel was given the difficult task of telling Israel that time was up
 - Israel had engaged in gross idolatry repeatedly over centuries in spite of the Lord's warnings spoken through various prophets
 - So Ezekiel said the time had arrived for the city and temple to be destroyed
 - He's communicated that message in a variety of ways over more than a decade
 - The exiles in Babylon have ignored the prophet, made excuses, and argued with him
 - Meanwhile, the glory of the Lord has departed the temple and the Babylonian army has descended on the city
 - Nebuchadnezzar's final siege will last for three years
 - After the battle, the remaining remnant of the people will make their way to join the rest in exile
 - And Israel will appear to be gone forever, destroyed by the very God Who made them a people and gave them the land
 - But that isn't the end of the story for God's people, and in fact a glorious future awaits
 - That's what we learn in the second part of this book
- Before we get there, we have to finish the prophecies against Israel's enemies
 - Last week we began the seven oracles against Israel's greatest enemy, Egypt
 - Egypt's worst offense against God's people was introducing them to idolatry
 - And therefore the Lord gives them the longest rebuke
 - Last week we studied the first three of the seven messages against Egypt
 - The Lord promised to judge Egypt in the future through a unique period of abandonment of the land
 - Neither man nor beast would set foot in the land for 40 years
 - When we studied this prophecy, we concluded that the fulfillment must be in the Kingdom to come
 - That for the first forty years of the 1,000-year Kingdom, the land of Egypt will be left empty as a testimony against the nation
 - After which time the people of Egypt would be allowed to return for the remainder of the 1,000 years
 - But the nation would be the least among all the nations
 - This prophecy was followed by a near-term prophecy, promising that Egypt's Pharaoh would be judged in the immediate future
 - He tried to oppose Babylon when it attacked Jerusalem
 - And in that he was opposing God Who sent Babylon

- So the Lord promised to use the Babylonian army to eliminate Pharaoh's power
- And as we learned, just as the Lord promised, Nebuchadnezzar's army put an end to the reign of Pharaohs over Egypt
- Now we reach the fourth message to Egypt, and this message is an argument of logic against the false sense of security that Egypt maintained
 - The oracle begins with a comparison to another great power of the age, Assyria

Ezek. 31:1 In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,

Ezek. 31:2 “Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes, ‘Whom are you like in your greatness?’

Ezek. 31:3 ‘Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon

With beautiful branches and forest shade,

And very high,

And its top was among the clouds.

Ezek. 31:4 ‘The waters made it grow, the deep made it high.

With its rivers it continually extended all around its planting place,

And sent out its channels to all the trees of the field.

Ezek. 31:5 ‘Therefore its height was loftier than all the trees of the field

And its boughs became many and its branches long

Because of many waters as it spread them out.

Ezek. 31:6 ‘All the birds of the heavens nested in its boughs,

And under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth,

And all great nations lived under its shade.

Ezek. 31:7 ‘So it was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches;

For its roots extended to many waters.

Ezek. 31:8 ‘The cedars in God's garden could not match it;

The cypresses could not compare with its boughs,

And the plane trees could not match its branches.

No tree in God's garden could compare with it in its beauty.

Ezek. 31:9 ‘I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches,

And all the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it.

- This oracle is dated to June 21, 587, which is about 2 months from the previous message God gave Ezekiel
 - The oracle is directed at the current Pharaoh of Egypt who was a man named Hophra
 - Ezekiel is writing in Babylon, so we must assume that God was delivering this message to Pharaoh through some messenger
 - The point of this oracle is stated simply in v.2
 - Whom is Egypt like in its greatness?
 - Egypt was undoubtedly a great world power, and the nation had been great for thousands of years

