

Ezekiel 29-32 — God’s Judgement On Egypt — Part 2

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Romans 5:5 NKJV

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. [Remember, we obey God because we love Him, it’s the only way, the only right motive—see John 14:15, 21]

Introduction

In chapters 29-32 Ezekiel continues his series of prophecies of judgment on the nations surrounding Israel. However, Egypt is given special attention with seven prophecies or messages dedicated to how and why God will judge Egypt, who is a picture of the evil world system we live in. Today we will cover the remaining 5 prophecies found in chapters 30-32. Remember that Egypt is being judged for multiple reasons:

1. For being unreliable—they failed to keep their promises to Israel (Ezekiel 29:6-7)
2. For being proud—Pharaoh and the Egyptians failed to be thankful and give God the glory or credit for all their blessings (Ezekiel 29:3)
3. For being a constant source of temptation, both to sin, and to depend upon it instead of God—remember, they are a picture of the evil world system we live in today
4. For keeping God’s people in bondage and mistreating them prior to the Exodus

Remember that Egypt was not just *unwilling* to keep her promises, but also *unable* to keep her promises, because she was under God’s judgement: God had made her weak, and had made Babylon strong in her place. Egypt would go into captivity for 40 years and then be restored to only a shadow of her former glory. God’s purpose in restoring Egypt as a lowly nation was simply to remind Israel of her sin and foolishness in repeatedly relying on, and turning to, Egypt. Remember that Egypt is a picture of the evil world system, and we as believers have the same tendency as the Israelites to both:

— enjoy the passing pleasures of sin that the world offers

— rely on the world’s resources and solutions in time of need, instead of relying on God.

The seven prophecies or messages of judgement concerning Egypt

1. Ezekiel 29:1-16 — God versus king crocodile, “never trust a crocodile’s smile”
2. Ezekiel 29:17-21 — Babylon will defeat Egypt, “all bad things will come to an end”
3. Ezekiel 30:1-19 — Egypt and her allies will fail, “appearances can be deceiving”
4. Ezekiel 30:20-26 — God breaks pharaoh’s arms, “all strength comes from God”
5. Ezekiel 31:1-18 — Egypt cut down like a great tree, “learn lessons from history”
6. Ezekiel 32:1-16 — A funeral song, “the crocodile (Pharaoh) is caught in God’s net”
7. Ezekiel 32:17-32 — The ultimate destiny of Egypt and other world empires, Hell

3. Egypt and her allies will fail, “appearances can be deceiving”

Ezekiel 30:1-19

Ezekiel 30:1-4 NKJV—Woe to Egypt

The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, ² “Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Wail, ‘Woe to the day!’ ³ 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. ⁴ 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.

v 2 **Woe to the day!**: God is foretelling that the great Egyptian empire is coming to an end. Just imagine how this would have sounded to those hearing this prophecy. Egypt, the dominate world power for over 1,000 years, and a powerful nation for 1,500 years before that, is going to be defeated and never regain her influence again. How could a nation who seemed so strong fall so easily? Easy, God said it would happen.

v 3 **For the day is near**: Consider how long proud Egypt has been in rebellion against God—close to 2,500 years. God was so patient, but His patience came to an end. Remember that this is a picture of what God will do when He judges this evil world system at the end of the Tribulation—what seemed so strong and secure and dependable will be revealed for what it really is—passing away—and it will be destroyed, in one hour, and it's enticements and luxuries will be found no more (see Revelation 18). Never forget why God is so patient.

2 Peter 3:9-13 NKJV

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Application: Today is the day of salvation

Don't take God's patience for granted. Just like Egypt's "day" came and she was judged, so it will be for this evil world system at the time of the Tribulation. However, each person will face their own "day of reckoning", the day when the opportunity for repentance will pass, and we will be taken from this earth and will meet our Creator. Don't be like Egypt, spurning God's graciousness and patience, and ending up in Hades/the Pit/Sheol, awaiting judgement at the Great White Throne Judgement.

