



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 32

*Theme: Lamentation over Egypt
and the Pharaoh*

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Theme: Lamentation over Egypt and the Pharaoh

Adam Clarke Introduction: The prophet goes on to predict the fall of the king of Egypt, under the figure of an animal of prey, such as a lion or crocodile, caught, slain, and his carcass left a prey to the fowls and wild beasts, vv. 1-6. The figure is then changed; and the greatness of his fall (described by the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars) strikes terror into all the surrounding nations, vv. 7-10. The prophet adds, that the overthrow of the then reigning Egyptian dynasty was to be effected by the instrumentality of the king of Babylon, who should leave Egypt so desolate, that its waters, (alluding to the metaphor used in the second verse), should run as pure and smooth as oil, without the foot of man or the hoof of a beast to disturb them, vv. 11-16. A beautiful, nervous, and concise description of a land ruined and left utterly desolate. In the remaining part of the chapter the same event is portrayed by one of the boldest figures ever attempted in any composition, and which at the same time is executed with astonishing perspicuity and force. God is introduced ordering a place in the lower regions for the king of Egypt and his host, vv. 17, 18. The prophet delivers his message, pronounces their fate, and commands those who buried the slain to drag him and his multitudes to the subterraneous mansions, vv. 19, 20. At the tumult and commotion which this mighty work occasions, the infernal shades are represented as roused from their couches to learn the cause. They see and congratulate the king of Egypt, on his arrival among them, v. 21. Pharaoh being now introduced into this immense subterraneous cavern, (see the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, where a similar imagery is employed), the prophet leads him all around the sides of the pit; shows him the gloomy mansions of former tyrants, tells their names as he goes along; beautifully contrasts their former pomp and destructive ambition, when they were a terror to the surrounding states, with their present most abject and helpless condition; declares that all these oppressors of mankind have not only been cut off out of the land of the living, but have gone down into the grave uncircumcised, that is, they have died in their sins, and therefore shall have no resurrection to eternal life; and concludes with showing Pharaoh the place destined for him in the midst of the uncircumcised, and of them that have been slain by the sword, vv. 22-32. This prophetic ode may be considered as a finished model in that species of writing which is appropriated to the exciting of terror. The imagery throughout is sublime and terrible; and no reader of sensibility and taste can accompany the prophet in this funeral procession, and visit the mansions of Hades, without being impressed with a degree of awe nearly approaching to horror.¹

¹ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

Ezekiel 32:1

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

Missler: There were about 2 years between Chapter 31 and 32 in terms of the timing of the prophecy. It really consisted of 2 lamentations which happened to be about 2 weeks apart.²

Constable: This is the first of two messages that Ezekiel received from the Lord concerning Egypt on March 3, 585 B.C.⁴⁴⁷ Less than two months had passed since the exiles had learned of Jerusalem's fall, which had occurred several months earlier (33:21). The Egyptians had also doubtless heard of Jerusalem's destruction. This oracle assured both the Jewish exiles in Babylon and the Egyptians, including the Jewish exiles there, that God would bring Egypt down. Jerusalem's destruction was to be no source of comfort for the Egyptians.³

Dake: [twelfth year] This was over a year after the fall of Jerusalem, and the 12th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin and the first Israelites who were taken to Babylon.⁴

LAN: This prophecy was given in 585 B.C., two months after the news of Jerusalem's fall had reached the exiles in Babylon. Ezekiel prophesied numerous judgments upon many wicked nations. These judgments served a positive purpose: they showed that evil forces are continually being overcome and that one day God will overthrow all evil, making the world the perfect place he intended. They also serve as warnings that God alone is sovereign. Even the mightiest rulers, like Pharaoh, will fall before God. All are accountable to him.⁵

Wycliffe: Twelfth year ... twelfth month ... first day. February–March, 584 (585) B.C., one year and seven months after the fall of Jerusalem.⁶

ESV: The date formula corresponds to March 585 b.c., placing it some time after the fall of Jerusalem and its defining moment in Ezekiel at 33:21, breaking the book's chronological sequence in order to follow the thematic gathering of the foreign-nation oracles into a single collection.

BKC: Ezekiel's sixth prophecy against Egypt was given in the 12th year, in the 12th month on the first day. That was March 3, 585 B.C.—two months after the news of Jerusalem's fall reached the captives in Babylon (cf. 33:21). The fall of Egypt was now so certain that Ezekiel was told to take up a lament concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt. A lament, or funeral dirge, was usually delivered when one was buried. (For an explanation of a lament see the comments on chap. 19.) Ezekiel had already written laments for Judah

² Chuck Missler, Notes on the book of Ezekiel, khouse.org

³ Dr. Thomas Constable, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm>

⁴ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁵ Life Application Notes, Life Application Bible

⁶ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:1). Chicago: Moody Press.

(chap. 19), the city of Tyre (26:17-18; 27), and the king of Tyre (28:12-19). The lament against Egypt is in three parts (32:2b, 3-10, 11-16). The second and third sections each begin with, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says” (vv. 3, 11).⁷

Parable of the Crocodile (32:1–16).

In his own estimation, Pharaoh was “a young lion of the nations.” In truth he was nothing but a clumsy crocodile. Usually the crocodile remained submerged in the seas, i.e., the rivers of Egypt. Occasionally, however, he would venture forth, muddying the waters, i.e., confusing the political situation, as he did (32:1f.). Ezekiel had made this same comparison two years before (cf. 29:1–6). The great crocodile of Egypt faced a terrible fate. It would be captured in a net by a company of many peoples. It would be cast forth into a field and left for dead. Bird and beast, i.e., smaller nations, would pick the bones of the helpless creature. Mountains and valleys would be filled with the huge carcass. The blood of the beast would saturate the ground and rivers (32:3–6). The meaning of these frightening images is explained by the prophet himself.