- It was the world power back in Abraham's day
 - And in Ezekiel's day it was one of two powers, along with Babylon, that vied for domination
- But there was one big difference between Egypt and Babylon...Babylon had been chosen by God to execute His judgments
 - Babylon was the nation God chose to discipline His people, Israel
 - And likewise Babylon would be used by God to judge many of Israel's enemies, including Egypt
- So the question God is asking Egypt is "who do you think you are? Just how great do you think you are?"
 - It's a rhetorical question, so the Lord proceeds to give Pharaoh an answer
 - He compares the greatness of Egypt to another world power of that period of history: Assyria
- Assyria was the world power that preceded Babylon on the world stage
 - For centuries Assyria was THE world power who competed with Egypt, but it was they who dominated the world scene
 - At this point in history, Assyria was gone
 - Babylon had conquered Assyria after Nebuchadnezzar's rise to power
 - But in its day, it was glorious
 - So in vs.3-9 the Lord uses figurative language to remind the Egyptians how truly great and powerful the kingdom of Assyria had been
 - Assyria was like the dominant cedar in Lebanon
 - The old growth cedar trees in Lebanon are gone today...the region was deforested long ago, over centuries
 - But the Bible is filled with references to these trees of old
 - In fact, the cedars of Lebanon are the most commonly referenced plants in the Bible
 - That fact is a testimony to how impressive these trees were...something like the giant redwoods of California
 - These trees reportedly stood 80 feet tall and were beautifully symmetrical like a perfect carved column of stone
 - And they possessed a thick canopy of interwoven branches
 - Cedars were the keels of the great ships of the ancient world
 - They were used to build the temple in Jerusalem
 - In v.3 the Lord uses the cedar as a picture of the greatness of Assyria in its day
 - In the way a giant cedar's branches shaded and protected a large patch of ground, so did Assyria "shade" or cover much of the world
 - It was the top nation, like a cedar reaching to the clouds
- The point is obvious...as great as Egypt was, it wasn't the first or only nation to have achieved such greatness or prominence

- In fact, the Lord uses the picture of a river to make a direct comparison to Egypt
 - In v.4 the Lord says Assyria was made strong by water that fed it like a river by a cedar tree
 - Literally speaking, the Lord is describing the Tigris river, which contributed greatly to Assyria's power
 - It watered the fields and supported trade with other nations
- Likewise, Egypt's greatness was owed in large part to the power of the Nile river
 - So the Lord is drawing Egypt's attention to the similarities between it and Assyria
 - In v.5 the Lord uses birds nesting in branches to describe how Assyria, like Egypt, provided support and protection to many other nations
 - People often fled to Egypt for food in the midst of famine, and nations near Assyria turned there for support as well
- So in summary, in vs.6-7, the nation of Assyria was a sight to behold in its day
 - It was the center of the world, the strongest nation and unmatched in power
 - No other nation could compare with Assyria
- Yet even great Assyria had its day of reckoning

Ezek. 31:10 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Because it is high in stature and has set its top among the clouds, and its heart is haughty in its loftiness,

Ezek. 31:11 therefore I will give it into the hand of a despot of the nations; he will thoroughly deal with it. According to its wickedness I have driven it away.

Ezek. 31:12 "Alien tyrants of the nations have cut it down and left it; on the mountains and in all the valleys its branches have fallen and its boughs have been broken in all the ravines of the land. And all the peoples of the earth have gone down from its shade and left it.

Ezek. 31:13 "On its ruin all the birds of the heavens will dwell, and all the beasts of the field will be on its fallen branches

Ezek. 31:14 so that all the trees by the waters may not be exalted in their stature, nor set their top among the clouds, nor their well-watered mighty ones stand erect in their height. For they have all been given over to death, to the earth beneath, among the sons of men, with those who go down to the pit."

Ezek. 31:15 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day when it went down to Sheol I caused lamentations; I closed the deep over it and held back its rivers. And its many waters were stopped up, and I made Lebanon mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted away on account of it.

Ezek. 31:16 "I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall when I made it go down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit; and all the well-watered trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, were comforted in the earth beneath.

