

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

EZEKIEL 29-32

Whenever I think of Egypt, Cecil B. DeMille's classic movie, "[The Ten Commandments](#)," comes to mind.

The film was released in 1956, and it's production took three years. It was mostly shot on site in Egypt. A total of 12,000 extras were used in the picture.

What's most interesting was Cecil B. DeMille's motivation for making the flick. He said, "[The world needs a reminder of the law of God \(since the horrors of World War 2 and\) the world's awful experience of totalitarianism... many thoughtful people realize anew that the law of God is the essential bedrock of human freedom.](#)" Oh, that we would remember that again!

The Bible provides mankind the only ethic that can produce true freedom. The Bible is the great liberator.

Tonight, we return to the land of Yul Brynner, Yvonne DeCarlo, Edgar G. Robinson, and Vincent Price - we'll go back to the land of the Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

And just as God judged Egypt during the days of Charlton Heston (*I mean Moses*) he had to judge them again. Ezekiel lived 900 years after the Exodus. The humbling of Pharaoh had long worn off. Egypt's defeat at the Red Sea was buried under the sands of time.

Pharaoh had again become arrogant and haughty, and had exalted himself above God. Now God is determined to take him down a notch of two.

Chapter 29, “In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month...” Ezekiel’s prophecies in chapters 29-32 are an anthology - a collection of seven prophecies delivered over a period of 17 years.

All but one is dated. The exception is 30:1-19.

These were *Ezekiel’s greatest hits... against Egypt*. All concerned God judgment against the Egyptians.

On our calendar the first prophecy is dated January 7, 587 BC. It was given one year and two days after the Babylonian general Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Jerusalem - and seven months before its fall.

Ezekiel writes, “the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt.” At the time, the pharaoh was a man named Hophra - the grandson of the famous Pharaoh Necho who had led the Egyptian army to defeat against the Babylonians at the decisive battle of Carchemish.

Prior to this battle world politics were dominated by two superpowers - *east of Judah was Babylon, and south was Egypt*. Jerusalem and Judah sat between them - caught in the crossfire. After Nebuchadnezzar’s victory at Carchemish, Babel emerged the world’s lone superpower. Egypt limped home nursing her wounds.

Pharaoh Hophra nursed Egypt back to health and they remained a proud people until 568 BC. It was 18 years after the fall of Jerusalem, that the Babylonians crossed the Nile River and conquered the Egyptians.

Ezekiel is now writing at a time when Egypt had temporarily risen from the ashes and retained her pride and prominence. But true to God's Word, a permanent and ultimate decline is just around the corner!

God tells the prophet, “Speak, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster who lies in the midst of his rivers...”’ The Hebrew term “*monster*” means “*dragon*.” It refers to a marine monster, a sea serpent.

Remember in Cecil B de Mille’s movie, Yul Bryner’s crown, *the pharaoh’s crown*, sported a golden serpent.

This monster may also have been a crocodile. The croc was a symbol of the pharaoh. The Egyptians turned the crocodile into a god. And the pharaoh was known as the crocodile lying the midst of the Nile.

As we move through these prophetic passages let’s not miss the allegorical message... Throughout the Bible, Egypt represents *the godless world system*.

Israel is in bondage to Pharaoh - or the ancient sea serpent, Satan - who is the ruler of this world. Moses, the Deliverer, is a type of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who brings us out of this world and makes us God’s people.

The pharaoh boasts in verse 3, “My River is my own; I have made it for myself.’ I have a book, “The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said.” One example, is the city councilman who said “I move, Mr Chairman, that all fire extinguishers be examined ten days before every fire.”

Yet, here's another stupid comment that could be added to the book... History tells us Hophra made some improvements on the river that provided a boost to Egypt's economy. But his successes went to his head. Here he brags, *"My Nile is my own, I have made it for myself."* Hophra says he owned and made the Nile River, whereas the Nile was what made him.

