

Ezekiel 29-32 • Prophecies against Egypt and Pharaoh

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Here on Wednesday nights, we're in the Old Testament. We're making our way through the Old Testament on Wednesday. We're in the book of Ezekiel. So, I'd like to have you open your Bibles there, please, to Ezekiel chapter 29. I always feel during specific books that we go through on a Wednesday night; I feel the need to commend you for sticking with an Old Testament study like this.

You know, Ezekiel has some wonderful things to say it's wonderfully prophetic and it's, we've already seen, well, last week we saw some interesting parallels between the king of Tyre and the origin of the fall of Satan. We saw that there in chapter 28. But a lot of going through Ezekiel is just going through a lot of prophecies to a lot of countries, some of which don't even exist anymore.

And we just, we have to just, we go through this because we're learning what the Bible has to say on these things. And we've been reading several prophecies that Ezekiel has been given from the Lord to other nations, nations other than Israel. And now, in fact, we've gone through six. We've heard six prophecies to six different, more than six prophecies, but to six different nations.

Now we're dealing with the seventh and final nation that Ezekiel is prophesying against, and that is going to be Egypt. And these prophecies take four chapters. We're going to try to get through them all tonight. We'll see how we do. They're not terribly long, but what we're going to see in these chapters is a series of seven oracles that are, were given to Ezekiel directly to Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt.

Let me remind you of something, and this is probably important. Well, no, it's not probably, it's an important thing going into it. God chose Babylon as a disciplinary measure upon the nation of Judah, the Southern kingdom of Judah. Israel had been long since conquered. But the nation of Judah still existed. They had fallen into terrible idolatry. God brought the Babylonians to them as a disciplinary measure and He said through His prophets, I am disciplining you for your idolatry, repent of your sin and accept my discipline. Okay?

They did neither, they did not repent of their idolatry, and they did not accept the Lord's discipline even though God repeatedly told them, this is me doing this. And you know, how would you like to have been one of those prophets who had to tell your fellow countrymen that, you know this country that's making life miserable for us right now, God's in that, because that sounds very much like treason.

And Jeremiah was one such prophet, you'll remember, who had to do just that. He had to tell the nation of Judah over and over, this is God's doing and you need to submit to it. And they, of course, believed that he was an unfaithful man because of it. So, they refused to submit to the Lord's discipline. But you need to understand where Egypt comes into this because as I said, these chapters are all about Egypt. Egypt is the nation that largely motivated them to rebel. You see, Judah knew that they were no match for the Babylonian army.

The Babylonians had already come and conquered them. They hadn't devastated them, but they conquered them. Took their king off the throne, put another king on, and they basically said, we're in charge. You guys pay us money. We'll, you know, and we'll basically leave you alone, but you know, you're under us. Just like in the days of Jesus, they were under Roman occupation, right?

Now they're under Babylonian rule. Well, that was God's discipline, but they refused to do it. Well, Egypt comes along, and they said, hey, we'll help you stand against the Babylonians. Well, so Israel or Judah, I should say, began to lean upon Egypt in such a way as to say, yeah, boy, you know, we get together with Egypt and we're strong and we can actually mount a defense now against the Babylonian army if they were to come and, you know, start to give us any trouble, we could stand against them.

We've got to understand how God views this whole thing. So, Babylon is His disciplinary measure for His people. And Egypt comes along tempting them to throw off the Lord's discipline and not to embrace it. So, they're playing that role as it were, that the work of the enemy would otherwise play, right? In our lives, to get us to say, I'm not going to submit to this.

Have you ever wondered how much hardship in your life was the Lord's discipline? That you may be even refused to recognize at the time? We tend to get into these situations where when we go through a difficult season, we think Satan is always attacking. And to be sure the Lord may be using the enemy to accomplish some of it because we know that He does. We see that in the Word.

But we're out there casting out the devil and doing this and speaking into and it's the Lord's discipline that is actually going on in our lives, but we don't take time many times to walk in any level of discernment related to that. We just think that anything bad that happens is never good, it doesn't come from God and therefore, I need to reject it. And sometimes I think we may have done the same thing that the people of Judah did, and that was reject the Lord's disciplinary action in our lives.

Well, be that as it may, Egypt played a role in bringing Judah to a place of rejecting that discipline. And so, we're going to see what the Lord has to say in these four chapters to Egypt because of that. I need to tell you too, that six of the seven oracles that are given that we're going to be reading tonight are given, they're dated. That's the word I was trying to think of.