The fall of Egypt would be a dark day. Sun, moon and stars would refuse to shine. Other nations and kings would tremble before God’s unsheathed sword. When they saw Egypt fall, they would realize that the situation was hopeless for them. That sword was the king of Babylon who made expeditions against Egypt in 582 and 568 B.C.. Ezekiel called his armies “the mighty ones, tyrants of the nations.” This army would devastate the pride of Egypt, her multitude and her cattle. Egypt would become a desolation with neither man nor beast to trouble her waters any more. This was the lamentation which “the daughters of the nations” would chant over Egypt in that day (32:7–16).⁸

ESV 1–16: Lament over Pharaoh. Like the preceding oracle, this one is firmly bounded by a repeated element, the call to “lament” (vv. 2, 16)—although the poetic form itself is not strongly marked by this genre. The poem turns on the identification of Pharaoh as a “dragon” (v. 2), recalling 29:3 (see note). It is followed by two pronouncements of divine activity, one in 32:3–10, which develops the metaphorical world of the “dragon,” and the second in vv. 11–15, which more briefly and literally applies divine judgment to Egypt.

Ezekiel 32:2

Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.

The image here was like a crocodile, jumping in and stirring up the mud so he could hide.

⁷ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 32:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 32:1–16). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

Constable: Ezekiel was to utter a lamentation over Pharaoh. In the other oracles of judgment against foreign nations recorded in this book, lament typically follows announcement (cf. ch. 19; 26:17-8; 27; 28:12-19). The same is true with the oracles against Egypt. The writer's desire to preserve this pattern is probably another reason he recorded the oracles of judgment in 29:17-21 and 30:1-19 out of chronological order.

Hophra had compared himself to a young lion, but he was more like the mythical sea-monster. The Egyptian sphinx has the body of a lion and the head of a Pharaoh. Again, the monster in view seems to be a crocodile (cf. 29:3). He had burst forth from the Nile and its estuaries muddying and fouling their waters. This symbolizes Pharaoh's disturbing influence on the international scene as he complicated God's dealings with other nations, especially Judah and Babylon.

ESV: Egypt may fancy itself a lion, a self-delusion like that in 29:3, but it is a dragon, the cosmic beast being associated with the Nile's crocodile (again, see 29:3). In the verses that follow, the cosmic and natural elements intermingle, although the metaphorical language predominates.

Dake: [whale] Hebrew: *tanniyn* (HSN-8577), a monster; sea serpent; dragon; whale.

Clarke: **Thou art like a young lion—and thou art as a whale in the seas**—Thou mayest be likened to two of the fiercest animals in the creation; to a lion, the fiercest on the land; to a crocodile, *tannim*, (see chap. 29:3), the fiercest in the waters. It may, however, point out the hippopotamus, as there seems to be a reference to his mode of feeding. He walks deliberately into the water over head, and pursues his way in the same manner; still keeping on his feet, and feeding on the plants, etc., that grow at the bottom. Thus he fouls the water with his feet.

LAN: Although Pharaoh thought of himself as a strong lion, in God's eyes he was nothing but a crocodile ("monster") muddying the water. God's judgment would reduce Pharaoh to his true size. Anyone who defies God will face his judgment.

Lamentation (19:1). Here, a tragic song with denunciations: "Pharaoh, young lion of the nations, you are destroyed!" You are like a sea monster (*tannîm*; cf. 29:3), stirring up trouble among the nations.

BKC: Ezekiel said Pharaoh (Hophra), in his fierce power, was like a lion (cf. Judah's kings, 19:2-9) among the nations and a monster in the seas (cf. 29:2-5). The "monster" could refer to a crocodile or to the mythological chaos-monster, to picture Pharaoh's ferocity and seeming invulnerability. Possibly the crocodile is suggested as Ezekiel said Pharaoh was churning up the normally placid water (cf. Job 41:31-32). Pharaoh's actions were disturbing the international scene as he tried to blunt Babylon's power.⁹

⁹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 32:2). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

McGee: God's judgment would reduce Pharaoh to his true size. Anyone who defies God will face his judgment.

"Thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers." You see, back there they had an ecology problem. Old Pharaoh was muddying the water.¹⁰

The words **lion** and **monster** depict Egypt as proud and powerful.

Ezekiel 32:3

Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net.

Constable: The Lord announced that He would cast His net over Pharaoh using a large group of people as His instruments. In the Babylonian account of Creation, the *Enuma elish* (4:95), the god Marduk captured the chaosmonster Tiamat in a net and slew him. God may have wanted the Jewish exiles in Babylon to see a parallel between what Ezekiel predicted and what the Babylonians believed. Fulfillment would demonstrate Yahweh's sovereignty. The Babylonians would take Pharaoh captive, and the Egyptians would go into captivity. Since the Egyptians regarded the Pharaoh, the crocodile, and the Nile as manifestations of their gods, this announcement meant that Yahweh would humble Egypt's gods as well as bring her defeat.

BKC 3-10: Ezekiel then spoke of Pharaoh's judgment. If Pharaoh were a crocodile, God would lead Pharaoh's enemies on a "crocodile hunt." With a great throng of people I will cast My net over you, and they will haul you up in My net (cf. 29:3-5). Pharaoh would be trapped by his enemies and removed from his sphere of power. This was an amazing statement, for in Egypt the Pharaoh supposedly could defeat a crocodile! (Cf. comments on Job 41.) God would drag Pharaoh from his place of power and throw him on the land and hurl him on the open field. Pharaoh's power would be broken and his people scattered.

The destruction of Pharaoh and Egypt was couched in terms that conjured up images of Egypt's judgment at the time of the Exodus. God said He would drench the land with Egypt's flowing blood (Ezek. 32:6). This recalled the first plague on Egypt in which the water turned to blood (Ex. 7:20-24). But this time, the blood would come from the slain in Egypt. God also said He would darken the stars ... sun, and moon, bringing darkness over the land (Ezek. 32:7-8). Though these cataclysmic signs are similar to those that will accompany the day of the Lord (Joel 2:30-31; 3:15), it seems Ezekiel was alluding here to the darkness of the ninth plague (Ex. 10:21-29).

