



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 30

*Theme: Prophecy against Egypt,
Lamentation for Egypt*

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Theme: Prophecy against Egypt, lamentation for Egypt

Constable: Of the seven oracles against Egypt, this is the only one that is undated. Most of the commentators assumed that Ezekiel gave it in 587 B.C., the same year as the first, second, and third oracles. But he could have given it in 571 B.C. after his sixth oracle (29:17-21). I think he gave it in 571 B.C. and that the writer placed it here in the text, after the other late oracle, because both of them contain specific references to Nebuchadnezzar. Knowledge that Nebuchadnezzar would be God's instrument in judging Egypt is helpful in interpreting the remaining oracles against Egypt. If this chronology is correct, this would have been the last prophecy that Ezekiel gave that this book records. This oracle appears to be a mosaic of four separate messages. Note the recurrence of the introductory clause "thus says the Lord God" in verses 2, 6, 10, and 13.¹

OTS: The Woes of Egypt (30:1–19).

In the third word concerning Egypt Ezekiel listed the woes which were about to befall Egypt. The oracle begins with an announcement of the approach of the day of Yahweh. Ezekiel pictured that day as gloomy, a day when a sword would come upon Egypt and her allies. An enemy would take away the wealth of the land. The very foundations of the land would be shaken. Egypt's allies would also fall in that day (30:1–5).

For Egypt that would be a time of great slaughter. All of Egypt's helpers, those who were the "pride of her power," would fall by the sword throughout the land. Egypt and her cities would be desolate. This devastating judgment would bring Egypt to experiential knowledge of who the Lord really was. News of the fall of Egypt would be carried by messengers to the neighboring Ethiopians. These complacent people would be terrified and confused by what they heard. The day of Egypt was certainly at hand (30:6–9).

Again Ezekiel identified Nebuchadnezzar as the agent of Yahweh's wrath against Egypt. His army consisted of "the most ruthless of the nations," "evil men," and "strangers." This force was coming to empty their swords against Egypt, to destroy the land and fill it with slain Egyptians. Yahweh promised to "make the Nile canals dry," i.e., remove every obstacle from before Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord would deliver Egypt into the hand of the invaders (30:10–12).

The idols of Egypt would suffer along with the land which venerated them. Never again would that nation have a native prince, i.e., Egypt would be ruled by a succession of foreign rulers. Ezekiel identifies the leading cities of Egypt and succinctly predicted how the judgment would impact on each of them. An interesting contrast is predicted for two major capitals, Noph or Memphis in the north, and Thebes or No in the south. The Lord threatened that he would "make the images cease from Memphis." Thebes would be torn asunder and its population would be cut off. A visit to the ruins of these ancient sites demonstrates that images of various kinds still stand at Thebes, but they are nowhere to be found at Memphis save for one huge statue of Ramses lying prone under a modern shelter (30:13–17).

God would thus break the yoke which Egypt had imposed on other nations. The pride of that superpower would cease forever. A cloud of gloom would cover the land. Egypt's

¹ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

daughters, i.e., her cities, would go into captivity. Through the judgments which Yahweh would execute there, Egypt would learn that Yahweh is God (30:18f.).²

Ezekiel 30:1

The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

Again Ezekiel doesn't want there to be a doubt in any mind whose word this is.

ESV 1–19 Lament for Egypt. The third of the seven anti-Egypt oracles is the only one undated, and it contains no written basis for dating. It is comprised of four relating prophecies, each introduced by Thus says the Lord (vv. 2, 6, 10, 13) and each echoing motifs and ideas seen elsewhere in Ezekiel's oracles. Together they announce the fall not only of Egypt but also of her allies, and again by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (v. 10). Much like in the Tyre oracle in ch. 27, there is no specific charge brought against Egypt here; rather, God's judgment is simply pronounced.

Unlike Ezekiel's other prophecies against Egypt, he did not date this one, which stressed Babylon's judgment on Egypt and her allies. It has four sections, each beginning with This is what the "LORD" (or Sovereign LORD) says (vv. 2, 6, 10, 13).³

Ezekiel 30:2

Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!

This is a time of wailing and mourning, a lamentation.

Clarke: Howl ye, Wo worth the day!—My Old MS. Bible,—*Soule gee, woo woo* to the day! "Howl ye, Alas for the day!" The reading in our present text is taken from Coverdale's Bible, 1536. The expressions signify that a most dreadful calamity was about to fall on Egypt and the neighboring countries, called here the "time of the heathen," or of the nations; the day of calamity to them. They are afterwards specified, Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, and Chub, and the mingled people, probably persons from different nations, who had followed the ill fortune of Pharaoh-hophra or Pharaoh-apries, when he fled from Amasis, and settled in Upper Egypt.⁴

This is a lament for Egypt and its allies. Because of the Egyptians' pride and idolatry, they would be brought down.

² Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 30:1–19). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 30:1–5). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

ESV 2–5: The cry of the day (v. 2) and the announcement that the day is near (v. 3) point to the “day of the Lord” concept, developed in 7:10–27 (see notes there). The bare announcement of the day of the Lord finds its counterpart in the time ... for the nations, explained almost at once as a time of doom. Ezekiel combines this motif with the “sword of the Lord” in a subtle way at 21:8–10, but here the connection is overt with the reference to the sword in 30:4.

Ezekiel 30:3

For the day *is* near, even the day of the LORD *is* near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

Missler: Let me pause here and suggest to those of you who are serious students of prophecy that you should spend some time and make it your own personal study of the phrase, “the Day of The Lord.” It is a very important concept.

There are some people who say it is just an idiomatic phrase which can mean many different things. There are others (and that is the way I lean) who argue that *The Day of The Lord* is a very specific phrase referring to God’s judgment upon the world. It is not an event like it happens in a day, do not misunderstand me; but prophecies that use that phrase are in one way or another End Time oriented.

“The End Times,” and “The Day of The Lord” are phrases that do not mean exactly the same thing, but speak towards the same thing. It is a technical area that may not be that interesting to some of you; but for those of you who are interested, here are a few references (this is not exhaustive, you should do a study through an exhaustive concordance):

See: Isaiah 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15, 2:11, 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Zechariah 14:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10.