Every year the Nile would overflow its banks and water the fields. The river brought a nutritious silt that fertilized the fields of Egypt. Yet rather than look at the annual flooding as God's blessing, the pharaoh took it as a reason he didn't need God. Hophra grew haughty.

The Greek historian, Herodotus, wrote that Pharaoh Hophra boasted that he was so entrenched and secure in his realm that no god or army could uproot him.

And this is the problem with modern man. We've made a few advances in science and technology and it's gone to our collective heads. Humans assume we're self-sufficient now, and no longer need God.

This can also happen to a pastor... *when his church experiences some growth.* It happens to a businessman... *after a couple of profitable quarters.*

We start assuming the credit, taking the bows, rather than acknowledging that the glory belongs to God.

Our passage tonight proves there's one thing God won't tolerate and that's man stealing His glory. As God says in Isaiah 48:11, *"For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it... I will not give My glory to another."*

Verse 4, “But I will put hooks in your jaws, and cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales; I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, and all the fish in your rivers will stick to your scales.” The fish that stuck to the Pharaoh’s scales were his followers.

“I will leave you in the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers; you shall fall on the open field; you shall not be picked up or gathered. I have given you as food to the beasts of the field and to the birds of the heavens. “Then 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. When they took hold of you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their backs quiver.” A wooden staff needs to be strong. It should provide a shepherd with stability and resilience.

The nation Judah leaned on Egypt as if her southern neighbor was a sturdy staff. Instead she discovered Egypt was a flimsy reed that broke under pressure.

In Jerusalem’s final days, despite the warnings of Jeremiah, Judah’s King, Zedekiah, signed a protection treaty with the Egyptians. Her previous kings, Jehoiakim and Hezekiah had made similar treaties.

Caught between the two superpowers of Babel and Egypt, the Judean kings waffled back and forth - trying to hedge their bets as to who would prevail. At times they were *pro-Babylon*. At other times *pro-Egyptian*.

As a matter of fact, for a time Judah had a two party political system - pro-Babylonian and pro-Egyptian.

In the end Judah was attacked by the Babylonians and abandoned by the Egyptians. Egypt proved to be the unreliable staff. The fragile reed that snapped.

Realize just how powerful and relevant Ezekiel's prophecy was when it was first uttered. The prophet was speaking directly to the current political situation.

God's people had placed their national hope and trust in their former enemy - now a crumbling empire.

And the spiritual lesson here is also obvious.

This world is our enemy. And it's on its way out.

When tough times come don't turn back to the very things that once let you down and held you in bondage.

Don't renew alliances with old friends, or return to old habits from which you were delivered. This world is *a rickety reed, a shaky staff*. It'll *splinter*, it won't *support*.

And there's a lesson here for the politically-minded. Trust in any political party and it will let you down.

Former Senator George Mitchell once said, "[Although He's regularly asked to do so, God does not take sides in American politics.](#)" Just as God was neither pro-Babylon or pro-Egyptian, today God isn't Republican or Democrat. God is the true independent!

It was Will Rogers who said, "[The more you read about politics, you got to admit that each party is worse than the other.](#)" We make a huge mistake when we posture God as either Republican or Democrat. Our great God is beholden to no one. *God is on God's side!*

God has His own agenda, and expects all parties to bow to His will, not vice versa. This is why I encourage Christians not to vote *party*, but *principle*. Vote for the party platform that most closely reflects biblical values.

Verse 8, “Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will bring a sword upon you and cut off from you man and beast. And the land of Egypt shall become desolate and waste; then they will know that I am the Lord, because he said, ‘The River is mine, and I have made it.’ God took offense to the pharaoh’s boast.

As a matter of fact, He’s offended by all pride.

“Indeed, therefore, I am against you and against your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Ethiopia.” From Egypt’s northern most fortified town to its southern most city, near Ethiopia.

“Neither foot of man shall pass through it nor foot of beast pass through it, and it shall be uninhabited forty years.” After the fall of Jerusalem, the Jews were taken captive to Babylon, and remained there for 70 years.