They're dated from the standpoint that he gives he literally gives the date when the Lord gave the word to him. And you need to know something too. Not all of these oracles are in chronological order. In fact, the second one that we're going to read, which is going to be in this first chapter, is really at the very end of the chronology of the events but for some reason or another, we don't know why, Ezekiel put it as second as he wrote these things down.

So anyway, chapter 29, look with me there in your Bible It begins again with that date, ¹*“In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me:”*

Now you need to know that the dating here is very good. It helps us to understand what's going on. Remember Ezekiel is in Babylon. He's in the Persian kingdom now. He was one of the early people taken by the Babylonian army before they conquered Jerusalem. So, he's there, he's prophesying about what's going on all over the place. But he's in Babylon and this word is given to him approximately one year into this final siege of Jerusalem.

And I hope you guys understand what a siege is. To mount a siege against a city, of course most cities had walls and if an advancing army came against you, you just lock up your walls, lock up all the doors. Well, so the army has to build, they would call them “siege works” where they could either climb up the walls and breach the city or they'd begin to dig under a wall or they'd begin to do various other things to try to stop up the water supply for the city, but all of it was referred to as laying siege to a city. Okay?

Well, the Babylonians have come against Judah for the last time or Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem, and they've been there for a year. Now understand that

some sieges, depending on how good the wall was made, could go on for years. Okay. We're one year into it. And so, here's the message that is given to Ezekiel, verse two,

² *“Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt;”*

Here's something else interesting. Perhaps the Pharaoh at this time was a man named Hafra and again, he was the man who had promised assistance to Judah saying, we'll band together against Babylon and so that encourages them to throw off the discipline of the Lord. Verse 3,

³ *“speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, ‘My Nile is my own; (speaking of the Nile river) I made it for myself.’”*

Can you imagine the arrogance of saying I made this? You got to understand people. A water source was a source of life okay, to the people in those days, it obviously is to us today, but it comes much easier to us. We turn on the tap. They couldn't. Putting their civilization, their cities near access to water and having abundant water supply literally was the difference between life and death.

So, for this man to make a claim for Pharaoh to say, this is my river and I made it, is to really exalt himself in the presence of God who gives life to all mankind. And so, you have to understand what's going on here. There is a, there's a confrontation of pride that the Lord is making against Pharaoh. And so, he says in verse four,

⁴ *“I will put hooks in your jaws, and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales; and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams, with all the fish of your streams that stick to your scales. And I will cast you out into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams; (And that's, obviously, a reference to all the people) you shall fall on the open field, and not be brought together or gathered. To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens I give you as food. ⁶ Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord. Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel,”*

I want you, I want to just, reeds were something that, you know what a reed is. They grew up in marshy land and reeds are pretty cool. You can build things with reeds in there and you know, they're kind of, they look cool and stuff, but

there's one thing you don't use a reed for and that's to lean on. You don't use it as a staff because they can't bear a man's weight. If they did, they'd splinter and you would get hurt. You literally would cut your hand or these shards or splinters of the staff would go into your hand.

And so notice that the Lord is confronting them about the assistance that Hophra promised to the people of Judah saying, "I'll help you stand against the King of Babylon." He says, "you are a staff made from reeds to my people." And look what he says in verse seven, he says,

⁷ "when they grasped you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; and when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their loins to shake.

⁸ Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will bring a sword upon you, and will cut off from you man and beast, ⁹ and the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste. Then they will know that I am the Lord. "Because you said, 'The Nile is mine, and I made it, ¹⁰ therefore, behold, I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Cush.

¹¹ No foot of man shall pass through it, and no foot of beast shall pass through it; (And then check this out) it shall be uninhabited forty years. (Now, so you can see that it was not God's intention that Egypt would be uninhabited forever. In fact, this is going to be a shorter period of time than He's going to give to the people of Judah. Theirs will be 70 years, right? So, 40 years for Egypt. Verse 12),

¹² And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated countries, and her cities shall be a desolation forty years among cities that are laid waste. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them through the countries. ¹³ "For thus says the Lord God: At the end of forty years, I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered,

¹⁴ and I will restore the fortunes of Egypt and bring them back to the land of Pathros, the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. ¹⁵ It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations. ¹⁶ And it shall never again be the reliance of the house of Israel, recalling their iniquity, when they turn to them for aid. Then they will know that I am the Lord God."