2 Corinthians 6:2 NKJV

For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

v 3 **Day of the Lord**: The day of the Lord usually refers to the 7 year Tribulation that will follow the rapture of the church. However, "From time to time a nation reaches a climax of oppression and moral decay from which God humbles and often destroys it. The final Day [of the Lord—the Tribulation] is yet to come when God will put down all sin wherever it is found. Thus previous Days of the Lord become patterns of the final Day [of the Lord]." (Wright)

v 4 **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**: Egypt and Ethiopia would lose many people in the coming war, their riches would be taken away, and their cities would be destroyed. Poole explains how this would happen:

"Some two years, and [Egypt] shall be miserably routed in the deserts of Libya; immediately after [this] the civil war for eleven years together shall waste you; and then Nebuchadrezzar's forces will be upon you; so that, whereas there may be about sixteen or eighteen years between the prophecy and its fulfilling, here is thirteen or fourteen of them taken up with sorrows and afflictions, forerunners of the last."

Ezekiel 30:5-9 NKJV—Egypt's allies will be judged along with Egypt

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

6 ‘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.

7 “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. 8 Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have set a fire in Egypt and all her helpers are destroyed. 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!”

v 5 ...who are allied, shall fall with them by the sword. Those who uphold Egypt shall fall.... those within her shall fall by the sword,” Says the Lord God: As we learnt last week, those allied with the evil world system world will share in her judgement. God calls us to come out of the world—find your satisfaction in God instead.

v 6 **The pride of her power shall come down:** This is the reason why Egypt was being judged; she took God’s blessings for granted and took credit for what God had given her. We must also be careful that we do not get proud, even as Christians, because then God will have to humble us. This is never a pleasant experience.

Ezekiel 30:10-12 NKJV—Nebuchadnezzar will conquer and destroy Egypt

‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will also make a multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. 11 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. 12 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.”

Babylon and those allied with her would defeat Egypt and her allies with a bloody, overwhelming victory.

Ezekiel 30:13-19 NKJV—Judgement of specific regions and cities of Egypt

‘Thus says the Lord God: “I will also destroy the idols, and cause the images to cease from Noph; there shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt; I will put fear in the land of Egypt. 14 I will make Pathros desolate, set fire to Zoan, and execute judgments in No. 15 I will pour My fury on Sin, the strength of Egypt; I will cut off the multitude of No, 16 And set a fire in Egypt; Sin shall have great pain, No shall be split open, and Noph shall be in distress daily. 17 The young men of Aven and Pi Beseth shall fall by the sword, and these cities shall go into captivity. 18 At Tehaphnehes 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. 19 Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt, then they shall know that I am the Lord.” ’ ’

v 13 **I will also destroy the idols, and cause the images to cease from Noph:** Through this judgement, God would gain honour over the idols and the false God’s of the land of Egypt.

v 13, 19 **I will put fear in the land of Egypt... Then they shall know that I am the Lord:** This refers to the people fearing God, and finally understanding that God is the Only True God.

4. God breaks pharaoh's arms, "all strength comes from God" **Ezekiel 30:20-26**

Ezekiel 30:20-21 NKJV—*God breaks Pharaoh's arm*

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, 21 "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.

v 20 **The eleventh year, in the first month:** This fourth prophecy or message against Egypt was given about four months before the fall of Jerusalem.

v 21 **Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt:** Remember that many in the nation of Judah were still looking to Egypt for help. God uses the image of Pharaoh having a broken arm to communicate to the nations, especially Judah, that Egypt would not be able to help them.

Ezekiel 30:22-23 NKJV—*God breaks both of Pharaoh's arms*

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. 23 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them throughout the countries.

v 22 **Will break his arms, both the strong one and the one that was broken:** As if a one armed Pharaoh was not enough to dissuade Judah from trusting Pharaoh, God now presents the Egyptians as completely helpless—Pharaoh is now completely unable to hold a sword at all. God is telling them that Egypt will cease to exist as an empire—I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations.

Ezekiel 30:24-26 NKJV—*Babylon will become the world power or empire*

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. 25 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. 26 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.' "

God is going to reveal Himself to be God by telling the whole world what would happen before it happened. God was saying that Babylon would replace Egypt as the dominant world empire. The nations would know that this was all of God.