These are examples of very important passages that use this phrase, “the Day of the Lord.” As you assemble them and read them for yourselves, you will come to your own inferences as to whether this is just an idiom, or whether it is different views of a singular concept or event in the mind of the Lord.⁵

Constable: Ezekiel was to wail and bemoan the fact that the day of the Lord was near. It would be a dark day for several nations since it would involve judgment for them. "The day of the Lord" is any day in which God acts in a dramatic way in history. The phrase "the day of the Lord" usually describes an eschatological day, but that is not its meaning here as is clear from what follows (v. 9; cf. 7:7, 10; Lam. 2:21-22). This judgment would come on Egypt soon.⁶

Daniel: A lot of people get confused when they read the phrase "the Day of the Lord." They imagine that it refers to either the Rapture, the Tribulation period, the Second Coming, or the end of the Millennial Kingdom. In fact, there are Scriptures where we find these assumptions to be true. Looking at the entirety of the Bible, we see that "the Day of the Lord" is a generic term, used to describe any time that God brings judgment.

⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

⁶ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

In this case, I cannot identify with certainty which of the judgments of Egypt are being referred to here. But it is reasonable to assume from the context that the Lord is continuing His statement about Egypt's fall at the hands of Babylon. They will be wiped out, along with any ally who stands with them against Nebuchadnezzar.⁷

The Day of the Lord on Egypt (30:1–19). Egypt's fall is associated with the Day of the Lord, an expression used elsewhere in the Old Testament of those times when the Lord comes as a warrior and swiftly and decisively destroys His enemies. Using Nebuchadnezzar as His "sword," the Lord would destroy both Egypt and its allies. Egypt's great river, the Nile, would dry up, its idols and princes would prove helpless, and all of its famous cities would be conquered.⁸

Dake: [day of the LORD] The day of the Lord will begin at the second coming of Christ and continue through the Millennium.

the day of the LORD. The time of God's intervention in judgment. Though the phrase is usually used eschatologically, here Egypt is viewed as representative of God's judgment on all godless nations.⁹

Wycliffe: The Day of the Lord Announced with Reference to Egypt. 30:1-5.

The day of the Lord. The *dies irae*, "day of wrath." See also 7:7; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph 1:7, 14; Isa 13:6; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 2. This is the day of judgment on sin and the final doom of the heathen world, of which Egypt is representative.¹⁰

BKC 2-5: In verses 2-5 Ezekiel discussed the day of the Lord. Wail and say, Alas for that day! For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near—a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. Clouds often pictured doom (cf. v. 18; 32:7-8; 34:12; Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15). Though some think this refers to the future day of the Lord when God will judge the world for her sin, that view divorces the phrase from its context. True, "the day of the LORD" usually refers to God's future judgment on the earth (cf. Isa. 13:6-16; 34:8; Mal. 4). It will be a time when Israel and the nations will be judged and when Israel will be restored to her place of national blessing. However, the "day" of the Lord can refer to any time God comes in judgment (cf. Lam. 2:21-22 and see comments under "Major Interpretive Problems" in the *Introduction to Joel*). Both Israel and Judah experienced a "day" of God's judgment when they were punished for their sins (cf. Ezek. 7:1-14, esp. vv. 7, 10, 12). Now God's "day" of judgment would extend to **Egypt**, who would be defeated by Babylon (cf. 30:10-12).

God's judgment—"a time of doom"—would lead to death and destruction. The sword drawn against Israel (21:1-17) would also overtake Egypt, and anguish would

⁷ Ron Daniel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel2901.pdf>

⁸ Dockery, D. S., Butler, T. C., Church, C. L., Scott, L. L., Ellis Smith, M. A., White, J. E., & Holman Bible Publishers (Nashville, T. (1992). *Holman Bible Handbook* (443). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

⁹ The Ryrie Study Bible

¹⁰ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:1–3). Chicago: Moody Press.

extend to Cush, adjoining Egypt on the south, out of fear that she would be attacked next (cf. 30:9). Egypt's people would be killed and her treasures looted.

Egypt's allies would also be caught in her judgment. Egypt had many mercenary soldiers in her army (Jer. 46:8-9, 20-21). Cush, as stated earlier, refers to present-day southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia (Es. 1:1; Jer. 46:9; Ezek. 27:10). Put is modern-day Libya (Isa. 66:19; Jer. 46:9; Ezek. 27:10), and Lydia was on the west coast of Asia Minor (cf. 27:10). The words all Arabia could read "all the mixed people." Only one vowel in these Hebrew words makes this difference. Jeremiah used these same words to refer to all the foreigners residing in Egypt (cf. Jer. 25:20).

The Hebrew word translated Libya is actually "Cub" (*kûb*, NIV marg.). The normal Hebrew word for Libya is *lûb*, as in Nahum 3:9. No manuscript evidence warrants a change from *kûb* to *lûb*. It seems better to read "Cub" and to admit that the exact location of this nation is unknown. The people of the covenant land probably refers to those Israelites who fled to Egypt to avoid Nebuchadnezzar's attacks against Judah (cf. Jer. 42:19-22; 44:1-14).¹¹

McGee: A cloudy day was unusual. They don't have many clouds in the land of Egypt because they have less than an inch of rain in that section. They depend upon the river Nile for the water they need. By the way, they worshiped the crocodile of the Nile, as well as everything else in the animal world.

"The time of the heathen" is better translated the time of the *nations*, and we are certainly living in that day when the nations are really stirring throughout the world.¹²

Ezekiel 30:4

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

Constable: An enemy would invade Egypt, slay many of her people, take away her wealth, and tear down her national foundations. Her neighbor Ethiopia (Cush, Nubia) would despair when this happened because Ethiopia had strong ties to Egypt. Egypt's other allies would also fall: Put (on the African coast of the southern Red Sea), Lud (Lydia in Anatolia), Arabia, and Libya (farther west on the Mediterranean coast of Africa). "Arabia" (Heb. *ha'arab*) translates one pointing of the Hebrew text while "mixed people" (Heb. *ha'ereb*) renders another. Men from Put, Lud, Arabia, and other countries served Egypt as mercenary soldiers (cf. 27:10; Jer. 25:19-20a, 24; 46:9, 21), and they may be the "mixed people" in view, if that is the correct reading. The Judeans who had fled to Egypt from the Babylonians would have suffered too, and they would have been part of this "mixed people."¹³

¹¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 30:1-5). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 30:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹³ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

Dake: Egypt will be overthrown by the Antichrist during the conquest of the 10 kingdoms inside the old Roman Empire territory, in the first 3 1/2 years of Daniel's 70th week; and it will be under him the last 3 1/2 years of that 7-year period (Daniel 7:23-24; Daniel 8:23; Daniel 11:40-45).

ESV 4–5: On **Cush**, see 29:10. **Put** refers to the same region as **Libya**; for it and **Lud**, see note on 27:10. The Hebrew underlying **Arabia** (*'Ereb*) literally means “mixed peoples.” This geographical survey anticipates the central thrust of the next unit.