Likewise, the Egyptians were exiled to Babylon, but for 40 years. For four decades Egypt was a ghost town. A Babylonian historian named Berosus wrote of how Egyptians were brought to Babel in vast numbers.

God continues His judgment, “I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate; and among the cities that are laid waste, her cities shall be

desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries.” ‘Yet, thus says the Lord God: “At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered.

I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom.

It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself above the nations, for I will diminish them so that they will not rule over the nations anymore. No longer shall it be the confidence of the house of Israel, but will remind them of their iniquity when they turned to follow them. Then they shall know that I am the Lord God.”” The Egyptians will return from Babylon, but never again become a great empire.

And a survey of Egyptian history proves the accuracy of Ezekiel's prophecy. Egypt was a world superpower for 2100 years, until Nebuchadnezzar's conquest in 568 BC. Now for the last 2500 years Egypt has been a *“has-been.”* After their return from Babel they were a province of Persia, then of the Greeks, then the Romans, then the Turks, until modern times.

Today, Egypt is dependent on American aid and is a country in turmoil. It's currently under military control.

A second prophecy begins in verse 17, **“And it came to pass in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying...”** This occurs 17 years after the previous prophecy, or in 571

BC. The same year the Babylonians sacked the city of Tyre (see Chapter 26).

God tells Ezekiel, “Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor strenuously against Tyre; every head was made bald, and every shoulder rubbed raw; yet neither he nor his army received wages from Tyre, for the labor which they expended on it.” A conquering king always paid his soldiers with the spoils of battle. But in the case of Tyre it was a hollow victory. Remember, before the city collapsed, the men of Tyre moved their wealth and families out of the city to an island a mile off the coast.

Nebuchadnezzar’s army laid siege to Tyre for thirteen long, arduous years, but when the victory was won, he had no treasure from which to pay his soldiers.

How is Nebuchadnezzar going to make payroll?

God has an answer for the General! Verse 19, “Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Surely I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he shall take away her wealth, carry off her spoil, and remove her pillage; and that will be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor, because they worked for Me,’ says the Lord God.”

Remember the many times in Jeremiah when God referred to Nebuchadnezzar as His tool of judgment.

Even though the Babylonians were idolators God used them. They were His instrument to execute justice on the nations... and when God was done, He brought judgment on Babylon. Here Egypt is judged, and they become God’s payment for destroying Tyre.

Verse 21, “In that day I will cause the horn of the house of Israel to spring forth, and I will open your mouth to speak in their midst. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.” Israel will be strongest when she stops depending on Egypt, and listens to Ezekiel.

When she realizes God is her only deliverer!

Chapter 30, “The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, “Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Wail, ‘Woe to the day!’ For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.” Whenever the term, “*day of the Lord*” appears in Scripture it should alert you that the text is about to go *global and future*.

Of the prophecies in tonight’s chapters this is the only one without a date... for it could be yet future. That’s usually what the “*day of the Lord*” implies...

Today we live in “*the day of man.*” Man is having his say, getting his way - but the day is coming when God will shut us up, and God will have the final word.

“*The day of the Lord*” is a technical term for the end of the age and God’s final judgments on mankind. It begins with the rapture of the Church, followed by God’s judgments on the rebellious planet, culminating in Jesus’ second coming and the reign of His kingdom. That means expect this prophecy to look future...

“The sword shall come upon Egypt, and great anguish shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain fall in Egypt, and they take

away her wealth, and her foundations are broken down. “Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, all the mingled people, Chub, and the men of the lands who are allied, shall fall with them by the sword.”

Daniel 11 speaks of the Antichrist stretching out his hand against Egypt and North Africa. Daniel 11:42-43 read, “Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt.” In future, the Antichrist will subdue Egypt, just as Nebuchadnezzar did in the past.

“Thus says the Lord: “Those who uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down.