In response to Egypt's fall the surrounding nations would be appalled (cf. Ezek. 26:16; 27:35; 28:19) and their kings would shudder with horror. God's revealing His holy character through Egypt's judgment would have a profound effect on other nations. If mighty Egypt could be destroyed, so could they.¹¹

¹⁰ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 32:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 32:3-10). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

McGee: “Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will therefore spread out my net over thee”—“just as you put nets in the Nile River to get fish, that’s the way I am going to catch you, you monster of the Nile River, you crocodile!” It is as if God is saying, “I am going to pull you out and move you to a place where you won’t live in a palace. You will find yourself on the same plane with your subjects.” Death surely does level out humanity, does it not?¹²

Chuck Smith 3-7: Now as we get into this part of the prophecy where God speaks of the day when He puts her out, the heavens being covered, the stars dark, the sun will be covered with a cloud, and the moon will not give her light, brings into mind the prophecy of Joel concerning the time of the Great Tribulation, when the moon would be... the sun would be darkened, the moon would be turned to blood, and the stars would not shine. Jesus, of course, quoted this in Matthew 24, as again, a part of the Great Tribulation of those days. And we find it recorded also in the book of Revelation, in the cataclysmic judgments that take place in the sixth seal. So, it is possible that this prophecy against the Pharaoh is one of those prophecies with a dual fulfillment. That he was talking about what would happen when Nebuchadnezzar conquered him, but also the going out and the judgment against Egypt in the day of the Great Tribulation. So there is that real possibility of a dual aspect to the fulfillment of this particular prophecy, and it not only spoke of the condition of the Pharaoh then, but as history repeats itself, when the Lord judges the earth these same conditions do take place in the time of the Great Tribulation.¹³

ESV 3–6 Slaying the monster affects the entire landscape. The gorging of the **birds** and **beasts** in v. 4 is a stage beyond settling on the remains of the “cosmic tree” in 31:13.

Ezekiel 32:4

Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee.

Constable 4-6: Yahweh would set Pharaoh down in an open field and leave him on dry land, out of his element. Birds and beasts would then devour him (cf. 29:5; Matt. 24:28; Rev. 19:17-18). These animals of prey would carry his flesh and blood to distant mountains (cf. Exod. 7:19; Rev. 8:8) and fill the valleys and ravines with pieces of his carcass. This is a picture of the dispersion of the Egyptians from their land.

Wycliffe 4-5: Then will I leave thee. The monster would be slain and his carcass flung out to be devoured. Cf. 29:3-5. 7, 8. When I shall put thee out. Pharaoh is compared to a luminary whose extinction darkens the sky and stars. Cf. 30:18; Amos 5:18, 20; Isa 13:9,

¹² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 32:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹³ Chuck Smith, Sermon Notes, Pastor / Founder Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa CA

10; 14:12. 9, 10. I will ... vex the hearts of many people. Egypt's fall would make a profound impression on the nations. Cf. chapters 30; 31.¹⁴

Ezekiel 32:5

And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height.

Clarke: **And fill the valleys with thy height**—Some translate, with the worms, which should proceed from the putrefaction of his flesh.

Ezekiel 32:6

I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest, *even to the mountains*; and the rivers shall be full of thee.

Missler: Notice the mention of blood and water (the rivers); that has both an Old Testament and a New Testament echo. The Old Testament echo is, of course, in Exodus 7 when the plagues were literally put upon Egypt, the very target of this discussion (Exodus 7:19). But Revelation 8:8 also has the same overtones.¹⁵

Clarke: **The land wherein thou swimmest**—Egypt; so called, because intersected with canals, and overflowed annually by the Nile.

Ezekiel 32:7

And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.

Missler: The darkness was reminiscent of Exodus 10:23, the plague of darkness. It is also reminiscent of Revelation 8:12-13. There is an analogy, if you will, between Revelation 8 in a more broader, cosmic sense, and the 10 plagues of Egypt in Exodus. We find the same darkness in Joel 2:10 and elsewhere. For example, the quotation in Matthew 24:29; another one is in Isaiah 13:10.¹⁶

Constable 7-8: At the time God did this, He would darken the skies over Egypt so the light of the sun, moon, and stars would not shine on the land (cf. Joel 2:10, 31; Rev. 8:12-13). This announcement recalls the plague of darkness that the Lord sent before the Exodus (Exod. 10:21-23). He would again humiliate the gods that the Egyptians credited with bringing light and providing life.

The overthrow of Egypt was a prelude [or foreview], as it were, to the destruction of world rule in the last days.

¹⁴ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:4). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹⁵ Chuck Missler, Notes on the book of Ezekiel, khouse.org

¹⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on the book of Ezekiel, khouse.org

Clarke: I will cover the heaven—Destroy the empire.

Make the stars thereof dark—Overwhelm all the dependent states.

I will cover the sun—The king himself.

And the moon shall not give her light—The queen may be meant, or some state less than the kingdom.

ESV 7–8: The “cosmic” scope of the language is obvious in these heavenly effects of the dragon's death. The darkness on your land again provides allusions to the exodus story (cf. 30:13–19; also Ex. 10:21–23).

Ezekiel 32:8

All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.

Missler: The 10 plagues of Egypt were intended to be a foreshadowing of a larger set of plagues God is going to bring down upon the world. Be sensitive to the fact that we are not just dealing here with some quaint outpouring of Ezekiel on Pharaoh. We can tell from the

language that while Pharaoh was the target in a local sense, there were issues included which were broader, more cosmic than just Pharaoh, namely, Satan and his hosts that were motivating it all.

Using the same vocabulary which gave us Exodus and the 10 plagues, the same Author gave us Ezekiel and his tirade against the Pharaoh, and who gave us the Book of Revelation and its use of those same idioms. What we know as the Bible is not just 66 books written by 40 men over 5000 years; it is a single expression by a single author who happened to use 40 penman, who packaged it in 66 pieces, over thousands of years. But the message, the vocabulary, the idioms and the theme is unchangeable.¹⁷

Clarke: And set darkness upon thy land—As I did when a former king refused to let my people go to the wilderness to worship me. I will involve thee, and thy house, and thy people, and the whole land, in desolation and wo.