5. Egypt cut down like a great tree, "learn lessons from history" **Ezekiel 31:1-18**

A. Egypt compared to Assyria as a mighty tree—a parable: Ezekiel 31:1-9

Ezekiel 31:1-2 NKJV—*When the prophecy was given and why*

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, 2 "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: 'Whom are you like in your greatness?

v 1 **In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day:** This fifth prophecy came about two months after the fourth prophecy, about one month before Nebuchadnezzar breaks through the wall of Jerusalem and destroys the city and temple.

v 2 **Say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: ‘Whom are you like in your greatness?:** God is giving Egypt a history lesson. Assyria was a great nation but they fell. God asks Egypt: How are you any better than them? Do you really think that you can avoid God’s judgement? This is a warning that all the nations of the world with all their pride need to heed today, as well as all individuals—God will judge sin. The only way to avoid judgement is to humble ourselves, repent, and accept God’s gift of forgiveness.

Ezekiel 31:3-6 NKJV—The mighty Assyrian empire compared to a great tree

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. 4 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. 5 ‘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. 6 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.

v 3 **Indeed Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon... its height was exalted above all the trees of the field... In its shadow all great nations made their home:** “The greatness of Assyria made them a place of shelter for other nations; something true of Egypt also. Before the final fall of the city, many in Jerusalem hoped that they would find protection under Egypt’s power.” (David Guzik)

Ezekiel 31:7-9 NKJV—The incomparable greatness of the Assyrian empire

‘Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches, because its roots reached to abundant waters. 8 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. 9 **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.’

v 7 **Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches:** Assyria was not only powerful, but also beautiful or glorious (in a worldly sense), regarding their culture and achievements, and they also had a broad influence. This was also true of Egypt. None of the other kinds of trees, representing the other nations, came close in glory, power, and influence.

v 9 **I made it beautiful:** Again we see God’s sovereignty at work. **God takes all the credit for Assyria’s success.** We in Australia and the western world should praise and thank God, giving Him all the credit and glory for making us the prosperous and peaceful nations that we enjoy living in today. Take note from what we have been learning today—wicked nations will be judged. How long before Australia and other nations will be judged for their pride and wickedness—homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, and drug use etc. How ungrateful are we when we fail to thank God every day for the freedoms and prosperity we enjoy? We are a stench in God’s nostrils.

B. The mighty Assyrian empire is destroyed: Ezekiel 31:10-18

We now come to the second part of the sixth prophecy against Egypt

Ezekiel 31:10-12 NKJV—*Mighty Assyria was conquered and destroyed*

“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, 11 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. 12 And aliens, the most terrible of the nations, 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.

v 10 **Because you have increased in height.... and its heart was lifted up in its height:** Again, pride always comes before a fall (Proverbs 16:18). Nebuchadnezzar was God’s chosen instrument of judgement (**the mighty one of the nations**), that would humble both Assyria and Egypt because their wickedness (**I have driven it out for its wickedness**). Nebuchadnezzar had already defeated the Assyrians, and now he would soon defeat the Egyptians.

“They are portrayed as rough lumberjacks, who chop the tree down and leave it lying on the mountains, its broken branches strewn up and down the mountains, valleys, and ravines of the land.” (Block)

“It is worthy of notice, that Nebuchadnezzar, in the *first* year of his reign, rendered himself master of *Nineveh*, the capital of the *Assyrian* empire.... This happened about *twenty* years before Ezekiel delivered this prophecy; on this account.” (Clarke) Thus, this would have been in recent memory of both the Egyptians and the Israelites.

Ezekiel 31:13-14 NKJV—*There is no coming back for the Assyrian empire*

‘On its ruin will remain all the birds of the heavens, and all the beasts of the field will come to its branches—14 ‘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.’

v 14 **So that no trees (nations) by the waters may ever again exalt themselves... They have all been delivered to death:** God used the Assyrians as an example of what happens to an unrepentant and proud nation who exalted themselves and forgot about God. The lesson is very simple, **“that no trees (nations) by the waters may ever again exalt themselves.”** God is doing everything He can to get the attention of the people. Pride is the disease present in every human heart, and God is seeking people who will humble themselves and submit to His Lordship—this is the only cure for our prideful independence that keeps us separated from God.