Wycliffe: Foundations. The political and social institutions in which Egypt's strength lay (cf. vv. 6, 8, 13, 15, 17). 5. The allies of Egypt were to be overthrown. Arabia (RSV). This translation follows Symmachus, Aquila, and the Syriac in place of the AV, *the mingled people*. Libya. In northern Africa, west of Egypt (cf. Nah 3:9). Read *Lûb*, with the LXX, and the Syriac for unknown *Chûb* of the MT. Men ... in league. Literally, *and the sons of the land of the covenant with them*. A reference to Egypt's allies rather than to Jewish mercenaries in the army of Psamtik II (594–588; see *Letter of Aristeas*, ch. 13).¹⁴

McGee: At times there was an alliance between Egypt and Ethiopia, although a great deal of the time there was enmity and warfare between the two nations. It is believed by many conservative scholars that Moses, when he was Pharaoh's daughter's son, would have been the next Pharaoh, and that he actually led an expedition against Ethiopia.¹⁵

Ezekiel 30:5

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

These were the allies, the nations around Egypt who were also injured by Egypt's fall.

Chuck Smith 5-10: So the greatness which was once Egypt, one of the greatest nations in the ancient world. You study ancient history, and Egypt always stands out. And you go, of course, to Egypt and you see the tremendous monuments to the genius of the people of that ancient world. You see the ruins in Memphis and in Thebes. You see the pyramids, you see the sphinx, and all of these great monuments that were there in Egypt. And you can only stand in awe and imagine the glory that once was in Egypt. But Egypt is to fall. Not to rise into a world-dominating stature again, but to remain just a base nation from then on. And of course, such is the story. Egypt is no longer a major kind of a world empire or a major kingdom of the world, but it is just one of the many lesser nations of the world even today.¹⁶

Dake: Ethiopia and the Libyans will be at the footsteps of the Antichrist (Daniel 11:40-45), as well as the other countries listed here (Ezekiel 30:4-5).

¹⁴ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:1–3). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹⁵ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 30:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁶ Chuck Smith, Sermon notes on Ezekiel, Pastor/Founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa CA

Ryrie: *Put.* On the N coast of Africa in Libya. *Lud.* In Asia Minor (see Jer. 46:9). *Arabia.* Lit., the mixed people. Probably a reference to foreign mercenaries in the Egyptian army. *Lybia.* Lit., Chub (“Lybia” is taken from the LXX). An unidentified place.

Ethiopia is the Hebrew Cush, and refers to the area south of Egypt toward modern Ethiopia, see 29:10. Libya and Lydia were in Africa and Asia Minor; see 27:10. Mingled people may be read as “all of Arabia.” Chub is an obscure term that was understood as the “Libyans” by the Septuagint translators of the Hebrew Old Testament. The allied lands were lands to the south, east, and west of Egypt that would also fall to the Babylonian army.

McGee: At this time there was an alliance among these nations, but they would all become subject to Nebuchadnezzar, who was actually a world ruler. In fact, he is the head of gold in Daniel’s prophecy (ch. 2) of the four great world kingdoms.¹⁷

Ezekiel 30:6

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

The Lord announced again (vv. 6-9) that the nations that supported Egypt would fall with her. Egypt would suffer humiliation from north to south (cf. 29:10) as the enemy slew many Egyptians.

Migdol to Syene means the whole land of Egypt, see 29:10.

ESV 6–9: Here the allies of Egypt come into focus. They shall share the same fate as their master. On **Migdol to Syene**, see 29:10. The language of desolation also forges a link back to 29:8, 10.

Wycliffe: Egypt and Its Allies To Be Destroyed. 30:6-9.

Migdol to Syene (RSV). Preferable to AV, *from the tower of Syene*. Cf. 29:10. 7. Cf. 29:12. 8. **Fire.** Figurative of war (cf. vv. 14, 16). 9. Cf. Isa 18:2. The Lord’s acts against Egypt were meant to warn the **unsuspecting** (AV, *careless*) **Ethiopians** and the world.¹⁸

BKC 6-9: Ezekiel continued to discuss the defeat of Egypt’s mercenary **allies** within Egypt’s borders. Throughout the land, **from Migdol to Aswan** (the northern and southern extremities of Egypt [see the map in the *Introduction* to Jer.]; cf. Ezek. 29:10). These allies would be crushed and the cities where they had settled would be ruined. The destruction would force these nations to acknowledge the God who predicted their downfall: Then they will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁷ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 30:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁸ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:6). Chicago: Moody Press.

The news of Egypt's destruction would spread rapidly, causing panic among her allies. Messengers would travel in ships up the Nile River south to Cush to announce Egypt's defeat. The news would cause panic in Cush because they, having sided with Egypt against Babylon, would now be vulnerable to attack. Anguish would take hold of them (cf. 30:4). "The day of the LORD" (v. 3) was now explained as the day of Egypt's doom. God's day of judgment on Egypt would surely take place.¹⁹

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

Ezekiel 30:7

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

Shall be desolate—All these countries shall be desolated, and the places named shall be chief in these desolations.

Ezekiel 30:8

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

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

Fire is often symbolic of judgment (see 20:47; Isa. 4:4).

Ezekiel 30:9

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

Constable: On this day of the Lord (v. 3), the day of Egypt's judgment, God would send soldiers against Egypt in ships, and they would frighten even the distant Ethiopians (cf. v. 4). The terror and consternation of Egypt in that hour can only be likened to the time of Egypt's judgment when Israel was delivered from Egyptian servitude in the exodus (see Exodus 15:12-16).²⁰

¹⁹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 30:6-9). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁰ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

Clarke: Messengers go forth from me in ships—Ships can ascend the Nile up to Syene or Essuan, by the cataracts; and when Nebuchadnezzar’s vessels went up, they struck terror into the Ethiopians. They are represented here as the “messengers of God.”

This **day of Egypt**—the day that Egypt and her allies would be conquered—was part of a larger period of God’s judgment on the nations outside Israel by means of Babylon; in fact, Ezekiel describes the Babylonians as messengers sent from God Himself. No one could prevent the coming day of judgment, for the Almighty had ordained it: for indeed it is coming.

Ezekiel 30:10

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

Now here again we get the context of this as local, immediate. Nebuchadnezzar’s judgment upon Egypt is the primary focus.