Chuck Smith 8-15: And again in all of these prophecies, the Lord declares when they are fulfilled then they shall know that I am the Lord. One of the purposes of prophecy, speaking of things in advance, is to give proof that God indeed has spoken. Jesus said, "I have told you these things before they come to pass so that when they come to pass you might believe." And so one of the strong apologetics of scripture is prophecy and the fulfillment of prophecy. And so over and over again as the prophecies are made, the Lord said, "And then shall ye know that I am the Lord." And, of course, when we get into Ezekiel our study next week, as it speaks of Russia's invasion with this massive army

¹⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on the book of Ezekiel, khouse.org

from all of her allies, including Libya and Ethiopia and all, Iraq, Iran and all, when they are all defeated in Israel, he said, "Then shall the nations of the world know that I am God. I will be sanctified before the nations of the world."

I was talking with a very wealthy Jewish friend about the Bible and about the Lord, and I was asking him what it was going to take to make him a believer. Because his whole thing was, "Where was God when my parents were gassed in Germany?" For his parents, both of them, killed by the Germans during the war. And I said, "But what will it take to make you a believer?" I said, "Here God said that He was going to make Israel a nation once again, and Israel is now a nation. Doesn't that say something to you?" He said, "No." He said, "It's very obvious we have had that in our heart from the beginning. You know, one day it was gonna be a nation again. We were going to take it again." He said, "We're tough people." I said, "Well, it says when Israel becomes a nation again that they will become a troublesome stone to all of those that are round about them, and if any nation tries to come against them, that they are really going to be hurt." And this was right after the '67 war. And I said, "Doesn't... look what's happened how Israel struck out against Jordan, Egypt and Syria, all at the same time and defeated all three. Took the Sinai, took the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, doesn't that cause you to believe?" He said, "No, I told you we were tough people." I said, "Well, the Bible says that Russia then will head an invasion against Israel, and will come with all of her allies to destroy this new nation. And that Russia is going to be totally defeated." He said, "When that happens, I'll become a believer." I said, "Paul, you might be just a little bit too late to escape the Great Tribulation that will follow." But we'll be getting into that more next week as we move on in this exciting prophecy of Ezekiel, as he gets into these... the re-gathering of the nation of Israel and the events of these last days. Now as we get into verse 17, we have a whole new prophecy. The lamentation against the Pharaoh is over with verse 16. This is the lamentation. He is told to take up a lamentation for the Pharaoh.

Ezekiel 32:9

I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known.

Constable 9-10: Many on-looking peoples would be upset when they observed the destruction and dispersion of the Egyptians (cf. 26:16; 27:35). The kings of other nations would tremble for their own safety when they saw what God would do to Egypt.

Clarke: I will also vex the hearts—Even the remote nations, who had no connection with thee, shall be amazed at the judgments which have fallen upon thee.

ESV 9–10: The political dimension is introduced. The more literal language, along with the reference to **my sword**, provides a transition to the second unit.

Ezekiel 32:10

Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall.

Ezekiel 32:11

For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.

Constable 11-12: The Lord promised to send the military power of Babylon against Egypt. The swords of these rapacious invaders would destroy the multitude of Egyptians and devastate their land.

Wycliffe 11-12: The sword of the king of Babylon and his warriors would come upon Egypt (cf. 21:19; 29:8; 30:11). 13, 14. I will destroy. A dramatic picture of uninhabited Egypt. Cf. verse 2; 29:11. 14. Then will I cause to sink down their waters. The mud would settle and the water would become clear, and the rivers would run like oil, no more trampled by man or cattle. This is the only comparison of a smoothly flowing stream to oil. 15. The purpose of the judgment.¹⁸

BKC 11-16: This third section of Ezekiel's lament drops the figurative description of destruction (vv. 3-8) and portrays Egypt's fall to Babylon literally. The sword of the king of Babylon will come against you. Pharaoh's army would be crushed by the ruthless Babylonians (cf. 29:17-21; 30:10-12, 24) and the land of Egypt would be decimated. Egypt's pride would be shattered, her hordes ... over thrown (cf. comments on "hordes" in 30:10), and her cattle by the Nile and streams destroyed. Both man and beast would be affected by the coming attack.

The waters that were once stirred by the foot of man and muddied by the hoofs of cattle would now be stilled. Figuratively Pharaoh had "muddied the waters" with his international intrigue (32:2); literally the Nile was muddied through the daily activities of man and beast (v. 13). But now the streams and rivers would settle because those activities would be curtailed through death and deportation. The streams would flow like oil, smoothly, undisturbed.

Like professional "chanters" the surrounding nations (daughters of the nations; cf. v. 18) would be "hired" as mourners to chant a dirge over Egypt's fall.¹⁹

The king of Babylon will take Egypt.

¹⁸ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:11). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹⁹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 32:11-16). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

ESV 11–13: Yet again the agent of God's punishment is identified as the **king of Babylon** (v. 11), once again bearing the **sword** of the Lord (v. 10). Here, the demise of Egypt provides an opportunity for nature to recover from its corrupting influence, with the “waters” and “rivers” of v. 14 pointing back to the initial picture drawn in v. 2.

Ezekiel 32:12

By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall, the terrible of the nations, all of them: and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed.

Ezekiel 32:13

I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters; neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them.

Constable 13-14: The enemy would also slay the Egyptians' cattle. The Egyptians regarded many forms of cattle as manifestations of their gods. Finally the waters of Egypt would be undisturbed (cf. v. 2); there would be no people or animals left in the land to muddy them. The waters would settle and would flow as smoothly as oil. Some interpreters have taken this as a reference to the messianic age, but it probably does not look that far into the future.

In biblical and Jewish tradition the motif of streams running with oil usually speaks of paradisiacal peace and prosperity.

Ezekiel 32:14

Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord GOD.

Clarke: Cause their rivers to run like oil—Bring the whole state into quietness, there being no longer a political hippopotamus to foul the waters—to disturb the peace of the country.

Ezekiel 32:15

When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I *am* the LORD.