From Migdol to Syene those within her shall fall by the sword,” says the Lord God. “They shall be desolate in the midst of the desolate countries, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are laid waste.

Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have set a fire in Egypt and all her helpers are destroyed.”

And this one phrase occurs 54 times in Ezekiel. Talk about a theme song - a motto. All that God does - His blessings and His judgments - are for one ultimate purpose - *that the world will know that He is the Lord!*

Verse 9, “On that day messengers shall go forth from Me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great anguish shall come upon them, as on the day of Egypt; for indeed it is coming!” ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will also make a multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with

him, the most terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land; they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.” This is a dual-prophecy. It speaks of the sixth century BC, and events of the end times.

“I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; I will make the land waste, and all that is in it, by the hand of aliens. I, the Lord, have spoken.” It’s interesting, since the 1970 construction of the Aswan Dam, the Nile River can now be dried up with a flip of a switch. Here, *God makes the rivers dry.*

“Thus says the Lord God: “I will also destroy the idols, and cause the images to cease from Noph (which was ancient Memphis); there shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt; The great Egyptian dynasties ended with the Babylonian captivity.

Never again did an Egyptian rule as king. There were Persian governors, the Greeks and Alexander, the Romans, Arab sheiks - even in modern times King Faud was not Egyptian, but Albanian. Today, Egypt has an elected president. Ezekiel’s prophecy came true.

Verse 13, “I will put fear in the land of Egypt. I will make Pathros desolate (or Upper Egypt, which would be Southern Egypt on a map), set fire to Zoan (a city on the Nile River), and execute judgments in No (which was the ancient Egyptian capitol of Thebes).”

For 500 years the pharaohs were buried in the [Valley of the Kings](#), across the river from Thebes. It was there they buried their mummies... who were also daddies.

Which reminds me of a few mummy jokes...

What's the most important day in Egypt? *Mummy's Day...*
Why do mummies have trouble making friends? *They're too wrapped up in themselves...* What kind of music do mummies like? *Wrap music... or Ragtime...*

What kind of briefs does a mummy wear? *Fruit of the Tomb...* Why don't mummies take vacations? *They're afraid to relax and unwind...* If a mummy gives you two dimes for a quarter, what happened? *He E-gypted you...* Where do mummies swim? *The Dead Sea...*

Back to God's judgments, verse 15, "I will pour My fury on Sin, the strength of Egypt (the city of Sin was also called Pelusium, it was a fortress in the Sinai); I will cut off the multitude of No (again Thebes)..."

Here's an interesting historical footnote... In 525 BC the Persian General Cambyses laid a siege against Pelusium, but beforehand he did a little research.

Cambyses learned that the Egyptians worshipped dogs and cats, so he gathered a herd of dogs and cats and marched them before his army. The Egyptians refused to fight. This led to an easy Persian victory.

Literally, the Egypt's idolatry caused their downfall.

God will also "set a fire in Egypt; Sin shall have great pain, No shall be split open, and Noph (Memphis) shall be in distress daily. The young men of Aven and Pi Beseth shall fall by the sword, and these cities shall go into captivity." "Aven"

was the ancient Egyptian city of **On**, which was later given the Greek name **Heliopolis**.

Verse 18, “**At Tehaphnehes** (another city in the northern delta) **the day shall also be darkened, when I break the yokes of Egypt there. And her arrogant strength shall cease in her; as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.**”

Notice again, God took offense at Egypt’s arrogance.

“**Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt, then they shall know that I am the Lord.**”” These prophecies were proof that the God of Ezekiel was truly the Lord.

Verse 20 begins a new prophecy, “**And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying...**” This was April 29, 586 BC, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem was in its 14th month.

The Jews were getting desperate. They had sent to Egypt for help. They were expecting the Egyptian calvary to appear any second. Sadly, it never came.

“**Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and see, it has not been bandaged for healing, nor a splint put on to bind it, to make it strong enough to hold a sword. Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Surely I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, both the strong one and the one that was broken; and I will make the sword fall out of his hand.’**” Imagine, being a Jew in dire straights. They hoped in Egypt - that the pharaoh would fight for them.