So that is the end of the first Oracle. God promises that He's going to scatter Egypt, but then return them to their land, but they will never ever attain to their glory that they had before. Verse 17 starts the next Oracle,

¹⁷ *"In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, (So this is really chronologically last. Okay?) the word of the Lord came to me.*

¹⁸ *"Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre. Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against her.*

¹⁹ *Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army. ²⁰ I have given him the land of Egypt as his payment for which he labored, because they worked for me, declares the Lord God. ²¹ "On that day I will cause a horn to spring up for the house of Israel, (And you'll remember a horn is always a symbol of strength. In other words, I will cause a strength to spring up for the house of Israel) and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the Lord."*

Isn't it interesting, you know, Egypt never claimed to belong to the Lord. In fact, they had their own pagan gods, and yet God says, it's all mine and I'm giving it to Nebuchadnezzar. And when He took out Tyre, which was a very wealthy city, apparently, they didn't take any plunder from that particular battle. And so He says, "I'm going to give them the splendor and the majesty and the glory of Egypt as their payment because they're working for me." They're working for me.

Isn't that interesting? It can really challenge our understanding of the way the Lord works when we hear things like this, that Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army were working for the Lord and yet they're pagans too. Chapter 30. Chapter 30 is really just kind of a lament or a cry. You could even translate that word funeral dirge, if you wanted to, but it's a lamentation and it concerns Egypt and the judgment that is set to be brought to it. And Ezekiel says,

30 *"The word of the Lord came to me: ² "Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord God: "Wail, (or cry) 'Alas for the day!' ³ For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. ⁴ A sword shall come upon Egypt, and anguish shall be in Cush, when the slain fall in Egypt, and her wealth is carried away, and her foundations are torn down.*

⁵ Cush, and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya and the people of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword. ⁶ “Thus says the Lord: Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down; from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword, declares the Lord God. ⁷ And they shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries, and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste.

⁸ Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken. ⁹ “On that day messengers shall go out from me in ships to terrify the unsuspecting people of Cush, and anguish shall come upon them on the day of Egypt's doom; for, behold, it comes! ¹⁰ “Thus says the Lord God:

“I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. ¹¹ He and his people with him, the most ruthless of nations, shall be brought in to destroy the land, and they shall draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain. ¹² And I will dry up the Nile and will sell the land into the hand of evildoers; I will bring desolation upon the land and everything in it, by the hand of foreigners; I am the Lord; I have spoken.

And then we have the next Oracle, given us starting in verse 13,

¹³ “Thus says the Lord God: “I will destroy the idols and put an end to the images in Memphis; there shall no longer be a prince from the land of Egypt; so I will put fear in the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ I will make Pathros a desolation and will set fire to Zoan and will execute judgments on Thebes. ¹⁵ And I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium, the stronghold of Egypt, and cut off the multitude of Thebes. ¹⁶ And I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium shall be in great agony; Thebes shall be breached, and Memphis shall face enemies by day.

¹⁷ The young men of On and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword, and the women shall go into captivity. ¹⁸ At Tehaphnehes the day shall be dark, when I break there the yoke bars of Egypt, and her proud might shall come to an end in her; she shall be covered by a cloud, and her daughters shall go into captivity. ¹⁹ Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt. Then they will know that I am the Lord.” (By the way, that's a statement that the Lord ends all of these with, “Then they will know I am the Lord.” Verse 20)

²⁰ In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: ²¹ “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and behold, it has not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so that it may become strong to wield the sword. ²² Therefore thus

says the Lord God: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken, and I will make the sword fall from his hand.

²³ I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them through the countries. ²⁴ And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a man mortally wounded. ²⁵ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall. Then 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 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. (And then that familiar ending) Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

All right. Chapter 31 is another interesting chapter. Again, all these chapters deal with prophecies related to Egypt, but this one is a message to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and it comes to us in the form of an allegory. And it is an allegory of comparison comparing the nation of Assyria. And you need to understand something. It was Assyria who conquered the Northern kingdom of Israel, right? And then Babylon conquered Assyria.