Constable 15-16: When the Lord brought this devastation on the land and the people, they would know that He is God. He would again humble the gods of Egypt and demonstrate His sovereignty as He had done in the Exodus. Furthermore people of other nations would chant this lamentation when God punished Egypt, as hired wailing women did at funerals (cf. Jer. 9:17-20).

This oracle looks back and recalls aspects of the Exodus, God's former judgment of

Egypt, and reveals that God would judge her again similarly.

"If Egypt is a mighty dragon, one might say, Yahweh is cast in the role of St. George!

This oracle also looks forward and anticipates a still future day of the Lord when God will humble all proud enemies of His people (cf. Joel 2:30-31; 3:15; Amos 8:9).

Clarke: **hall be destitute of that whereof it was full**—Of corn, and all other necessities of life.

Ezekiel 32:16

This is the lamentation wherewith they shall lament her: the daughters of the nations shall lament her: they shall lament for her, *even* for Egypt, and for all her multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Missler: The main point I want to highlight here is that while we do have this cosmic overview thing, that very local focus on this, namely Babylon's role in bringing Egypt down which was prophesied in Jeremiah 46, and Ezekiel talked about in chapters 21 and 29. We are familiar with that theme by now, that Nebuchadnezzar would be God's instrument in the local application of this.²⁰

Wycliffe: **The lamentation** chanted by the daughters of the nations. Women were hired as mourners (cf. v. 18; 19:14; Jer 9:16, 17).²¹

Such a scene of judgment will produce mourning and great grief; but God is to be seen as just and doing what was necessary to stop the people's arrogance. **The daughters of the nations:** These were among the "many peoples" in vv. 9, 10 who shall **lament** and be astonished over Egypt's destruction.

The closing verse of the oracle also connects with v. 2, providing a literary envelope for the whole oracle.

Ezekiel 32:17

It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Now verses 17 through the end of the chapter has been labeled by at least one scholar the most solemn elegy over a heathen people that has ever been composed.

Constable: The last of the seven oracles against Egypt fittingly pictures the nation in its final resting place, the grave or Sheol, surrounded by other dead nations that had preceded it in judgment.

²⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on the book of Ezekiel, khouse.org

²¹ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:16). Chicago: Moody Press.

The language is highly poetical and the details must not be taken too literally. This is not the chapter to turn to if one wishes to understand the Bible's teaching about the after-life. It does, however, illustrate something of the concept of death which was common to Near Eastern thought and from which the Old Testament was constantly striving to break free.

Apparently Ezekiel delivered this oracle two weeks after the previous one, on March 18, 585 B.C.⁴⁵³ The meter of this mourning song is two plus two rather than the three plus two meter of the more common funeral dirge (the *qinah* meter). Thus while this lament is similar to the one in the preceding oracle (32:1-16), it is not exactly the same. Wevers called this the only example of a mourning song in the Old Testament. The distinction between the two types of lament is not great, however.

[in the twelfth year] The 12th year of the captivity, the 12th month (Ezekiel 32:1), or about a year and 8 months after the fall of Jerusalem.

Clarke: In the twelfth year—Two of Kennicott's MSS., one of De Rossi's, and one of my own, (that mentioned verse 1), have, in the ELEVENTH year; and so has the Syriac, as before. This prophecy concerns the people of Egypt.

BKC 17-21: Ezekiel's last of seven prophecies against Egypt came in the 12th year, on the 15th day of the month. The month was not named, but many interpreters assume it was the same month as the previous prophecy (v. 1). If so, the date of this message was March 17, 585 B.C., exactly two weeks after the preceding message. The message's theme was the consignment of the hosts of Egypt to sheol. Since the language is highly poetic, Ezekiel's purpose was not to give a precise description of the afterlife. However, he did indicate that after death a person has no opportunity to change his destiny.

In his own funeral dirge for Egypt, Ezekiel assigned her to sheol with her surrounding nations (the daughters of mighty nations; cf. v. 18), with those who go down to the pit. (On the "pit" as a figure for death see the comments on 26:19-21.) God's word of judgment was so sure that Egypt's appointment to the grave was already made.

Ezekiel derided both Pharaoh and his nation. Are you more favored than others? Go down and be laid among the uncircumcised. Egypt's pride would be shattered when her people were destroyed. She would be forced to take her place in death with "the uncircumcised." This phrase, used 10 times in chapter 32 (vv. 19, 21, 24-30, 32), described a death of shame and defeat (cf. comments on 28:10; 31:18). Every time Ezekiel used this phrase for death he associated it with defeat by the sword at the hands of one's enemies.

The descent of Egypt's defeated army and her allies into sheol would be derided by the military men already there. They would observe that she had come down to lie with the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword. Egypt exulted in her military prowess, but would be humbled in death, taking her place with other defeated nations.²²

²² Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 32:17-21). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Parable of Sheol (32:17–32).

The final word concerning Egypt is dated two weeks after the previous one. The prophet was to feign a lament. Through his prophetic message he was to bring down to the nether world the multitude of Egypt and the “daughters of powerful nations,” i.e., he was to announce the ultimate demise of these peoples. The oracle has to do with the place of Egypt among the various uncircumcised nations, i.e., Gentiles, in Sheol. The terms “nether world,” “Sheol” and “pit” are all Hebrew ways of referring to the afterlife, the abode of the dead (32:17f.).

1. *Egypt’s descent inevitable (32:19–21)*. The prophetic lament began with a rhetorical question: “Whom do you surpass in beauty?” Egypt was no different from any other nation of that period. She must make her bed with the uncircumcised, i.e., Gentile nations. Though the Egyptians embalmed their dead and made other elaborate provisions for the afterlife, they would have no privileged position there (32:17–19).

Egyptian soldiers would fall by the sword. Ezekiel pictured the inhabitants of Sheol pulling Egypt down, as it were, into the pit. There she would be greeted with mocking words by “the strong among the mighty ones,” i.e., the chiefs of the nations. The mockery involved four points: (1) “they have gone down,” i.e., the Egyptians had entered Sheol; (2) “they lie still,” i.e., they are dead; (3) they are among “the uncircumcised,” i.e., those who had been treated as though they were uncircumcised; and (4) they are treated like those “slain by the sword” in battle (32:20f.).