Constable 10-11: In a third message (vv. 10-13), the Lord said He would make the vast wealth of Egypt cease when He sent Nebuchadnezzar against her. Nebuchadnezzar would come with his allies and fight against the Egyptians and slay large numbers of them.²¹

ESV 10–12: The explicit identification of **Nebuchadnezzar** and the Babylonians as the agents of God's wrath links to 29:17–20, although it is likely that this unit comes from an earlier period. Likewise, the drying up of the **Nile** (30:12) links back to 29:9b–12.

BKC 10-12: The third section of this prophecy again zeroed in on the means of destruction against the hordes of Egypt. “Hordes” was mentioned 14 times in chapters 30-32 by Ezekiel, apparently to stress that proud nation’s teeming populace. Egypt’s judgment would come by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 29:17-21). God selected Babylon, the most ruthless of nations (cf. 28:7; 30:10-11; 32:12), to accomplish His judgment. Babylon treated her captives cruelly. After King Zedekiah of Judah rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar forced him to watch soldiers kill all his sons. Then Zedekiah’s eyes were put out so the last thing he ever saw was his sons’ deaths (2 Kings 25:7). Ezekiel said that Babylon, after defeating Judah, would turn her cruel war machine against Egypt, killing the Egyptians with swords (cf. Ezek. 30:4).

In describing Babylon’s attack, Ezekiel carefully pointed up the ultimate Source of destruction. Three times in verses 10-12 God said “*I will*” do this. Babylon was only a tool God used to accomplish His judgment. God declared that by the hand of foreigners I will lay waste the land. For the fifth time in this book God called the Babylonians “foreigners” (7:21; 11:9; 28:7, 10; 30:12).²²

²¹ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

²² Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 30:10–12). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Ezekiel 30:11

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

These verses add extra details to the more general predictions about Egypt's doom in the preceding verses (vv. 3–9). **Most terrible of the nations** was applied to the Babylonians because their cruelty was legendary (see 2 Kin. 25:7; 2 Chr. 33:11; 36:17; Jer. 39:4–10).

Wycliffe: The Wealth of Egypt To Be Seized by Nebuchadrezzar. 30:10-12.

10. **The multitude of Egypt** (cf. 4; 29:19) would be carried off by **Nebuchadrezzar**, first referred to here by name. The reference in 29:17-19 is from a later date. 11. **The terrible**. Cf. 28:7; 31:12; 32:12; 7:24. 12. I will make the rivers dry. Drying up of the Nile arms (cf. 29:3) would be a calamity to Egypt. Cf. Isa 19:5ff. The hand of the wicked ... strangers. Cf. Hab 1:6ff., 12, 13.²³

Ezekiel 30:12

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

This threat of letting the river dry up has happened literally in our times; the famous Aswan Dam, and the disasters it has brought ecologically. The point is that this is God's way of really threatening the Egyptians. Their whole lives hung on the Nile and its ability to produce sustenance by its overflowing and fertilizing the fields. So saying He would make the rivers dry would be a scary threat to them.

Constable: Yahweh would cause the canals of the Nile River to dry up as a result of the warfare. The irrigation canals in Egypt required constant attention and maintenance, but during war the Egyptians would not have time for that. Consequently Egypt would stop producing food. The Babylonians, strangers to Egypt, would take over Egypt and desolate it.²⁴

Clarke: **I will make the rivers dry**—As the overflowing of the Nile was the grand cause of fertility to Egypt, the drying it up, or preventing that annual inundation, must be the cause of dearth, famine, etc. By rivers, we may understand the various canals cut from the Nile to carry water into the different parts of the land. When the Nile did not rise to its usual height these canals were quite dry.

Egypt's pharaohs claimed that they had made the Nile—the river on which the entire nation depended. If God dried up the Nile, the nation would be doomed.

²³ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:10). Chicago: Moody Press.

²⁴ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

McGee: These rivers, as we have seen before, are actually the different branches down in the delta of the Nile, and there were many of them. There were also canals in that very rich fertile area. Near there was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites settled when they first came to Egypt.

“I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked.” Egypt fell later on to Alexander the Great, and when he died his generals took over the nations he had conquered. Cleopatra, who was not an Egyptian but a Greek, ruled over Egypt.

“I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers.” “Strangers” are foreigners. Egypt came under the control of foreign nations, and the canals were allowed to fill up. Although I have never gotten into that delta section, a friend of mine whom I met in Cairo had just come from there, and he told me that it is really a swamp in that section. God had said that He would make the land waste, and that is what it is today.²⁵

Ezekiel 30:13

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

Constable: Finally (vv. 13-19), the Lord also promised to destroy the idols of Egypt, even from Noph (Gr. Memphis), the capital of Lower Egypt near modern Cairo. Some studies indicate that there were more than 1,200 gods in Egypt at one time.⁴³⁷ There would no longer be a king over Egypt either; foreigners would rule over the land. Consequently the Egyptians would be very fearful. The Egyptians regarded their Pharaoh as the incarnation of a god.²⁶

If you go to Memphis and you can see these huge idols that are still there.

Chuck Smith 13-18: Now it was at Tehaphnehes that Jeremiah, you remember, took stones and he buried them and he said, "Over the top of these stones Nebuchadnezzar is going to build his throne." And of course, archaeologists in excavating at Tehaphnehes uncovered the porch of the palace and they removed the stones, the pavement, and underneath they found the very stones that Jeremiah buried as a witness against that city. And it was indeed there that Nebuchadnezzar came and set up his throne, Jeremiah says, "You're trusting in Egypt to deliver you, look, Nebuchadnezzar is gonna set up his throne right here. Egypt isn't going to deliver."

Now that did not happen during the period of Pharaoh Haaibre, but this portion of course happened later, seventeen years after the beginning of the siege of Tyre. Or actually, it was fifteen years after that, that God for payment to Nebuchadnezzar gave him Egypt.²⁷

²⁵ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 30:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²⁶ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

²⁷ Chuck Smith, Sermon notes on Ezekiel, Pastor/Founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa CA

Clarke: Their images to cease out of Noph—Afterwards Memphis, and now Cairo or Kahira. This was the seat of Egyptian idolatry; the place where Apis was particularly worshipped.

No more a prince of the land of Egypt—Not one, from that time to the present day. See the note on Ezekiel 29:14.