Ezek. 31:17 "They also went down with it to Sheol to those who were slain by the sword; and those who were its strength lived under its shade among the

nations.

- At a point in time, the Lord contended with the pride of Assyria
 - Like all nations, the Lord had raised up Assyria for a purpose
 - Assyria was called by God to bring discipline against the northern tribes of Israel
 - The king of Assyria did indeed conquer northern Israel and Samaria as God intended
 - We hear a summary of the Lord's act in 2 Kings 18:

2Kings 18:11 Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and put them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes,

2Kings 18:12 because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded; they would neither listen nor do it.

- But the Lord also told the king that he was not permitted to attack Judah
 - The Lord's judgment at that time was against the northern tribes alone
 - But after completing the work God gave to him, the king of Assyria still wanted more

2Chr. 32:1 After these acts of faithfulness Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself.

- The Assyrian king became greedy and forgot Who it was giving him the power to defeat Israel
 - So he assumed he could keep going south and take Judah too in his own power
 - But the Lord defended Judah

2Chr. 32:20 But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed about this and cried out to heaven.

2Chr. 32:21 And the LORD sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned in shame to his own land. And when he had entered the temple of his god, some of his own children killed him there with the sword.

2Chr. 32:22 So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria and from the hand of all others, and guided them on every side.

- The Lord defeats the entire Assyrian army overnight without Judah lifting a finger

- In 2 Kings we learn that 185,000 Assyrian warriors were killed
- That essentially put an end to the Assyrian army
- And beyond this judgment, they determined to bring the entire kingdom to an end
- Notice in v.11 the Lord says He would give Assyria into the hands of a despot of nations
 - That man was Nebuchadnezzar, and he would thoroughly deal with the rebellious, arrogant Assyria
 - Assyria's wickedness was cause for God to send a greater wickedness against it
 - Referring again to the cedar analogy; the Lord says that alien tyrants cut Assyria down, leaving it splintered on mountains and valleys
 - Its branches and bough fell, referring to the alliances that crumbled after Assyria's downfall
 - The peoples of the earth would flee from its destruction and in its ruins new things would rise up
 - Notice in v.14 the Lord declares that all "trees" by waters would not be exalted in their stature nor be set among clouds
 - Rather, these trees have been given over to death; to the earth beneath
 - Among the sons of the men who go down to the pit
 - The point here is clear: Assyria has no inherent power of its own
 - The nation, like all nations (i.e., trees), lived to serve God and had no power apart from what God gave it
 - And in the end all nations come to an end, in the same way that all things die and go back into the earth
 - And when Assyria's time was up, the Lord says in v.15 that it too went down to Sheol
 - Referring to the destination of souls, the Lord is comparing the death of a nation to the death of a man
 - No man, however powerful he is in life, can escape death
 - Which is a reminder that every person's – and every nation's – power is an illusion
 - It's merely a temporary assignment by God, and in the moment God is finished with our service, our power comes to an end
- Assyria's end was a shock to the world, because Assyria seemed unbeatable
 - In v.16 the Lord says the nations quaked at the fall of this cedar
 - And because Assyria fell, the other nations profited in the end
 - In the way smaller trees get more sunlight after a tall tree is cut down, the rest of the nations prospered when freed from Assyria
 - They didn't pay tribute or suffer under the authoritarian rule
 - But those nations that had aligned themselves with Assyria were brought down with her

- Like a tall tree falling on other trees in the forest, the Lord says in v.17 that those who lived under Assyria's sword went to Sheol too
 - So those who were oppressed by Assyria were set free, while those who oppressed with her shared her fate
- What's the point here? Assyria was every bit as great as Egypt, and in fact Assyria was even greater in its day
 - And yet consider what happened to Assyria in the end?
 - When it stopped serving a purpose to God, God brought it down
 - It only had power because the Lord gave it power
 - So when the Lord withdrew His hand, the nation fell quickly
 - We're talking about an ancient superpower disappearing overnight at the hands of Babylon
 - It's similar to the end of the Soviet Union
 - That nation was virtually equal in power to the United States for decades
 - And then almost overnight, it disappeared
 - That's the power of God to move nations as He wills
 - So the point to Egypt was that they ought not delude themselves by thinking that they were invincible
 - They certainly have existed for far longer than Assyria
 - But they are no more powerful, and therefore they can disappear just as fast when God wills
 - And that's exactly the final point the Lord makes in this oracle