2. *Other occupants of Sheol (32:22–27)*. The Egyptians would join the six nations which were already in Sheol. Assyria with its multitude was there in the graveyard of tyrants. These were the graves of those slain by the sword. They lie in the uttermost part of the pit, an area reserved for those who caused terror in the land of the living. The thought is that those who were ruthless in life are repaid with utter contempt in the life to come. Elam was also there in shame, “in the midst of them that are slain.” Meshech and Tubal⁹ experienced an even more humiliating fate for they had been even more ruthless. They were “the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.” Therefore Meshech and Tubal rested with those who had been stripped of their weapons.

3. *Pharaoh’s burial place (32:28–32)*. Pharaoh was buried near the Assyrians. He was not among the mighty ones, but among the leaders of Edom, the princes of the north and the Sidonians. Pharaoh, however, could take some measure of comfort in the fact that others had shared his fate. For a time God had instilled a terror of Pharaoh in the land of the living. The fall of Egypt would mean shame and disgrace. The oracle closed as it opened (cf. v. 17) with the declaration that Pharaoh and all his multitude, i.e., subjects, would be made “to lie down among the uncircumcised.”

The key phrase in this difficult passage is “by the sword” which occurs twelve times. This parable illustrates the words of Jesus: “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt 26:52). The passage thus underscores the futility of war. Nebuchadnezzar and its restoration under the Persians seems to fit. *Keil and Delitzsch Old Testament Commentaries; Ezekiel XXV to Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers, n.d.), p. 64.²³

²³ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 32:17–32). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

Ron Daniel 17-32: This final section is quite interesting to me. You see, God goes beyond the simple, "Egypt will be destroyed" message and lets them know something else: "You will have consciousness when you die and descend to Sheol, the abode of the dead."

Many societies and belief systems explain death as being the end. The end of consciousness, the end of existence. However, we see that God's Word makes it clear that we continue to exist after our bodies die. Our spirits exist eternally, with full consciousness.

In Pharaoh's case, he will be going to the same place that so many others went before him. He will see those who were considered strong and mighty, fallen heroes.

And the only thing even remotely resembling comfort for Pharaoh will come in the form of, "Oh well, at least I'm not the only one who died in judgment and ended up down here." And the others who see him will realize that in Sheol, everyone is the same - those who were terrified at Pharaoh during life will see that he is just another soul who is also suffering the punishment for his iniquity.²⁴

ESV 17–32 Egypt's Descent to the Pit. The seventh and final oracle against Egypt—and the last of the entire foreign-nation oracle collection—returns to a theme introduced briefly in an oracle on the sinking of Tyre in 26:20, and already used against Egypt in 31:14, 16. In a grand finale, all the nations are gathered together in **the pit** (32:18), in **Sheol**, the place of the dead. Egypt joins them there, Pharaoh receiving cold comfort from the welcome he receives (v. 31). Ezekiel is instructed to **wail** (v. 18), not to “lament,” so this dirge lacks the poetic structure of the lament genre. After a leading rhetorical question, which serves as a thematic superscription, Egypt's reception in Sheol is described in terms of the “welcoming party”—five nations already languishing there. In drawing the nations together in this place over which God alone has power, Ezekiel again demonstrates God's sovereignty, poised at this juncture of the book when Judah's own death seems assured.

Ezekiel 32:18

Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.

Constable 18-19: Ezekiel was to wail for Egypt and the other peoples that would fall with her as people mourned when someone died. We can visualize these words being cried as people stood around an open grave. Even though Egypt had been unsurpassed in her beauty as a nation, she would lie in the grave with the most ordinary and barbarian dead nations. God would not favor Egypt over the uncircumcised peoples that she proudly disdained.

Clarke: Cast them down—Show them that they shall be cast down. Proclaim to them a casting down prophecy.

²⁴ Ron Daniel, Notes on Ezekiel, <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/26-Ezekiel/Ezekiel2901.pdf>

LAN: The Hebrews believed in an afterlife for all people, good and bad. Ezekiel's message assumed that the evil nations had already been sent there (to the "pit") and that Egypt would share their fate. The words here are more poetic than doctrinal (see Job 24:19; Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 38:10, and the note on Matthew 25:46). The Egyptians had a preoccupation with the afterlife (the pyramids were built solely to ensure the pharaohs' comfort in the next life). This message should remind us that any attempt to control our afterlife and ignore God is foolish. God alone controls the future and life after death.

Wycliffe: In the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month (so MT). On the basis of 32:1, it may be assumed that this oracle was dated in the twelfth month, two weeks later.

This oracle contains the most graphic portrayal of the Pit or Sheol in the OT. It is the international abode of the dead, full of graves (vv. 22, 23), peopled with nations once vital (vv. 18, 29, 30); nations are in places of honor or dishonor (vv. 23-25, 30); kings on their thrones are surrounded by their subjects (cf. Isa 14:9, 10, 18, 19); warriors are buried with their weapons under their heads (v. 27); the nations are weak (vv. 20, 21; Isa 14:10; cf. also Job 3:17-19). 19. Egypt would be consigned among the uncircumcised. Cf. 31:18.²⁵

Now Pharaoh will find that the other rulers are down there in sheol—

Ezekiel 32:19

Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised.

Clarke: Whom dost thou pass in beauty?—How little does it signify, whether a mummy be well embalmed, wrapped round with rich stuff, and beautifully painted on the outside, or not. Go down into the tombs, examine the niches, and see whether one dead carcass be preferable to another.

The rhetorical question with its implied irony alludes to Tyre's proud claim in 27:3, but is framed in a way similar to the question posed to Egypt in 31:2b. The Egyptians practiced circumcision, thus their place with the uncircumcised would be cause for deep shame.

Ezekiel 32:20

They shall fall in the midst of *them that are slain by the sword*: she is delivered to the sword: draw her and all her multitudes.

Constable 20-21: Egypt would die as a victim of war, and her people would be scattered from their land. Nations already dead would speak of the demise of Egypt as the death of an uncircumcised (barbarian) people, namely, as a nation like their own.