Here Ezekiel tells them God is against the Pharaoh. God broke not just one of his arm - but both his arms.

Verse 23, “I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them throughout the countries. 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 will groan before him with the groanings of a mortally wounded man. Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; they shall know that I am the Lord, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt.”

Remember when Moses raised his arms the Israelites prevailed in their battle with the Amalekites.

But when his arms weakened the enemy got the upper hand. When Moses’ assistants saw this they held up his arms... Here God is holding up the arms of the king of Babylon, and He’s breaking the arms of the Pharaoh. This was all vivid imagery to the Jews.

“I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries.” And here it is again, “Then they shall know that I am the Lord.”

Chapter 31, “Now it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying...” Here’s the date of this prophecy - June, 586 BC. This is now less than two months from the sacking of Jerusalem.

“Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: ‘Whom are you like in your greatness?’

Indeed Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with fine branches that shaded the forest, and of high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs. The waters made it grow; underground waters gave it height, with their rivers running around the place where it was planted, and sent out rivulets to all the trees of the field. 'Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field; its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long because of the abundance of water, as it sent them out. All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young; and in its shadow all great nations made their home.'

Throughout this chapter and all the Bible, a common idiom for a nation or empire is that of a giant, branch laden tree. In Matthew 13 Jesus paints the Kingdom of God as a tiny mustard seed that grows into a great tree where all the birds, or nations of the earth, will nest.

Here Egypt is compared to Assyria. Both were world-dominating empires. Both were conquered by Babylon.

Verse 7, 'Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches, because its roots reached to abundant waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide it; the fir trees were not like its boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like its branches; no tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty. I made it beautiful with a multitude of branches, so that all the trees of Eden envied it, that were in the garden of God.'

The Assyrian empire grew up around the Tigris river, near the traditional site of the Garden of Eden.

It emerged among the earth's kingdoms as a strong cedar. Its branches extended its power and beauty.

If God views nations as trees, I wonder how He sees America. We've grown tall in a short period of time. Our trunk is strong, and our branches extend around the globe. He might also see us as a beautiful tree.

Yet, we've fallen victim to what toppled these trees of old. We too have become proud and self-sufficient.

And if God judged them He will surely judge us...

“Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Because you have increased in height, and it set its top among the thick boughs, and its heart was lifted up in its height, therefore I will deliver it into the hand of the mighty one of the nations, and he shall surely deal with it; I have driven it out for its wickedness.’ Assyria’s problem was also its pride. *“It’s heart was lifted up in its height...”*”

“And aliens, the most terrible of the nations (these were the Babylonians), have cut it down and left it; its branches have fallen on the mountains and in all the valleys; its boughs lie broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the peoples of the earth have gone from under its shadow and left it.” A once beautiful, elegant tree is no more. It’s been splintered and uprooted.

Verse 13, ‘On its ruin will remain all the birds of the heavens, and all the beasts of the field will come to its branches - ‘So that no trees by the waters may ever again exalt themselves for their height, nor set their tops among the

thick boughs, that no tree which drinks water may ever be high enough to reach up to them.

‘For they have all been delivered to death, to the depths of the earth, among the children of men who go down to the Pit.’ Ezekiel tracks the fall of Assyria all the way to “*the Pit*” - in Hebrew it’s “*Sheol*” or “*Hell*.”

Verse 15, “Thus says the Lord God: ‘In the day when it went down to hell, I caused mourning. I covered the deep because of it. I restrained its rivers, and the great waters were held back. I caused Lebanon to mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it.

I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to hell together with those who descend into the Pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the depths of the earth. They also went down to hell with it, with those slain by the sword; and those who were its strong arm dwelt in its shadows among the nations. ‘To which of the trees in Eden will you then be likened in glory and greatness? Yet you shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the depths of the earth; you shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude,’ says the Lord God.”