LAN 13-19: The list of cities to be destroyed shows the breadth of the destruction; the drying up of the Nile (Ezekiel 30:12) shows its depth. Egypt would be completely incapacitated. This was a clear message to Judah not to trust Egypt for help against the Babylonians.²⁸

Ryrie: 13-19 Principal towns are mentioned in this description of the destruction of Egypt. *Memphis*. 10 mi. (16 km) S of Cairo. *Pathros*. Upper (South) Egypt. *Zoan*. The land of Goshen, where the Israelites had settled. *Thebes*. Capital of Upper Egypt. *Sin* or Pelusium. Situated on the NE frontier of Egypt, 23 mi. (37 km) SE of modern Port Said. *On*. Heliopolis, seven mi. (11 km) NE of Cairo (see Jer. 43:13). *Pi-beseth*. About 30 mi. (48 km) NE of Cairo and a center of worship of the cat-headed goddess. *Tehaphnehes*. Another frontier fortress, SW of Pelusium.

“Noph” is another name for Memphis.

God, One God—God displays His power and authority over the nations by destroying their worthless idols. See note on 6:3-7. Governments reign only as long as God allows.

Nelson: This fourth and final message adds more detail to the description of the coming destruction of Egypt. Emphasis seems to be placed on the fall of major cities. Noph was ancient Memphis, a significant city in Egypt. It was capital of the Old Kingdom in the third century B.C. On Pathros, see 29:14, 15. Zoan, the classical Tanis, was a city in the northeastern delta. No was ancient Thebes, the capital of Upper or southern Egypt. Thebes was destroyed by the Assyrians in 661 B.C. Sin was ancient Pelusium, a fortress town on the northeastern border where the ruling Egyptian dynasty of Ezekiel’s day had a residence: the strength of Egypt. Aven (or Heliopolis, “the City of the Sun”) was ancient On, a center for worship of the sun-god Re. Aven was north of Memphis at the southern tip of the delta. Pi Beseth, or Bubastis in Greek form, was once the capital of Lower Egypt (the northern or Nile Delta area). Tehaphnehes was also a fortress town on the northeastern border, the place where the Babylonian army would enter Egypt to bring this dark day. A cloud would arise from burning the city, and its vassal villages—her daughters—would be attacked and set ablaze also.²⁹

ESV 13–19: The knowledge of Egypt demonstrated in 29:14 is seen in this unit's plethora of place names, often compared to Mic. 1:10–15. To each place is joined a facet of the judgment to fall upon it. This litany of divine actions amounts to a comprehensive rejection of Egyptian religion and politics. There is no clear geographical organization to

²⁸ Life Application Notes, Life Application Bible

²⁹ The Nelson Study Bible

the list, but where information is available, the judgments appear to be appropriate to the place. **Memphis** (Ezek. 30:13, 16) was the capital of Lower Egypt, south of the Nile delta. On **Pathros** (v. 14), see 29:14. **Zoan** (30:14), **Pelusium** (vv. 15–16), and **Tehaphnehes** (v. 18) were in the northeastern delta, with Pelusium being a strategic fortress at the border with the Sinai. **Thebes** (vv. 14–16) was capital of Upper Egypt, thus holding great symbolic value. **On** and **Pi-beseth** (v. 17) were in the southeastern delta, near the land of Goshen, the location of the sojourn of the people of Israel before the exodus (Gen. 45:10). Some of the judgments (Ezek. 30:18) provide allusions to the exodus plagues.

Wycliffe: Princes and Towns of Egypt To Be Destroyed. 30:13-19.

Eight principal cities, three in Lower and five in Upper Egypt, are singled out for destruction.

Idols and ... images. The words *gillûlîm*, “logs, blocks,” and *elîlîm*, “not-gods,” are used only here in Ezekiel but often in Isaiah. One suggestion is to read *gfdôlîm*, “nobles” and *elîm*, “chiefs” (LXX).

Memphis (Gr.). Or *Noph* (Heb.), *Mennofri* (Egyptian), near *mit Rahîneh*, ten miles south of Cairo. The home of the fire-god, Ptah, and the Apis bull. 14. **Pathros**. Cf. 29:14. **Zoan**. Egyptian *S·nt*, or Greek Tanis. The Hyksos capital Avaris, present day San el-Hagar, in the east Delta of the Nile, west of Pelusium. **Thebes**. Or *No*, No-Amon, Egyptian Net, capital of Upper Egypt, four hundred miles south of Memphis, home of the sun-god, Amon. 15. **Pelusium** (RSV). So the Vulgate. MT *Sin* (only here in Ezk). Identified as Tell Foramen. It was a frontier fortress on the northeast boundary, in the vicinity of Pelusium, twenty-three miles southeast of Port Said. 16. **Pelusium** (*Sin*) to **Thebes** (*No*) is all Egypt from north to south.³⁰

BKC 13-19: In this fourth section of the prophecy Ezekiel enumerated the many places in Egypt that would be destroyed. No major city there would escape God’s wrath. First, God said He would destroy the idols and ... put an end to the images in Memphis (cf. v. 16). According to legend, Memphis was the first capital of united Egypt (ca. 3200 B.C.). But later, when Memphis was no longer the capital, the city still was important as a religious center. Numerous temples were built there. A colony of Jews had settled in Memphis (cf. Jer. 44:1).

Other cities would also feel the sting of judgment. Pathros was an area about midway between Cairo and Aswan. “Pathros” was a synonym for upper Egypt (cf. Jer. 44:1) and possibly for all Egypt (cf. Ezek. 29:14). Zoan was a royal residence in the Delta region (cf. Ps. 78:12, 43; Isa. 19:11, 13). Later Zoan was called Tanis by the Greeks. Thebes (or No), mentioned three times in this passage (Ezek. 30:14-16), was in southern (upper) Egypt about 400 miles south of Cairo at the site of modern Karnak and Luxor. For a long time it was the country’s capital. The city was destroyed by the Assyrians in 663 B.C. (cf. Nahum 3:8-10) but was rebuilt. Jeremiah also predicted Thebes’ destruction (cf. Jer. 46:25). The hordes of people there would be slain and the city would be taken suddenly by storm.

³⁰ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:13). Chicago: Moody Press.

Pelusium would receive God's wrath (Ezek. 30:15), and when fire would spread through Egypt, Pelusium would writhe in agony (v. 16). Pelusium (or Sin) was in the Delta about a mile from the Mediterranean Sea. The city was a major military center and guarded the northern entrance to Egypt. Appropriately Ezekiel called it the stronghold of Egypt.