²⁵ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:17). Chicago: Moody Press.

Ezekiel 32:21

The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

[hell] Hebrew: *She• owl* (HSN-7586), the unseen world, not the grave; the place of the soul, not the body; the place of departed spirits. It is contrasted with *qeber* in these verses, as seen in the note on Ezekiel 32:22, below.

LAN 21-32: In these verses, Ezekiel conducts a guided tour of the grave, the region of the afterlife. In the grave, all of God's enemies are condemned in judgment; many of them experience the fate they so quickly imposed on others. Though Babylon is not mentioned, Ezekiel's readers would have concluded that if all the other nations would be judged for their rebellion against God, Babylon would be judged as well. These words would comfort the captives.

Ezekiel 32:22

Asshur is there and all her company: his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword:

Now we will be going right through the heathen nations.

Constable 22-23: Assyria and her allies were already in the grave having perished in war. Even though the Assyrians had struck terror into the hearts of other peoples in their day, they now lay in the grave while others viewed them and marveled.

[graves] Hebrew: *qeber* (HSN-6913), tomb, grave, sepulchre; the place of the body—never the place of the soul (Ezekiel 32:22-26).

Clarke: Asshur is there—The mightiest conquerors of the earth have gone down to the grave before thee; there they and their soldiers lie together, all slain by the sword.

Asshur (i.e. Assyria) would be consigned to the bottom of Sheol.

BKC 22-32: Ezekiel described the nations that Egypt would join in sheol. The descriptions are similar, for he spoke of each nation's being slain ... by the sword and being in the grave. All (except Edom) were said to have caused terror among those they attacked. Assyria is there with her whole army (v. 22; cf. v. 23). Assyria had already been used as an object lesson by Ezekiel (chap. 31). All Assyria's soldiers killed in battle were buried around her.

The second country mentioned by Ezekiel was Elam ... with all her hordes around her grave (32:24-25). Elam, east of Babylon, was a warlike nation (cf. Gen. 14:1-17). Though subdued by Assyria and conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 49:34-39), Elam regained power and later became a major part of the Persian Empire. But Ezekiel was referring only to the defeated Elamites of the past who were already in the grave.

The third group awaiting Egypt in the grave were the nations of Meshech and Tubal (Ezek. 32:26-27). “Meshech and Tubal,” mentioned earlier (27:13), were probably located on the northern fringe of what is now eastern and central Turkey. They appear again in chapters 38-39 as Gog’s allies. Aggressive Meshech and Tubal had carried on a long battle with the Assyrians for control of the area south of the Black Sea. Do they not lie with the other uncircumcised warriors who have fallen? Some scholars see this statement as a further judgment on Meshech and Tubal and translate it as an assertion (“they do not lie with ...”). However, it seems better to view it as the NIV renders it. Meshech and Tubal are not being singled out from the other countries but are included with them in judgment. The once-awesome might of these warriors had vanished, and they were now suffering the judgment due their sin.

Ezekiel paused to state why he spoke of the grave. You too, O Pharaoh, will be broken and will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword (32:28). The fate of these other nations was an object lesson to Egypt. Like those once-powerful nations that were now in the grave, Pharaoh and his powerful army could expect the same fate.

Then Ezekiel resumed listing other nations. Edom is there, her kings and all her princes (v. 29). Edom had already received notice of God’s judgment (cf. 25:12-14). Her leaders who had died were in sheol awaiting Egypt’s arrival.

The final group in the grave was all the princes of the north and all the Sidonians (32:30). These “princes of the north,” connected with Sidon, were probably the Phoenician city-states. All these mighty maritime powers suffered the same humiliating fate: slain in disgrace despite the terror caused by their power. Their past exploits could not save them from the specter of death. They too were awaiting Egypt’s appearance in sheol.

Ezekiel again mentioned Egypt’s fate (vv. 31-32). Pharaoh would have a perverted sense of comfort (be consoled) when he and his hordes would finally arrive in sheol because he would see that he was not alone in his shame and humiliation.²⁶

Assyria was the master of the ancient Middle Eastern world until the rise of the neo-Babylonians around 612 B.C., early in Jeremiah’s career and about 20 years before Ezekiel’s first vision.

ESV 22–23: **Assyria** is the chief of the slain (cf. ch. 31), but in the **uttermost parts** of the pit. Ezekiel's Sheol knows gradations of shame, and Assyria's appears to be the deepest.

²⁶ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 32:22–32). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Ezekiel 32:23

Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living.

Clarke: Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit—Alluding to the niches in the sides of the subterranean caves or burying-places, where the bodies are laid. These are numerous in Egypt.

Wycliffe: ix welcoming nations to receive Egypt in Sheol. The repetition, 24-27, 32, gives a mournful quality to the oracle. Its general theme is, “They that live by the sword shall die by the sword.”²⁷

“There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave.” You see, the body was put in the grave, but *they* have gone to another place, to sheol, the unseen world. Our Lord Jesus called it the place of torment for those who are lost. The saved are in the section which He called Abraham’s Bosom; then later to the repentant thief on the cross He called it paradise: “Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.”

Ezekiel 32:24

There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit.

Elam was the independent kingdom in the times of Abraham, and it was subjugated by the Assyrians at about 645 B.C. and subsequently became the heart of the Persian Empire.

Constable 24-25: The Elamites, another formerly mighty people who lived east of Babylonia, were also in the grave having died in warfare (cf. Jer. 49:34-38). The people from this region later became a significant part of the Persian Empire, but the Elamite kingdom of former years is in view here. Ashurbanipal the Assyrian had destroyed Elam about 645 B.C. Both the Assyrians and the Elamites did not practice circumcision, and now the Egyptians, a circumcised people, would join them in the same grave. The end of Egypt would be no different or better even though they considered themselves superior to the uncircumcised nations of the world (cf. Gal. 5:6).

[the nether parts of the earth] Hell, not the grave, is located in the nether parts of the earth. This is where all the souls of the righteous and wicked went before the resurrection of Christ. Now only the wicked souls go there, to remain until the second

²⁷ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:22). Chicago: Moody Press.

resurrection and the great white throne judgment (Ezekiel 31:14,16,18; Ezekiel 32:18,24).