“Sennacherib had a statue set up in Egypt, saith Herodotus, with this inscription, Let him that looks upon my misery learn to be modest and to fear God.” (Trapp)

“God had an educative purpose in the fall of Assyria: to teach the nations the folly of striving for earthly might. The ultimate objective of the judgment was to deter others from the same disastrous course.” (Feinberg) ***Are we listening? Do we do the same?***

v 14 **Down to the pit**: Death is the great equaliser. All people who rebel against God, no matter how powerful, rich, famous, or talented they may be, will end up in the Pit. There is no-one above anyone else in that place. “Death is the great equaliser and the surest antidote to an excess of ambition.” (Taylor)

Ezekiel 31:15-17 NKJV—The nations mourn and fear the fall of Assyria

“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. 16 I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to hell (Sheol, the Pit, Hades) together with those who descend into the Pit (cistern, prison, dungeon, world of the dead); and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the depths of the earth. 17 They also went down to hell (Sheol, the Pit, Hades) with it, with those slain by the sword; and those who were its strong arm dwelt in its shadows among the nations.

v 15 **In the day when it went down to hell, I caused mourning**: Like the feeling of dread and impending doom a criminal feels when one of their most cunning partners in crime is caught and imprisoned, so the nations will react when they see the most powerful of nations defeated and brought to nothing. If it happened to Assyria, then it can happen to them. It’s a reality check for the nations.

Ezekiel 31:18 NKJV—Egypt will suffer the same ignominious* fate as Assyria

18 ‘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.”

* *ignominious definition*: humiliating, undignified, embarrassing, mortifying, shameful, disgraceful, dishonourable, discreditable, ignoble, inglorious, abject, sorry, wretched, miserable, and pitiful. Lesson learned: the world’s glory leads to shame.

“The reference to the uncircumcised is especially forceful because the Egyptians did practice circumcision and were amazingly meticulous, as the pyramids show, about proper burial, so this placing of them on the level of those mentioned [the uncircumcised], was the deepest disgrace possible to them. To the Egyptians, those in this condition [uncircumcised] were outside the range of the civilised world.” (Feinberg)

v 18 **This is Pharaoh and all his multitude**: God makes it clear that this is a parable aimed squarely at Egypt, bringing attention to the fact that other powerful world empires have been humiliated and brought to shame, and soon so will she.

6. A funeral song, “the crocodile is caught in God’s net”

Ezekiel 32:1-16

Ezekiel 32:1-2 NKJV—*Pharaoh described as a lion and a crocodile*

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, 2 “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.’

v 1 **In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month:** This is more than a year after the fall of Jerusalem. This lamentation or funeral dirge for Pharaoh king of Egypt was given after any hope Judah had placed in Egypt was lost.

v 2 **You are like a monster in the seas:** “Pharaoh and his kingdom were mighty forces in the world, second only to Babylon—and Babylon had only recently subdued Egypt at the battle of Carchemish in 605 bc. Egypt was still a great force with the ability to influence and trouble other nations.” (David Guzik)

v 2 **Troubling the waters with your feet:** “Pharaoh thrashed about in the water and made a big scene, but all he did was muddy the waters and create problems by disobeying the Lord.” (Wiersbe) I think that this is a good description of the effect that wicked leaders have in the world; they do no good, only stirring up trouble and strife.

Ezekiel 32:3-8 NKJV—*God catches the crocodile (Pharaoh) and slays it*

“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. 4 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. 5 I will lay your flesh on the mountains, and fill the valleys with your carcass. 6 ‘I will also water the land with the flow of your blood, even to the mountains; and the riverbeds will be full of you.

7 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. 8 All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, and bring darkness upon your land,’ Says the Lord God.

God here describes the defeat of Egypt to the catching of a crocodile or lion with a net. The crocodile would be dragged out of the river, killed, and left to be eaten by wild animals on the land. This is a gruesome picture of a multitude of soldiers slain on the battlefield, and, as we described before, was literally fulfilled at the time Pharaoh Hophra lost dramatically when invading Libya two years later. It would also happen again in another 13 years when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt and annihilated their army.

v 7 **When I put out your light:** “The term *kaba*, which is used concretely of snuffing out a wick or a lamp, is occasionally used figuratively of death.” (Block)

Ezekiel 32:9-10 NKJV—*The nations fear; if Egypt can be defeated, so can they*

‘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. 10 Yes, I will make many peoples astonished at you, and their kings shall be horribly afraid of you when I brandish My sword before them; and they shall tremble every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of your fall.’

v 9 **I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples:** Like we read last time, when a major world power falls, the whole world suffers economically. This is in addition to the fear of God's judgement that comes when they see Egypt brought to justice.