Chapter 32, “And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying...” This prophecy was given to Ezekiel 18 months after the fall of Jerusalem - about two

months after news of the destruction of the city had reached Ezekiel in Babel.

“Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him: ‘You are like a young lion among the nations, and you are like a monster in the seas, bursting forth in your rivers, troubling the waters with your feet, and fouling their rivers.’” Again, the pharaoh is seen as a river monster, a sea creature.

Yet God is a fisherman, expert at tackling large creatures, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will therefore spread My net over you with a company of many people, and they will draw you up in My net.”’

“Then I will leave you on the land; I will cast you out on the open fields, and cause to settle on you all the birds of the heavens. And with you I will fill the beasts of the whole earth. I will lay your flesh on the mountains, and fill the valleys with your carcass.”

Egypt and its pharaoh will be a like a fish out of water - left on the dock for the scavengers to eat.

“I will also water the land with the flow of your blood, even to the mountains; and the riverbeds will be full of you.” Recall the plagues of the Exodus, the first miracle God brought upon Egypt was turning the Nile into blood. Here’s He’s saying one day it’ll be repeated.

“When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.

All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, and bring darkness upon your land,” says the Lord God.” The ninth plague was a thick darkness all across the land of Egypt for three full days. Perhaps, God manipulated a sort of solar eclipse over Egypt.

Remember though, how these prophecies were prefaced in Chapter 30. They were associated with *“the day of the Lord.”* That means it’s probable that these predictions won’t finally be fulfilled until the last days and the judgments spoken of in Revelation 6-19.

Verse 9, “I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries which you have not known.” This doesn’t just refer to a local, but global calamity.

“Yes, I will make many peoples astonished at you, and their kings shall be horribly afraid of you when I brandish My sword (or unsheathe - literally, God will draw His sword) before them; and they shall tremble every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of your fall. ‘For thus says the Lord God: “The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. By the swords of the mighty warriors, all of them the most terrible of the nations, I will cause your multitude to fall.

“They shall plunder the pomp of Egypt, and all its multitude shall be destroyed. Also I will destroy all its animals from beside its great waters; the foot of man shall muddy them no more, nor shall the hooves of animals muddy them.” Neither man or animal will muddy the waters. The land of Egypt will be forsaken.

Then I will make their waters clear, and make their rivers run like oil,” says the Lord God. “When I make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country is destitute of all that once filled it, when I strike all who dwell in it, then they shall know that I am the Lord. This is the lamentation with which they shall lament her; the daughters of the nations shall lament her; they shall lament for her, for Egypt, and for all her multitude,” says the Lord God.” This is Egypt’s funeral dirge.

Verse 17, “It came to pass also in the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying...” This prophecy came two weeks after the prophecy in the first half of the chapter.

“Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down to the depths of the earth, her and the daughters of the famous nations, with those who go down to the Pit: ‘whom do you surpass in beauty?

Go down, be placed with the uncircumcised.” Like the Hebrews, the Egyptians were circumcised. Yet God will treat them as if they weren’t - as unclean people.

“They shall fall in the midst of those slain by the sword; she is delivered to the sword, drawing her and all her multitudes. The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with those who help him: ‘They have gone down, they lie with the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’” Again, Egypt’s plight is tracked all the way to Hell. She’s seen sharing Hell with pagan nations. She refused to believe in God.

In Dante's classic, "[Inferno](#)," the author takes us on a tour of Hell. He describes it's occupants and torments.

This is what Ezekiel does in the next few verses.

Verse 22, "Assyria is there, and all her company, with their graves all around her, all of them slain, fallen by the sword. Her graves are set in the recesses of the Pit, and her company is all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who caused terror in the land of the living. "There is Elam (these were Persians, allies of Babylon) and all her multitude, all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who have gone down uncircumcised to the lower parts of the earth, who caused their terror in the land of the living; now they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit." Egypt and Elam have gone to hell.