Ezekiel named the last three of the eight cities of Egypt in verses 17-18: Heliopolis ... Bubastis, and Tahpanhes. Heliopolis (or On) was in northern (lower) Egypt just south of the Delta region. It was a major religious center during much of Egypt's ancient history. Possibly Jeremiah had Heliopolis in mind when he predicted the destruction of "the temple of the sun in Egypt" (cf. Jer. 43:13). Bubastis (or Pi Beseth) was northeast of the modern city of Cairo, in northern (lower) Egypt. Bubastis served briefly as a capital of Egypt, and it too was an important religious center. Tahpanhes was near the present Suez Canal. In Jeremiah's day Pharaoh had a palace in that city (Jer. 43:9) which may be why Ezekiel mentioned it last—for climactic effect. Jeremiah condemned that city along with Memphis (cf. Jer. 2:16). He was forced to go there after Gedaliah was assassinated (Jer. 43:7-8).

By naming Egypt's major cities God was saying that the strength of the entire nation would be ended, like the breaking of a yoke. She would be covered with clouds, a figurative way to express doom and judgment (cf. Ezek. 30:3; 32:7-8; 34:12; cf. Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15). As gathering clouds herald an approaching storm, so covering Egypt with clouds would herald her coming judgment. Major cities would be destroyed, and people in the villages would be taken into captivity.³¹

McGee: Now here is another remarkable prophecy—

"I will cause their images to cease out of Noph." Noph is Memphis, and in Ezekiel's time it was the great city of Egypt. It was a very wealthy city, and it had idols in profusion—up and down both sides of the streets were idol after idol. They were the city's decoration! No other place has ever had idols like Memphis had them. Here God says that He would make the idols to cease out of Memphis.

I have walked over what is supposed to be the ruins of Memphis, and all that is left of the idols is one great big statue of Raamses. It lies on its back, and a building has been erected around it to house the statue. That is the only thing left in Memphis. God did exactly what He said He was going to do. He made the idols to cease.

"There shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." There is no royal line in Egypt any more. Neither can any of the rulers be called great men. They all have had to look to other nations for aid and support.³²

³¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 30:13–19). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 30:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ezekiel 30:14

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

Pathros was Upper Egypt; *Zoan* was another name for Goshen, the land where Israel was originally settled. *No Ammon* was another name for Thebes.

Constable: Specifically, God would desolate Pathros (Upper Egypt, between modern Cairo and Aswan, cf. 29:14), He would burn up Zoan (Gr. Tanis), a chief city in the northeastern delta, and He would judge No (Gr. Thebes, modern Karnak and Luxor), Egypt's southern capital. All the towns mentioned in these verses were important religious centers as well as large cities.³³

Zoan—Tanis, the ancient capital of Egypt.

No—Diospolis, or Thebes, the city of Jupiter. “No” is another name for Thebes.

Ezekiel 30:15

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

Sin is a location name.

Constable 15-16: God would also judge the people living in Sin (Gr. Pelusium), one of the northernmost strongholds of Egypt, and He would allow the walls of No (Thebes) to be breached and its people slain. Noph (Memphis) would also experience daily distress during the war.³⁴

Clarke: My fury upon Sin—Pelusium, a strong city of Egypt, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

McGee: “I will pour out my fury upon Sin”—which is Pelusium, now completely buried in the sand.

“I will cut off the multitude of No”—this is Thebes, which was a great city in the upper Nile. The ruins are there, but its greatness is all gone.

In the next verses God continues to speak of these great cities of Egypt which have now disappeared altogether.³⁵

³³ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

³⁴ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

³⁵ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 30:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ezekiel 30:16

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

Sin is a place name, a key city in the northern frontier. It is the place where Candis conquered with that business with the dogs and cats. So those are all place names.

Ezekiel 30:17

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

Constable 17-19: On or Aven (Gr. Heliopolis), a major religious center in Lower Egypt, and Pi-beseth (Gr. Bubastis), another capital city 40 miles northeast of modern Cairo, would also fall in the war, and the Egyptian women would go into captivity. It would also be a dark day for Tehaphnehes (Hanes, Gr. Daphne), a fortress town and residence of the Pharaohs (Isa. 30:4; Jer. 2:16; 43:7,9; 44:1), when Yahweh would break Egypt's power. Egypt's pride would cease, doom would overwhelm her, and her people would go into captivity. This is how the Lord would judge Egypt, and the people would know that He is the true God.

Various forms of misery characteristic of the Day of the Lord are mentioned here as what the cities of Egypt may expect. All of them are intended to apply to all of Egypt, although the style of the passage is to pair miseries with cities randomly, in a kind of literary collage.³⁶

Aven—Or On, the famous Heliopolis, or city of the sun.

Pibeseth—Bubastum or Bubaste, by a slight alteration of the letters. It is situated on the eastern branch of the Nile, towards Arabia.

The Hebrew text has only a feminine pronoun (“they”), and the esv supplies the referent as **women**, anticipating the ending of v. 18; it could also be “cities,” which is grammatically feminine (see esv footnote).

Wycliffe: On, or *Aven*. Egyptian *·nw*, Greek Heliopolis. The present Tell Hasn, or `Ain Shems, “sun fountain,” located about seven miles northeast of Cairo. It was the seat of the sun-god Ra. It was also the home of Joseph’s father-in-law (Gen 41:45, 50). **Pi-beseth**. Egyptian *Pi Bastis*, Greek *Bubastis*. Present-day Tel Basta, thirty miles north-northeast of Cairo. It was the house of the goddess Bast, to whom the cat was sacred.³⁷

³⁶ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

³⁷ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:17). Chicago: Moody Press.

Ezekiel 30:18

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

Tehaphnehes was the residence where the pharaohs lived (Jeremiah 43:9).

Tehaphnehes—Called also Tahapanes, Jeremiah 2:16. This is the Pelusian Daphne.

Break there the yokes—The sceptres. Nebuchadnezzar broke the scepter of Egypt when he confirmed the kingdom to Amasis, who had rebelled against Apries.

Tehaphnehes. Elsewhere *Tahpanhes*. Greek *Daphnae*. Modern Tell Defenneh, on the Pelusiac bank of the Nile. It was an eastern frontier fortress, about thirty miles southwest of Pelusium.³⁸

Ezekiel 30:19

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

Will I execute judgments. The purpose of the judgment was to be the revelation of the Lord and the recognition of his deity.³⁹

Ezekiel 30:20

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

Now we have a prophecy that is going to be dated, and this date is about 587 B.C. three months after the first verse of Chapter 29.

Ezekiel received this oracle against Egypt on April, 29, 587 B.C., less than four months after the Lord gave him the first oracle (29:1-16).

Chuck Smith: That is, you're back into the first month April of 586 B.C., and it's important that you catch these datings of these prophecies so that you know at what time these particular prophecies were made. So this now was made in April 586, the year that Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar.⁴⁰

³⁸ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:17). Chicago: Moody Press.