Ezekiel 32:11-16 NKJV—God will use Babylon as His instrument of judgement

“For thus says the Lord God: ‘The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. 12 ‘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.

13 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. 14 Then I will make their waters clear, and make their rivers run like oil,’ says the Lord God.

15 ‘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.

16 ‘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.”

v 11 **The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you:** Once again, God makes it crystal clear who was going to defeat Egypt.

v 12 **Plunder the pomp:** Because of their long existence and many successes, they were a very rich nation. Therefore, Babylon would receive a huge financial reward once they defeated Egypt.

v 13 **I will also destroy all its animals:** If all the people are killed and/or displaced, then there would be no-one to look after Egypt's many cattle.

iii. **Make their rivers run like oil:** “With no people and animals available to work the land and draw the water, the streams and canals wouldn't be muddied and the water would ‘run like oil’ with nothing to impede its flow.” (Wiersbe)

v 16 **This is the lamentation:** “The funeral speech of this kingdom; for this, as a funeral oration, tells us what was their ancient glory, and what is now their miserable reproach and loss.” (Poole)

7. The ultimate destiny of Egypt and other world empires, the Pit **Ezekiel 32:17-32**

Ezekiel 32:17-21 NKJV—Egypt goes down to the grave/Pit/Sheol/Hades

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: 18 “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 [Sheol]: 19 ‘Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down, be placed with the uncircumcised.’ 20 “They shall fall in the midst of those slain by the sword; she is delivered to the sword, drawing her and all her multitudes.

21 **The strong among the mighty [the deceased rulers of nations previously defeated] shall speak to him [pharaoh] out of the midst of hell [Sheol] with those who help him: ‘They have gone down, they lie with the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’**

v 17 **In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month:** This seventh and final prophecy against Egypt is probably 2 weeks after the previous one, also about one year after the fall of Jerusalem.

v 18 **Cast them down to the depths of the earth:** “As in Ezekiel 31:14–17, Egypt’s destiny was to go to *Sheol*, to the **pit**, the **depths of the earth**. Though Egypt surpassed many in **beauty**, their destiny would be agony and disgrace, **placed with the uncircumcised**.” (David Guzik)

Application: We need a genuine concern for the lost

v 18 **Wail over the multitude of Egypt:** Remember that God desires that all men be saved. God has no joy in the death of the wicked. We need to have the same attitude towards unbelievers as God has, and therefore like God, be willing to do whatever it takes to bring the gospel to every person. Remember what God keeps on saying, “Then they shall know that I am the Lord.” Our greatest desire should be the same, for all people to know that God is the Lord of all.

Ezekiel 18:30-32 NLT paraphrase

“Therefore, I will judge each of you, O people of Israel, according to your actions, says the Sovereign Lord. Repent, and turn from your sins. Don’t let them destroy you! ³¹ Put all your rebellion behind you, and find yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O people of Israel? ³² I don’t want you to die, says the Sovereign Lord. Turn back and live!

v 19 **Whom do you surpass in beauty:** The idea here is that of comparing one dead body to another; both are putrid and foul—all dead bodies look and smell the same. There is no beauty in the death of an unbeliever.

v 21 **With the uncircumcised:** This means that they were buried in disgrace, as the Egyptians, like the Jews, practiced circumcision. They would not even talk to someone who wasn’t circumcised, but now their “bed” was among them.

v 21 **The strong among the mighty [the deceased rulers of nations previously defeated] of shall speak to him [Pharaoh] out of the midst of hell [Sheol]... ‘They have gone down, they lie with the uncircumcised, slain by the sword’:** “The actual words of greeting are taunting and harsh, challenging Egypt’s self-esteem as the most delightful nation on earth.” (Block)

Each of the nations listed in the following verses will taunt Pharaoh, his people, and his helpers as he takes his place among the un believing dead. Pharaoh will have no glory or prestige in Sheol—everything he did was for nothing—he can take nothing with him!