"They have set her bed in the midst of the slain, with all her multitude, with her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit; it was put in the midst of the slain." Nations who wrecked havoc on earth are now sentenced to Hell. Mighty nations, once glorious nations, are now shamed.

And along with them "There are Meshech and Tubal and all their multitudes, with all their graves around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living." Meshech and Tubal are nations north of Mesopotamia.

All these nations are described as "*uncircumcised*."

Circumcision was the seal of the covenant God made with the Hebrew people. When He called Abram from among the Gentiles, God gave him this sign.

Thus, in the OT to be uncircumcised was to not know God - to be unrelated to God. To the Jews the term “*uncircumcised*” was a synonym for “*unbeliever.*”

Verse 27, “*They do not lie with the mighty who are fallen of the uncircumcised, who have gone down to hell with their weapons of war; they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities will be on their bones, because of the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.*” The phrase, “*their iniquities will be on their bones*” implies punishment beyond the grave.

Eternal punishment is both an OT and a NT concept.

In 1991 US News did an article entitled, “*Hell’s Sober Comeback.*” It reported a revival in our belief in Hell. At the time 60% of Americans believed in a real Hell.

That’s a statistic that holds steady today. The article though quoted people and their personal views of Hell.

One man dismissed the notion of Hell as “*shallow nostalgia*” - a carry-over from childhood beliefs. But then he backed up his statement with words that challenged me. He said, “*If people really believed in Hell they wouldn’t be watching basketball or even TV preachers. They would be out rescuing people.*”

What a truth! Out of the mouth of an unbeliever! If we took seriously this description we would be shedding tears and

offering prayers for those who don't know Christ. I wonder how many of us *really* believe in Hell?

Verse 28, “Yes, you shall be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and lie with those slain by the sword. There is Edom, her kings and all her princes, who despite their might are laid beside those slain by the sword; they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with those who go down to the Pit. There are the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down with the slain in shame at the terror which they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit.

And “Pharaoh will see them and be comforted over all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword,” says the Lord God.” Pharaoh will be just like the former people Ezekiel has judged in preceding chapters - like the Elamites, Edomites, and Sidonians.

And notice in verse 31 a couple of observations about the afterlife... First, Pharaoh is dead, in Hell, yet he's conscience and capable of feeling. We're told he's comforted by the presence of other nations, who occupy Hell and share in His torment. As they say, “[misery loves company](#)” - apparently, even in Hell.

But this means there's no such thing as annihilation, where the soul of a person ceases to exist. Numerous Bible passages speak of Hell as eternal punishment...

Check out... [Matthew 25:46](#), [Mark 9:48](#), [Revelation 14:11](#), [2 Thessalonians 1:9](#), [2 Peter 2:17](#), [Jude 13](#).

And notice another truth, pharaoh sees and recognizes his associates in Hell. Apparently, folks will know each other in the afterlife - in hell and heaven.

Verse 32, “For I have caused My terror in the land of the living; and he shall be placed in the midst of the uncircumcised with those slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude,” says the Lord God.”

Double judgment befalls Egypt and her neighbors. They suffer violent, bloody deaths - then head to hell.

Let me close with an observation by the OT scholar Charles Feinberg, “In reading this chapter, one cannot fail to be impressed with the monotony of the oft-reiterated punishment from the Lord on one nation after another.” In other words, there’s nothing unique or flamboyant about Ezekiel’s description. His words are a foretaste of the boring, repetitive reality of Hellfire.

On Earth, because of our spiritual dullness, sin seems so exciting, and holiness a bit boring. But the opposite is true in the afterlife. Sin and its consequences are painful and repetitive. Whereas, Jesus makes all things new, every day, for all eternity.

Feinberg closes his comments on this chapter with a warning, “Think of the boundless and unrelieved calamity of it all. Such awaits every soul out of Christ.”

This is why I hope you’re “in Christ” not “out of Christ.” If you’re not; then come to Christ today. And if you *really* believe, how can you not share your faith.