Ezek. 31:18 “To which among the trees of Eden are you thus equal in glory and greatness? Yet you will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth beneath; you will lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those who were slain by the sword. So is Pharaoh and all his hordes!” declares the Lord GOD.”

- To Egypt, the Lord asks which of the trees in Eden are you equal to?
- The Lord uses the term Eden to emphasize that the “garden” of nations were planted by God like trees in Eden
- So the Lord says to Egypt you have no equal among the nations of the earth, yet you too will be brought down
 - You will be slain, lying with the uncircumcised, meaning with the unworthy outcasts
 - The Egyptians practiced their own form of circumcision, though Babylonians did not
 - And for an Egyptian, to die unburied and uncircumcised was the worst end imaginable
 - In Egyptian thinking, these indignities prevented a person from entering into

the afterlife

- So will be Pharaoh and all his hordes
 - Not only was this prophecy intended to put Egypt in its place, but it was also directed to the exiles in Babylon
 - Some were probably holding out hope that another nation might rescue them from Babylon
 - And the only nation with enough power to make that happen was Egypt
- But now the exiles are hearing that there will be no rescue from Egypt
 - This was the end of the line for Egypt as a meaningful world power
 - And it was the end of the line for the exiles hoping for a way out of Babylon apart from the Lord's grace to release His people
- Which brings us the final two messages written to Egypt, the first of which is a lamentation or eulogy for Egypt's fall

Ezek. 32:1 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,

Ezek. 32:2 “Son of man, take up a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him,

‘You compared yourself to a young lion of the nations,
Yet you are like the monster in the seas;
And you burst forth in your rivers
And muddied the waters with your feet
And fouled their rivers.’”

Ezek. 32:3 Thus says the Lord GOD,
“Now I will spread My net over you
With a company of many peoples,
And they shall lift you up in My net.

Ezek. 32:4 “I will leave you on the land;
I will cast you on the open field.
And I will cause all the birds of the heavens to dwell on you,
And I will satisfy the beasts of the whole earth with you.

Ezek. 32:5 “I will lay your flesh on the mountains
And fill the valleys with your refuse.

Ezek. 32:6 “I will also make the land drink the discharge of your blood
As far as the mountains,
And the ravines will be full of you.

Ezek. 32:7 “And when I extinguish you,
I will cover the heavens and darken their stars;
I will cover the sun with a cloud
And the moon will not give its light.

Ezek. 32:8 “All the shining lights in the heavens
I will darken over you
And will set darkness on your land,”
Declares the Lord GOD.

Ezek. 32:9 “I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples when I bring your destruction among the nations, into lands which you have not known.

Ezek. 32:10 “I will make many peoples appalled at you, and their kings will be horribly afraid of you when I brandish My sword before them; and they will tremble every moment, every man for his own life, on the day of your fall.”