This is another evidence that there is no such thing as soul sleep. The people in Sheol/ the Pit/Hades are conscious and aware of the new arrivals—Pharaoh and the Egyptians. “The inhabitants of Sheol are not asleep but fully conscious. They are aware of one another and their relative positions; they also know that their assignment was determined by their conduct during their tenure ‘in the land of the living.’” (Block)

Ezekiel 32:22-30 NKJV—Egypt joins other former nations in Sheol/Hades/Pit

“Assyria is there, and all her company, with their graves all around her, all of them slain, fallen by the sword. 23 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*.

24 “There is Elam 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*.

25 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.

26 “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.

27 They do not lie with the mighty who are fallen of the uncircumcised, who have gone down to hell [Sheol] 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. 28 Yes, you shall be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and lie with those slain by the sword.

29 “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. 30 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*.

v 22-30 Assyria is there.... There is Elam.... There are Meshech and Tubal.... There is Edom ... the princes of the north.... all the Sidonians: These are the nations that would be watching and commenting/taunting as Pharaoh and his people entered into Sheol/the Pit/Hades, all feeling shame because of their violence and wickedness in the land of the living. Egypt would share their fate. ***Notice that all the wicked dead experience shame! What an awful way to spend eternity, regretting your life and feeling shame over your prideful attitude towards God. How stupid do they feel now their realise that their life was wasted!***

“Some of those named had not yet disappeared from the pages of history, but their doom foretold of God was nonetheless sure and was viewed as having occurred.” (Feinberg)

Ezekiel 32:31-32 NKJV—God, the judge, puts proud Egypt in her place: Sheol

“Pharaoh will see them and be comforted over all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword,” says the Lord God.

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.

v 31 **Pharaoh will see them and be comforted:** “Ezekiel ironically mentioned some small comfort that would come to Pharaoh on the day he entered hell. The **comfort** would come from knowing he was not the only one to suffer such shame and disgrace in judgment.” (David Guzik)

“The prophet’s declaration that ‘Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted,’ is appalling, as it reveals that the only comfort that can come to him is the profound sense of the operation of infinite justice in the punishment of all, himself included, who have been guilty of the abominations which have issued in the judgment of Jehovah.” (Morgan)

Put simply, the only comfort that the unbelieving dead will have is that everyone is judged according to God’s perfect standard of justice.

v 32 **For I have caused My terror in the land of the living:** God always has the last say. World leaders think that they are creating history, but history and the future and all *His-story*. God is infinitely greater than any man or nation, and in the end, after they have caused terror and havoc among the nations, they will experience God’s terrifying judgement upon themselves.

“The oracle affirms that Yahweh is the Lord not only of individuals but also of history. The rise and fall of nations may appear attributable to charismatic and gifted leaders, but behind all international movements one must acknowledge the supreme hand of Yahweh, who alone fixes the times and seasons of their lives, sets the limits to their conduct, determines the nature of their downfall, appoints the agents of judgment, and in the process accomplishes his goal: the universal recognition of his power and his person.” (Block)

Conclusion

I pray that this exposé of what happens after people die will enlighten you to see the foolishness of following, seeking, and enjoying this evil world system; it will have zero benefits for all eternity—you can’t take any of your temporary accomplishments or pleasures with you.

All unbelievers have to look forward to is a multitude of fellow unbelievers saying, “yes, you to were fooled, come and join the rest of us in shame and dishonour.”

For believers, our eternal destiny is secure, but we will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. Those believers who focus their lives on themselves and finding satisfaction and pleasure in this evil world system will find that they will “*be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames*” (1 Corinthians 3:15). You don’t want to smell like smoke for eternity. To avoid this ignominious (humiliating) fate, obey the following admonition.

Colossians 3:1-10 NLT paraphrase

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honour at God’s right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ³ For you died to this life, and your **real life** is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ **And when Christ, who is your life,** is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

⁵ So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. ⁶ Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. ⁷ You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world.

⁸ But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behaviour, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.