³⁹ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:19). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴⁰ Chuck Smith, Sermon notes on Ezekiel, Pastor/Founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa CA

Chuck Smith 20-26: And so God's judgments pronounced against Egypt. And the next couple of chapters he continues these judgments against Egypt, and then we get into these instructions for those of the Jewish captivity and of their coming back into the land. And we get into some very exciting prophecies as we move into next week and prophecies that we see being fulfilled today in the land of Israel.⁴¹

May the Lord keep His hand upon your life and may He speak to you this week through His Word. May He open up your heart and your mind and your understanding to the things of the Spirit. May He cause you to realize that His righteous principles will always prevail, that when God speaks it can be accounted as done. And when God establishes a principle, it cannot be violated. And thus, may you live in that place where God can bless you as He desires to bless you. May you keep yourself in the love of God as you walk in fellowship with Him this week. In Jesus' name.

Ron Daniel: God promises to break both arms of Pharaoh. Notice that one is broken already, and the other one will be. This is a figure of speech, referring to Egypt's strength for holding the sword. What arm had been broken already? About 18 years before, Pharaoh Neco had been defeated by Nebuchadnezzar when he took his army to meet the Babylonians at Charchemish on the Euphrates (2Chron. 35:20; Jer. 46:2). That was the first arm being broken. The second arm would be broken when Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt in the near future.⁴²

[eleventh year] The 11th year of the captivity, about 3 months before the destruction of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 30:21; 2 Kings 25:2-3). This was about 16 years before Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt (Ezekiel 29:17).

Clarke: In the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day—This was the eleventh year of the captivity of Jeconiah, and the date here answers to April 26, A.M. 3416; a prophecy anterior by several years to that already delivered. In collecting the writings of Ezekiel, more care was taken to put all that related to one subject together, than to attend to chronological arrangement.

LAN 20-21: This message came in 587 B.C. while Jerusalem was under attack from Babylon. Judah had rebelled against Babylon and made an alliance with Egypt in spite of God's warnings (Jeremiah 2:36-37). Pharaoh Hophra made a halfhearted attempt to help Jerusalem, but when Nebuchadnezzar's army turned on him, he fled back to Egypt (Jeremiah 37:5-7). This defeat is what Ezekiel meant when he said that God had broken the arm of Pharaoh.

Ryrie: *eleventh year ... first month* = April 587 B.C., three months before the fall of Jerusalem.

⁴¹ Chuck Smith, Sermon notes on Ezekiel, Pastor/Founder, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa CA

⁴² Ron Daniel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel2901.pdf>

Wycliffe: The Arms of Pharaoh To Be Broken. 30:20-26.

20. **Eleventh year, first month, seventh day.** March–April 586 (or 587), three months after 29:1, and four months before the fall of Jerusalem. In verses 21-23 the Lord is the destroyer of Pharaoh; in verses 24-26, the king of Babylon is His agent. 21. **I have broken the arm of Pharaoh.** Probably a reference to a recent defeat of Pharaoh-necho (Jer 37:5-8; 34:21). 22. The breaking of both Pharaoh's arms, **the strong, and ... broken,** refers to the army still in Egypt for defense and the one defeated and fleeing.⁴³

ESV 20–26: The Kings of Egypt and Babylon. The dates return in this fourth Egypt oracle, locating this unit in April 587 b.c. This oracle contrasts the weakness of Hophra's forces with the might of Babylon. The direct confrontation between these kings has been announced in v. 10. The **sword** (vv. 21–22) will **fall** from the **hand** of Hophra, but Nebuchadnezzar wields the sword of the Lord (v. 24; cf. 29:11, 19). Again, the king of Babylon does God's work (29:20).

BKC 20-26: Ezekiel's fourth of seven prophecies against Egypt was given in the 11th year, in the first month on the seventh day. That date was April 29, 587 B.C., almost four months after Ezekiel's first prophecy against Egypt (29:1). The first prophecy signified the time when the forces of Egypt went out to "rescue" Israel from Babylon (cf. Jer. 37:4-5); the fourth prophecy was recorded after the Babylonians defeated Egypt. The theme of the prophecy was Egypt's defeat by God: I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. This Pharaoh was Hophra, who ruled Egypt from 589 to 570 B.C. Possibly the days between the first and fourth prophecies were approximately the length of time the siege on Jerusalem was lifted as Babylon repositioned its army to meet the Egyptian attack.

Nebuchadnezzar broke the "arm" of Egypt so she was unable to defend Judah. In fact the damage done to Egypt was irreparable. Egypt's arm, symbolizing strength, was not even put in a splint so as to become strong enough to hold a sword.

Egypt "broke her arm" in her feeble attempt to rescue Israel, but this was only a prelude to God's full judgment. God said He would break both of Egypt's arms, the good arm as well as the broken one. In other words God would totally destroy Egypt's strength. Her ability to protect both others and herself would be eliminated.

Though God would destroy the power of Egypt, He would strengthen the power of Egypt's chief foe, Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's arms would be strengthened by God, and Pharaoh, groaning like a mortally wounded man, would be utterly defenseless before the Babylonians.

Ezekiel's point was to contrast the recent defeat suffered by Egypt (her one "broken arm") with the still greater defeat she would suffer. She had been disarmed when she tried to intervene in Babylon's attack on Jerusalem, but she would later be destroyed by Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt herself, she would fall to him (cf. Ezek. 29:1-20). God would then disperse Egypt among the nations (a fact stated twice for emphasis; 30:23, 26; cf. 29:12). Egypt would follow Judah into exile.⁴⁴

⁴³ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:20–23). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁴⁴ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 30:20–26). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

OTS: The Defeat of Pharaoh (30:20–26).

The Lord had broken the arm of Pharaoh, i.e., his military might. The reference is probably to the defeat of Pharaoh Hophra when he tried to come to the aid of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (cf. Jer 37:6–10). The Pharaoh's wound had not been healed, i.e., he had not yet recovered from his defeat by Nebuchadnezzar in Palestine in 586 B.C.. He could not hold a sword, i.e., muster any strength, to further resist Nebuchadnezzar (30:20f.).