So, for some of these mighty nations, Assyria became a picture of what was going to happen to them, ultimately, and that's what the Lord is doing in this message to Pharaoh used in kind of an allegorical picture, sort of a form. Check this out, verse 1,

31 *In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: ² “Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: “Whom are you like in your greatness? ³Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with beautiful branches and forest shade, and of towering height, its top among the clouds. ⁴ The waters nourished it; the deep made it grow tall, making its rivers flow around the place of its planting, sending forth its streams to all the trees of the field.*

⁵ So it towered high above all the trees of the field; its boughs grew large and its branches long from abundant water in its shoots. ⁶ All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth to their young, and under its shadow lived all great nations. ⁷ It was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its roots went down to abundant waters.

⁸ *The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it, nor the fir trees equal its boughs; neither were the plane trees like its branches; no tree in the garden of God was its equal in beauty. ⁹ I made it beautiful in the mass of its branches, and all the trees of Eden envied it, that were in the garden of God. ¹⁰ “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because it towered high and set its top among the clouds, and its heart was proud of its height,*

¹¹ I will give it into the hand of a mighty one of the nations. He shall surely deal with it as its wickedness deserves. I have cast it out. ¹² Foreigners, the most ruthless of 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 away from its shadow and left it.

¹³ On its fallen trunk dwell all the birds of the heavens, and on its branches are all the beasts of the field. ¹⁴ All this is in order that no trees by the waters may grow to towering height or set their tops among the clouds, and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height. For they are all given over to death, to the world below, among the children of man, with those who go down to the pit.

¹⁵ “Thus says the Lord God: On the day the cedar went down to Sheol I caused mourning; I closed the deep over it, and restrained its rivers, and many waters were stopped. I clothed Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field fainted because of it. ¹⁶ I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to Sheol (and Sheol again is the grave) with those who go down to the pit. And all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the world below.

¹⁷ They also went down to Sheol with it, to those who are slain by the sword; yes, those who were its arm, who lived under its shadow among the nations.

¹⁸ “Whom are you thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? You shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the world below. You shall lie among the uncircumcised, (And by the way, that's a term that is a statement of dishonor and contempt to lie with the uncircumcised or literally to die or to be buried with the uncircumcised) with those who are slain by the sword. “This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord God.”

So now it's interesting, as we get into the final chapter here this evening, we're going to find that this idea or this picture of going down to Sheol or the grave, is going to be given to us again. We're actually going to hear this term lying with the uncircumcised again in this final chapter as well, which once again is a

phrase of dishonor and contempt. But what's really interesting about this is God is going to talk about Sheol as a place that is more than just a grave.

You'll remember that in the book of Luke, and Luke is the only one that tells this, but Luke tells a story about a rich man and a poor beggar who both died and were taken to a holding place, if you will. It certainly wasn't heaven, it was kind of figuratively referred to as the place of Abraham's bosom, or literally a place of comfort, at least for the beggar, but there, it was also a place of torment.

And there was some kind of a chasm that was fixed between these two places and those who awaited judgment were in the place of torment, and those who awaited the comforts of heaven were being comforted as we saw in that story with Lazarus, the diseased beggar, not to be confused with Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, whom he raised from the dead. Now, what's interesting about that story in Luke is it speaks to us. And I don't believe I've told you this before, that wasn't a parable. Jesus wasn't telling a parable.

And the reason we know that is because He gave a name to one of the characters in the story and parables never included proper names. Okay? But he actually named the individual. He said his name was Lazarus. So this was a story. This was something that really occurred. Okay? Well, we gain incredible insight from a story like that. Jesus has the ability to give us insight into that sort of a situation, which is when you say, well, what kind of a situation, Pastor Paul?

After death. We don't, you know, there's very little we know and without God's help, we would know nothing, zero about what happens after death, you know. Jesus gives us fascinating information in fact, in that story of Lazarus, the diseased beggar He says the angels actually came and transported that poor man into that place of comfort. The angels literally escorted him. Okay? Again, that's not a parable. That's not figurative. Jesus is telling us what happens upon death.

People are ushered by the angels. He has greeter angels. Isn't that cool? They greet you at the place of death and say, come with us. And they take you, you know, where you're going. How cool is that? You know, wouldn't that be kind of fun to have that job? You know, I wonder if they have name tags that say greeter or something. Anyway, the point that I'm making here is that without the Lord giving us insights about life after death, the death of the physical body, we would be 100% clueless about any of these things.