- This oracle and the one that follows come in the final month of the twelfth year of exile
 - This one comes on the first of the month, while the second one comes 2 weeks later
 - Based on the dates provided in the next chapter (Chapter 33), we learn that this oracle comes several months after Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar
 - And it also comes two months after the exiles in Babylon first learned of Jerusalem’s fall
 - If the exiles had heard of Jerusalem’s fall, then certainly the Egyptians had also heard the same
 - And the news probably gave them reason to celebrate, since it meant one less rival on the world stage
 - But the Lord sends this message to the exiles and to the Egyptians to make clear they had no reason to celebrate
 - Though it would take a few more years to come to pass, the Egyptians would likewise be destroyed
 - In v.2 Ezekiel is told to speak a lamentation over the Egyptians and specifically over Pharaoh
 - Remember last week we mentioned that Ezekiel recorded the prophecies against Egypt out of order from when he received them from God
 - The different order allowed him to stress other connections, as with Tribulation and the Antichrist as we saw last week
 - And in the case of Chapter 32, it means Ezekiel moved this prophecy to the end since lamentations typically follow judgments
 - The Lord begins saying that Hophra, the Pharaoh of Egypt, compared himself to a lion, when he was actually a monster of the Nile
 - The Egyptian sphinx has the body of a lion but the head of a pharaoh, which is how the kings saw themselves
 - But the Lord says that was an incorrect picture
 - In reality, the king of Egypt was more like a river monster that comes out of the water to foul the river and muddy it
 - That symbolizes Egypt’s negative influence on the nations around it, particularly Israel
- As a result, the Lord promises to catch Pharaoh out of the water like catching a fish in a net
 - The net would be manned by a large group of people, Ezekiel says, referring to first the Babylonian army and later the Persians

- Interestingly, in the Babylonian account of Creation, they believed that their god Marduk captured a sea monster
 - The sea monster, Tiamat, was responsible for the chaos of the Universe, and Marduk caught the monster in a net and killed it
 - So it appears the Lord is using imagery from Babylonian culture to remind Israel that He is the sovereign Creator over nations
- We know there was an invasion of Egypt by the Persians resulting in widespread destruction and death in the land
 - The imagery of vs.4-6 indicates many lives would be lost and blood spilled throughout the land of Egypt
 - And in 526 BC, a final battle of Pelusium resulted in Egypt becoming part of the Persian empire
- But the destruction of that battle didn't equal the destruction described here
 - So unless we are prepared to accuse the Lord of exaggerating, the facts of history are starting to diverge from the text
 - Furthermore, the descriptions in vs.7-8 really go off in a new direction
- The Lord says in the day of this destruction, the heavens would be impacted as well
 - The stars would be darkened, the sun would not shine and the moon would not give its light
 - Furthermore, the lights of the heavens, referring to the stars, would darken over Egypt and darkness would come over the land
 - That reminds us of the judgments of the Exodus, which are themselves forerunners for the judgments of Tribulation
- So just as we saw last study, these references preclude a historical interpretation
 - There is simply no historical record of these things happening over Egypt in conjunction with an foreign invasion
 - Yet we do see examples of them reflected in end times events
 - Specifically, we know the heavens will be shaken by God's judgments during the Tribulation
 - Revelation mentions blood from Armageddon flowing like a river for 200 miles, which is the distance from Jerusalem to the Nile delta
 - Furthermore, we see the sun going black for periods, the stars falling, and the moon changing as well
 - These descriptions fit the circumstances described by Ezekiel
 - And they remind us of what we learned in previous oracles, when the Lord will bring ultimate judgment against Israel
 - In particular, note in v.9 that the Lord will trouble many other nations by bringing destruction upon them too
 - Clearly that points to something bigger than merely an invasion of Egypt
 - In v.10 the world as a whole would be frightened at Egypt's fall, which also suggests events bigger than one nation

- And the description becomes even more interesting in the next part

Ezek. 32:11 For thus says the Lord GOD, “The sword of the king of Babylon will come upon you.

Ezek. 32:12 “By the swords of the mighty ones I will cause your hordes to fall; all of them are tyrants of the nations,
And they will devastate the pride of Egypt,
And all its hordes will be destroyed.

Ezek. 32:13 “I will also destroy all its cattle from beside many waters;
And the foot of man will not muddy them anymore
And the hoofs of beasts will not muddy them.

Ezek. 32:14 “Then I will make their waters settle
And will cause their rivers to run like oil,”
Declares the Lord GOD.