Since Yahweh was against Egypt, that land would experience yet other setbacks. Pharaoh's other arm would be broken, i.e., he would be rendered totally powerless. The sword would fall from his hand, i.e., his armies would be scattered. While Egypt decreased, however, Babylon would increase. The Lord would uphold the arms of Nebuchadnezzar, and he would wield the sword of God's justice. When that sword was stretched out against Egypt, and the Egyptians were scattered among the nations, they would know by experience that Yahweh is God (30:22–26).⁴⁵

Pharaoh's Power Broken (30:20–26). Ezekiel received a message concerning Pharaoh in 587 B.C., one year after Nebuchadnezzar had defeated Pharaoh Hophra in battle when the latter had tried to come and aid besieged Jerusalem (compare Jer 37:5–8). By allowing Nebuchadnezzar to defeat Hophra, the Lord had, as it were, broken Pharaoh's arm, a symbol of his military strength. However, the Lord was not finished with Egypt. He would energize the king of Babylon to conquer Egypt. Both of Pharaoh's arms would be broken. When the Egyptians were conquered and scattered among the nations, they would recognize the sovereignty of Israel's God.⁴⁶

Ezekiel 30:21

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

Constable: Yahweh announced that He had broken Pharaoh's arm. Ironically, "the strong-armed king had suffered a broken arm." It had not been set in a splint and supported, so he could not wield a sword effectively. This may refer to Egypt's defeat at Carchemish in 605 B.C. when Egypt lost its share of control over the ancient Near East (cf. 2 Kings 24:7; Jer. 46:2). Another possibility is that the defeat in view was Hophra's unsuccessful attack against the Babylonians near Judea a few months earlier (cf. 2 Kings 24:7; Jer. 37:5, 9; 44:30).

Possibly the days between the first and fourth prophecies were approximately the length of time the siege on Jerusalem was lifted as Babylon repositioned its army to meet the Egyptian attack.⁴⁷

I have broken the arm of Pharaoh—Perhaps this may refer to his defeat by Nebuchadnezzar, when he was coming with the Egyptian army to succor Jerusalem.

⁴⁵ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 30:20–26). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

⁴⁶ Dockery, D. S., Butler, T. C., Church, C. L., Scott, L. L., Ellis Smith, M. A., White, J. E., & Holman Bible Publishers (Nashville, T. (1992). *Holman Bible Handbook* (443). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

⁴⁷ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

LAN 21-26: This prophecy was given to Ezekiel in 587 B.C. God destroyed Egypt's military superiority and gave it to Babylon. God allows nations to rise to power to accomplish a particular purpose, often beyond our immediate understanding. When you read about armies and wars, don't despair. Remember that God is sovereign and in charge of everything, even military might. Besides praying for your military and government leaders, pray that God's greater purposes would be carried out and that his will would be done "on earth as it is in heaven" (see Matthew 6:10).

Nelson: I have broken the arm of Pharaoh: The prophecy refers to Pharaoh Hophra's unsuccessful attempt to relieve the siege of Jerusalem just a few months earlier (see 29:2, 6, 7). God used Nebuchadnezzar to defeat the Egyptian army. A muscular *arm*, as a symbol of the king's (and thus the army's) strength, often appeared in Egyptian art and architecture. Even Hophra took the title "He Who Is Strong-Armed." That God had broken Pharaoh's arm symbolized his complete defeat.

McGee: God states once again that Egypt will fall. The pictures of Egyptian rulers always show them holding the scepter in their hands. The scepter was a token of their power. God says, "I have broken the arm of Pharaoh." It is hard to hold a scepter with a broken arm! And God goes on to say, "It shall not be bound up to be healed." Babylon was going to conquer Egypt, and Pharaoh would be powerless to stop it. All of this was literally fulfilled.⁴⁸

Ezekiel 30:22

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

Constable 22-23: The Lord was about to break Pharaoh's other arm and to break his previously broken arm again, personifications of Egypt's fate. Egypt would suffer another defeat at the hands of the Babylonians and would never again regain its former strength. Yahweh would scatter the Egyptians from their homeland, and they would go to live in other countries.⁴⁹

I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand—When the arm is broken, the sword will naturally fall. But these expressions show that the Egyptians would be rendered wholly useless to Zedekiah, and should never more recover their political strength. This was the case from the time of the rebellion of Amasis.

⁴⁸ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 30:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴⁹ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

Ezekiel 30:23

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

I will scatter: These verses predict the continued weakness of Hophra against Nebuchadnezzar and the coming catastrophe for all Egypt when its cities would be defeated and the people deported (beginning c. 568 B.C.).

scatter ... and disperse (see also v. 26). This language appeared in 29:12. The fear of dispersion is one of the most deep-seated in the OT (e.g., Gen. 11:4; cf. Ezek. 28:24–26).

I will scatter the Egyptians. Cf. verse 26; 29:12. 24. **Strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon.** This refers to the sword of the Lord in Nebuchadnezzar's hand. Cf. 21:9. 25. **They shall know that I am the Lord.** See also verses 8, 19, 25.⁵⁰

Ezekiel 30:24

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

Constable 24-26: The Lord described the conflict between Babylon and Egypt as a conflict between two warriors. Nebuchadnezzar would break Hophra's arms as they battled. Egypt would groan like a wounded soldier. The people would know that Yahweh was God when He put His sword of power into Nebuchadnezzar's arms and strengthened him to defeat Hophra and when the Egyptians dispersed from their land (cf. v. 17-18, 23; 29:12).

The flexed arm was a common Egyptian symbol for the Pharaoh's strength. Often statues or images of the Pharaoh have this arm flexed, wielding a sword in battle. A king with great biceps was especially a popular concept under the Saites Dynasty of Ezekiel's day. In addition Hophra took a second formal title that meant 'possessed of a muscular arm' or 'strong-armed' . . .

This oracle does not specify Nebuchadnezzar as the king of Babylon who would defeat Pharaoh. Evidently his identity was a later revelation that came in the oracles of 571 B.C (29:17-21; 30:1-19). The point of this one is Yahweh's certain and complete destruction of Egypt's power.⁵¹

Nebuchadnezzar was the Lord's instrument to destroy Egypt.

⁵⁰ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 30:23). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁵¹ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, http://www.preceptaustin.org/ezekiel_commentaries1.htm

Ezekiel 30:25

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

Ezekiel 30:26

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

54x Ezekiel uses that phrase, “And they shall know that I am the Lord.” The theme of Ezekiel is the Glory of God, the awareness that He is the Lord.

Clarke: I will scatter the Egyptians—Several fled with Apries to Upper Egypt; and when Nebuchadnezzar wasted the country, he carried many of them to Babylon.



Ezekiel Prophecies against Egypt

c. 571 b.c.

Ezekiel prophesied that even the great nation of Egypt and its allies would fall to the Babylonians, who already occupied the land of Israel and Judah. The rule of the Babylonians would eventually extend as far as the borders of Cush, referred to elsewhere as Ethiopia. None of the great cities of Egypt would be spared Babylon's wrath.