Now, again, as we go through chapter 32 here, the Lord is going to speak about Sheol and this place, but He's going to talk about it, and we saw just a hint of it in the last chapter, as if the people who are there are conscious. So, we're not talking about death as in oblivion or death as in unconsciousness. We're talking about death as a state of being, it's just the death of the body, but remember the soul and the spirit do not die. Okay? Your soul and your spirit cannot die. From that standpoint, so, all right, at least not from the standpoint of physical death. Chapter 32, here we go. This again is a lament for the fall of Egypt and for Pharaoh king of Egypt. Check out the date on this one,

32 “In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: (and this would have been about 60 days after word reached the Persian kingdom that Jerusalem had fallen. That they had breached the walls; that they had taken the city; that they had destroyed it. Remember word didn’t travel instantaneously like it does today, so this was about two months after that, word would have come. Now, Jerusalem has fallen, there’s no doubt that Egypt is next in line. And so, keeping that in mind, God says to Ezekiel, go ahead and speak this funeral dirge for Ezekiel because, not for Ezekiel, for Egypt because her time has come. Here we go,)

2 “Son of man, (verse 2) raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him: “You consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas; you burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet, and foul their rivers.

This is an interesting figurative statement but it’s probably something similar to the way you and I would say, “you muddy the waters” You’ve never heard somebody use that phrase to describe somebody making things unclear or getting in the way, or causing confusion. We’ll say something and then say, does that muddy the waters for you? Does that bring confusion or whatever. And that’s what the Lord is, I believe, saying here related to Pharaoh. Verse 3,

3 Thus says the Lord God: I will throw my net over you with a host of many peoples, and they will haul you up in my dragnet. 4 And I will cast you on the ground; on the open field I will fling you and will cause all the birds of the heavens to settle on you, and I will gorge the beasts of the whole earth with you. 5 I will strew your flesh upon the mountains and fill the valleys with your carcass. 6 I will drench the land even to the mountains with your flowing blood, and the ravines will be full of you. (And you can kind of get the sense that this slaughter of Egypt is going to cover a huge area of the land as the people spread the fight over many square miles. He says in verse 7),

⁷ *When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. (You'll remember the Egyptians worshipped the sun and the moon)* ⁸ *All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, (and I think this is probably a figurative way to say, your gods will not answer you on that day.) and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord God. (So whatever pagan influence is going to be completely unplugged. Verse 9)*

⁹ *"I will trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries that you have not known. (So, in other words, the word of this destruction is going to affect many peoples.)* ¹⁰ *I will make many peoples appalled at you, and the hair of their kings shall bristle with horror because of you, when I brandish my sword before them. They shall tremble every moment, every one for his own life, on the day of your downfall. (That's because they probably think that they're next on Nebuchadnezzar's list)*

¹¹ *"For thus says the Lord God: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. ¹² I will cause your multitude to fall by the swords of mighty ones, all of them most ruthless of nations. "They shall bring to ruin the pride of Egypt, and all its multitude shall perish. ¹³ I will destroy all its beasts from beside many waters; and no foot of man shall trouble them anymore, nor shall the hoofs of beasts trouble them. ¹⁴ Then I will make their waters clear, and cause their rivers to run like oil, declares the Lord God.*

¹⁵ *When I make the land of Egypt desolate, and when the land is desolate of all that fills it, when I strike down all who dwell in it, then they will know that I am the Lord. ¹⁶ This is a lamentation that shall be chanted; the daughters of the nations shall chant it; over Egypt, and over all her multitude, shall they chant it, declares the Lord God."* (Alright, verse 17 we have another dating which gives us another oracle)

¹⁷ *In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: ¹⁸ "Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and send them down, her and the daughters of majestic nations, (here it is) to the world below, to those who have gone down to the pit: ¹⁹ 'Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.'* (In other words you're no better than any of the others who have gone down before you. Verse 20,)

²⁰ *They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword. Egypt is delivered to the sword; drag her away, and all her multitudes. ²¹ The mighty chiefs shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of Sheol: 'They have come*

down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’²² “Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword,²³ whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit; and her company is all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living.

²⁴ “Elam is there, and all her multitude around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised into the world below, who spread their terror in the land of the living; and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.²⁵ They have made her a bed among the slain with all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for terror of them was spread in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit; they are placed among the slain.

²⁶ “Meshech-Tubal is there, (that was a nation located near modern day Turkey) and all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread their terror in the land of the living.²⁷ And they do not lie with the mighty, the fallen from among the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose iniquities are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living.