Ezek. 32:15 “When I make the land of Egypt a desolation,
And the land is destitute of that which filled it,
When I smite all those who live in it,
Then they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezek. 32:16 “This is a lamentation and they shall chant it. The daughters of the nations shall chant it. Over Egypt and over all her hordes they shall chant it,”
declares the Lord GOD.

- Now the Lord tells Egypt that the king of Babylon would be part of the judgment
 - In v.12 the Lord promises that the pride of Egypt would be brought low
 - The hordes of Egypt, referring to its armies, would be cut down
 - And the cattle would also be destroyed
 - But then notice that as we saw last time, the Lord says neither man nor beast would set foot in the land
 - The water would settle, as into the ground
 - And in place of water, the rivers would run like oil
 - And the land would become a desolation
 - And all who live in the land would die, He says in v.15
 - So the mention of the king of Babylon suggests something historical, perhaps at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar
 - And though we know Nebuchadnezzar did contend with Egypt, there is no record of him attacking to this extent
 - And some of the details simply can’t be historical events because nothing like them has ever happened
 - So we’re back to our same conclusion...this is a prophecy concerning the destruction of Tribulation
 - The desolation is consistent with the destruction of Tribulation
 - And even the reference to the rivers running like oil makes sense

- The two witnesses of Tribulation have the power to turn waters into blood, which flows like oil
- And certainly the other references to massive death fits
- If so, then what about the reference to the king of Babylon?
 - That reference also fits if we assume that this is the future king of Babylon, the Antichrist who rules from Babylon during Tribulation
 - If so, then the march of his armies in Egypt refers to the conquests of that man during the early stages of the seven years
 - Apparently the Lord uses the Antichrist to judge Egypt much in the same way He used Nebuchadnezzar to judge Israel's enemies
 - And so in that day to come the world will chant a lamentation over Egypt
 - Because that nation will fall to the Antichrist and signal the start of that man's conquest of the earth
 - And with that statement, Ezekiel receives the final oracle about Egypt, which serves as a summary of all the other six

Ezek. 32:17 In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,

Ezek. 32:18 “Son of man, wail for the hordes of Egypt and bring it down, her and the daughters of the powerful nations, to the nether world, with those who go down to the pit;

Ezek. 32:19 ‘Whom do you surpass in beauty?

Go down and make your bed with the uncircumcised.’

Ezek. 32:20 “They shall fall in the midst of those who are slain by the sword. She is given over to the sword; they have drawn her and all her hordes away.

Ezek. 32:21 “The strong among the mighty ones shall speak of him and his helpers from the midst of Sheol, ‘They have gone down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’

Ezek. 32:22 “Assyria is there and all her company; her graves are round about her. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword,

Ezek. 32:23 whose graves are set in the remotest parts of the pit and her company is round about her grave. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living.

Ezek. 32:24 “Elam is there and all her hordes around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised to the lower parts of the earth, who instilled their terror in the land of the living and bore their disgrace with those who went down to the pit.

Ezek. 32:25 “They have made a bed for her among the slain with all her hordes. Her graves are around it, they are all uncircumcised, slain by the sword (although their terror was instilled in the land of the living), and they bore their disgrace with those who go down to the pit; they were put in the midst of the slain.

Ezek. 32:26 “Meshech, Tubal and all their hordes are there; their graves surround them. All of them were slain by the sword uncircumcised, though

they instilled their terror in the land of the living.

Ezek. 32:27 “Nor do they lie beside the fallen heroes of the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war and whose swords were laid under their heads; but the punishment for their iniquity rested on their bones, though the terror of these heroes was once in the land of the living.

Ezek. 32:28 “But in the midst of the uncircumcised you will be broken and lie with those slain by the sword.

Ezek. 32:29 “There also is Edom, its kings and all its princes, who for all their might are laid with those slain by the sword; they will lie with the uncircumcised and with those who go down to the pit.

Ezek. 32:30 “There also are the chiefs of the north, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who in spite of the terror resulting from their might, in shame went down with the slain. So they lay down uncircumcised with those slain by the sword and bore their disgrace with those who go down to the pit.

Ezek. 32:31 “These Pharaoh will see, and he will be comforted for all his hordes slain by the sword, even Pharaoh and all his army,” declares the Lord GOD.

Ezek. 32:32 “Though I instilled a terror of him in the land of the living, yet he will be made to lie down among the uncircumcised along with those slain by the sword, even Pharaoh and all his hordes,” declares the Lord GOD.

- Just two weeks later, Ezekiel gets the final oracle about Egypt
 - It’s a bit tongue-in-cheek picturing Egypt in her final resting place alongside the other enemies of Israel who have been judged
 - Each nation is personalized as if they could literally descend into Hell
 - It starts with the Lord mocking Egypt for all her supposed strength and beauty
 - Nevertheless, they will end up among the lowly in the pit
 - The people of the nation will be destroyed in battle, Ezekiel says in vs.20-21, slain by a sword
 - They are given over to the sword, which indicates that the Lord appointed this outcome for the nation
 - In v.21 Ezekiel says the strongest among the mighty nations of the world would speak of Egypt and its helpers as barbarians, brought low with the rest
 - Among those who see Egypt brought low into Sheol is Assyria
 - Assyria and her allies are strewn around Sheol buried in corners
 - The rest marveled at how a kingdom so great could be brought so low
 - Elam is mentioned in v.24 and was a country east of Babylon
 - This a prophetic reference to the Persians, who followed the Babylonians in history
 - Elam is also lying with its hordes in Sheol, put there by God’s hand at an appointed time even though the world feared them
 - And Egypt would share their fate as well
- Also, we find Meshech and Tubal, nations that occupied present-day Turkey, which

may be a reference to the Alexandrian Empire that followed Persia

- They suffered a similar fate, of course
 - One moment they ruled the world
 - The next moment, they are gone; their warriors in the grave with their weapons
 - That's the power of God to move nations, and such would be the outcome for Egypt too
- At the end, the Lord mentions several former powers of the region including Edom, the chiefs of the North and the Sidonians
 - Each were the world power for a time in their region and yet each had come and gone and were now residing in Sheol
 - And those who lived and supported these nations died and landed in Sheol, in disgrace with them
 - So no one in Egypt should be deluded to think they would escape this pattern
 - And Israel should trust the Lord to bring these judgments in the course of time
- Finally, in an ironic twist, we see the king of Egypt being “comforted” by the sight of so many other mighty nations occupying Sheol
 - Obviously, the king of Pharaoh is not at all comforted to be there
 - But it dawns upon the leader that he is sharing the same destiny of all other powerful nations
 - That at least Pharaoh was singled-out in judgment
 - Even though he was once the terror of the land, now he's merely one among equals all in judgment together
- Death is the great equalizer, and though this scene is obviously contrived to make a point, it also serves as a reminder of the reality of judgment
 - This is the fate for so many in the world
 - It is a conscious existence where understanding follows
 - Those who enter Hades are aware of their fate and of those who shared it
 - Yet it's a timeless state that has no end, leaving no hope
 - And certainly, Chapter 32 ends without a sense of hope for Israel's enemies
 - But for the exiles who first heard the prophet's words, there was an equal sense of hopelessness over their circumstances
 - Their nation had been destroyed, their beloved city razed and their holy temple erased to the foundations
 - The final gourd of exiles had arrived telling tales of horrors
 - So the emotional low point of Ezekiel's book comes at the end of this chapter, both for the enemies of Israel and for Israel itself
 - And from this pit of despair, the Lord begins to lift Israel up a step at a time
 - That process raises their eyes off of their present circumstances in judgment and onto a vision of the final glory of the Kingdom

- We start that process of moving upward next week