²⁸ But as for you, you shall be broken and lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword.²⁹ “Edom is there, her kings and all her princes, who for all their might are laid with those who are killed by the sword; they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit.³⁰ “The princes of the north are there, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror that they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.

³¹ “When Pharaoh sees them, he will be comforted for all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, declares the Lord God. (And there’s that reference to the consciousness after death which is fascinating and really a little bit confusing to us. And then the final verse says,) ³² For I spread terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord God.”

After word reached the Persian kingdom, that Jerusalem had fallen, that they had breached the walls, that they had taken the city, that they had destroyed it. Remember, word didn't travel instantaneously like it does today. So, this was

about two months after that word would have come. All right, now Jerusalem has fallen.

There's no doubt that Egypt is next in line. And so keeping that in mind, God says to Ezekiel, go ahead and speak this funeral dirge for Ezekiel because for, not for Ezekiel, for Egypt, because her time has come. Here we go. A son of man, verse two, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh, king of Egypt and say to him, you consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you're like a dragon in the seas. You burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet and foul their rivers. This is an interesting figurative statement, but it's probably something similar to the way you and I would say you muddy the waters.

You never heard somebody use that frame to phrase to describe somebody making things unclear or getting in the way or causing confusion will say something and say, well, does that muddy the waters for you? And that does that bring confusion or whatever? And that's what the Lord is, I believe, kind of saying here. Related to Pharaoh verse three,

³*“Thus says the Lord God:*

I will throw my net over you with a host of many peoples, and they will haul you up in my dragnet. ⁴And I will cast you on the ground; on the open field I will fling you, and will cause all the birds of the heavens to settle on you, and I will gorge the beasts of the whole earth with you. ⁵I will strew your flesh upon the mountains and fill the valleys with your carcass. ⁶I will drench the land even to the mountains with your flowing blood, and the ravines will be full of you.

And you can kind of get the sense that this slaughter of Egypt is going to cover a huge area of the land as the people spread the fight over many square miles. He says in verse seven, ⁷*“When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light.”*

You'll remember that the Egyptians worship the sun and the moon, all the bright lights of heaven. I will make dark over you. And I think this is probably a figurative way of saying your gods will not answer you on that day and put darkness on your land declares the Lord God. So whatever pagan influence is going to be completely unplugged.

Verse nine. ⁹*“I will trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries that you have not known.”*

(So, in other words, the word of this destruction is going to affect many peoples)

¹⁰ “I will make many peoples appalled at you, and the hair of their kings shall bristle with horror because of you, when I brandish my sword before them. They shall tremble every moment, every one for his own life, on the day of your downfall.”

(That's because they probably think that they're next on Nebuchadnezzar's list)

¹¹ “For thus says the Lord God: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. ¹² I will cause your multitude to fall by the swords of mighty ones, all of them most ruthless of nations. “They shall bring to ruin the pride of Egypt, and all its multitude shall perish. ¹³ I will destroy all its beasts from beside many waters; and no foot of man shall trouble them anymore, nor shall the hoofs of beasts trouble them.

¹⁴ Then I will make their waters clear, and cause their rivers to run like oil, declares the Lord God. ¹⁵ When I make the land of Egypt desolate, and when the land is desolate of all that fills it, when I strike down all who dwell in it, then they will know that I am the Lord. ¹⁶ This is a lamentation that shall be chanted; the daughters of the nations shall chant it; over Egypt, and over all her multitude, shall they chant it, declares the Lord God.”

Alright, verse 17. We have another dating, which gives us another oracle,

¹⁷ In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: ¹⁸ “Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and send them down, her and the daughters of majestic nations, to the world below, to those who have gone down to the pit: ¹⁹ ‘Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.’ (In other words, you’re no better than any of the others who’ve gone down before you. Verse 20,)

²⁰ They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword. Egypt is delivered to the sword; drag her away, and all her multitudes. ²¹ The mighty chiefs shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of Sheol: ‘They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’

²² “Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, ²³ whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the

pit; and her company is all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living.

²⁴ “Elam is there, and all her multitude around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised into the world below, who spread their terror in the land of the living; and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.

²⁵ They have made her a bed among the slain with all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for terror of them was spread in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit; they are placed among the slain.

²⁶ “Meshech-Tubal is there, (That was a nation that was located near modern day Turkey) and all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread their terror in the land of the living. ²⁷ And they do not lie with the mighty, the fallen from among the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose iniquities are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living.

²⁸ But as for you, you shall be broken and lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword. ²⁹ “Edom is there, her kings and all her princes, who for all their might are laid with those who are killed by the sword; they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit.

³⁰ “The princes of the north are there, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror that they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.

³¹ “When Pharaoh sees them, he will be comforted for all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, declares the Lord God. (And there's that reference to the consciousness after death, which is fascinating and really kind of even a little bit confusing to us. And then the final verse says)

³² For I spread terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord God.”

Wow. It's a lot of reading. It's a lot of interesting sort of statements here. But there are some things that we draw from this in the sense of kind of conclusions

of understanding. And that is that did you notice how many of these nations that God said they terrorized the earth? They terrorized the people. They spread their terror. And now where are they? They're dead. They're gone.

They're slain. They were taken over. And so, what God is saying is, I ultimately brought judgment upon those nations. And what we see here is we see a God of judgment. We see that God does not allow the terror and the tyranny of men to just continue on unabated. Eventually, everyone is going to have their day with the Lord. And so, we see that God is doing this.

The other thing that's really interesting about these chapters, I find interesting anyway, is this statement over and over and over again in these prophecies where God says, "when I do this, then they will know that I am the Lord." Now, when I do what? When I judge them. Isn't that interesting that God reveals Himself through judgment as the Lord? Now, obviously that's not the only way He reveals Himself. He reveals Himself in mercy. He reveals Himself in compassion. The Bible says the kindness of the Lord leads us to repentance.

So, there are many ways for God to reveal Himself. But when He rises and judges the earth, He declares Himself holy and this challenges a lot of people. I had a note just this last week from a gal who just, you know, is reading through her Bible and she's like, you know, but all this judgment, all this judgment just really bothers me.

And she was having a hard time reconciling this God of love and compassion with all of the judgment that is going on throughout the Bible. And the reason that we struggle with those ideas, guys, is because we are so far from His, from knowing one aspect of God's nature, and that is His holiness. His holiness is an enigma to us. We know that the angels cry constantly holy, holy, holy around His throne, day and night crying continuously holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

And we read that and we go, wow, that's cool. We don't even know what it means except that God is totally "Other." And that is the essence of that word, holy. He is "Other." He is beyond what you and I know and think and frankly understand except for what He has revealed. So, holiness eludes us. There are some concepts of God's nature that we can more easily grasp.

We can grasp love, compassion, kindness. Those things, those are easy. Those are easy because we love to receive them. But we are not a holy people. We have received the Holy Spirit as believers, and God is doing a progressive work in our lives of holiness, but oh man, we're not there. As Paul says in the New

Testament, I have not yet attained it, this thing. So, holiness remains this thing that is beyond. But when we begin to get, and I believe this comes from the study of the Scriptures, when we study the Scriptures and we learn about the holiness of God and at least becomes an intellectual understanding to us. We begin to understand that holiness is that element of God's nature that cannot abide sin.

See, we can abide it easily. Because we are sinners, God cannot abide sin. His holiness demands a response to sin. Are you with me? God's holiness demands a response to sin. Now, you're a sinner. God's holiness demands that punishment be made for sin. His mercy provided a way for that punishment, to be consumed in the person of his son, Jesus Christ.

He was punished to satisfy the holiness of God, but at the same time, he also satisfied the mercy of God because God longed to show mercy, He delights to show mercy. So, the holiness of God must be satisfied. Do you guys understand that when Jesus died on the cross, God revealed Himself as holy because somebody had to die. Somebody had to pay. Let's pray.

Lord, you are a Holy God. And even though the words come easily off my tongue, the understanding is lost to me for the most part. And I confess that because I am not a holy being. I am a sinful being. And yet, Lord, you are doing a work in me and in all my brothers and sisters who are here and who are listening today, a work to bring about holiness in our lives that we might be "other" than the world in which we live.

We invite you to complete that work. Sometimes it's painful. Sometimes it's exciting. But it's always necessary. Do that work, complete the work that you started. We look forward to your coming, Jesus. The Spirit and the Bride say come. Even so, come Lord Jesus. We worship you and praise you, for it is in that name, the name of Jesus the Redeemer, that we pray, amen.