[in the land of the living] The land of the living is mentioned here as before, in contrast with the land of the dead (see note Ezekiel 26:20).

Dake: [pit] Hebrew: *bowr* (HSN-953). See note, Psalm 28:1. Here and Ezekiel 26:20; Ezekiel 28:8; Ezekiel 31:14,16; Ezekiel 32:18,23,25,30 it simply means the state of death.

Clarke: There is Elam—The Elamites, not far from the Assyrians; others think that Persia is meant. It was invaded by the joint forces of Cyaxares and Nebuchadnezzar.

LAN 24-26: Elam was a nation of fierce warriors from the region east of Assyria. They were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 49:34-39) and eventually rebuilt themselves and became part of Persia. Meshech and Tubal were territories located in the eastern region of Asia Minor, now eastern and central Turkey. In Ezekiel 38-39 they are described as allies of Gog, the chief prince of a confederacy. They are included with the evil nations who will be judged for fighting against God's people.

Wycliffe: Elam (*highlands*), mentioned only here in Ezekiel, was located east of the Tigris River and north of the Persian Gulf. Its capital city was Shushan (Susa; Neh 1:1; Dan 8:2). The Elamites were a non-Semitic people.²⁸

Elam was east and southeast of Assyria, in what is now Iran. The people of Elam were descended from one of the sons of Shem (Gen. 10:22; 1 Chr. 1:17).

ESV 24-25: Elam, in modern terms bordering southern Iraq to the east, was not at this time a notable political power. Its inclusion may be to mark a remote eastern edge of the nations gathered.

Ezekiel 32:25

They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that be slain.

²⁸ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:22). Chicago: Moody Press.

Ezekiel 32:26

There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living.

When we get to Chapter 38, we will be very interested in who Meshech and Tubal are. They were obviously the Scythians who dwelt between the Caspian and Black Seas. They were ancient tribal names for the Scythians who were the predecessors to the Russians.

Constable 26-28: The nations of Meshech and Tubal in eastern Anatolia (modern western Turkey, cf. 27:13) along with their neighbors, other uncircumcised peoples, had also perished in war and were now dead powers. They had produced terrifying warriors, like the Nephilim, the ancient legendary warriors of Genesis 6:4, but they were not able to escape their fate, and Egypt would join them. It was customary in some countries to bury honored warriors with their swords and other weapons of war (v. 27; cf. 1 Macc. 13:29).

Wycliffe: Meshech and Tubal. Cf. 27:13. 27. The LXX and the Syriac omit **not**, to read, *they lie with the mighty men, fallen* from of old, having their weapons buried with them. The manner of their death and burial will be in keeping with their life of bloodshed and violence.²⁹

Meshech and Tubal: These peoples were located in ancient Anatolia or Asia Minor, present-day Turkey. These names are mentioned as sons of Japheth (Gen. 10:2; 1 Chr. 1:5).

ESV 26–27: Not ... with the mighty implies that residence in Sheol includes distinctions of shame and honor (cf. note on 32:22–23).

Ezekiel 32:27

And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

Clarke: Gone down to hell with their weapons of war—Are buried in their armor and with their weapons lying by their sides. It was a very ancient practice, in different nations, to bury a warrior's weapons in the same grave with himself.

²⁹ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:26). Chicago: Moody Press.

Ezekiel 32:28

Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie with *them that are slain with the sword.*

Ezekiel switches suddenly to the second person singular—**you**—as a wake-up call or reminder to Pharaoh, the representative of Egypt. **Yes** is an emphatic use of the conjunction otherwise translated as “and.”

The focus of the mourning returns briefly to address Egypt directly.

Ezekiel 32:29

There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which with their might are laid by *them that were slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit.*

Constable 29-30: Edom is another example of a strong nation that had perished and joined the mass of humanity in the grave. Likewise the rulers of the North and the Sidonians, once terror-inspiring, were now dead. They too now shared their grave with the uncircumcised and their disgrace with other defeated and defunct peoples. The rulers of the North may be an allusion to the Phoenician coastal towns including Tyre. Or they may have been invaders who lived farther north, between the Black and Caspian seas.

Clarke: There is Edom—All the glory and pomp of the Idumean kings, who also helped to oppress the Israelites, are gone down into the grave. Their kings, princes, and all their mighty men lie mingled with the uncircumcised, not distinguished from the common dead:

“Where they an equal honor share,
Who buried or unburied are.
Where Agamemnon knows no more
Than Irus, he condemned before.
Where fair Achilles and Thersites lie,
Equally naked, poor, and dry.”

Edom. Cf. 25:12-14. The Edomites were circumcised, but here they are to lie with those who were not.

ESV29–30: Edom (v. 29; see 25:12–14) and the **Sidonians** (32:30; see 28:20–23) were Judah's near neighbors to the east and northwest respectively.

Ezekiel 32:30

There *be* the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with *them that be* slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit.

Clarke: **There be the princes of the north**—The kings of Media and Assyria, and all the Zidonians—the kings of Tyre, Sodom, and Damascus.

The princes of the north were probably the princes of the Phoenician city-states.

Wycliffe: The **princes** (or *chiefs*, *nāshîk*, from *nāshak*, “to install”; cf. Josh 13:21; Mic 5:4; Ps 83:11; Dan 11:8) **of the north** (*Şapôn*); i.e., of the Syrian states bordering Mount Şāphôn) (cf. 28:14). **The Sidonians**, or Phoenicians in general. Cf. Deut 3:9; I Kgs 16:31. The people of the Syrian states and the Sidonians were circumcised, and so the text should read as in verse 29, “they lie with the uncircumcised.”³⁰

The **princes of the north** are lands north of Israel such as Tyre and Sidon in Phoenicia. The **Sidonians** were from Sidon, a seaport on the coast about 30 miles north of Tyre (see 27:8).

Ezekiel 32:31

Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, *even* Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD.

Constable 31-32: When Pharaoh died, he would see that his was not the only nation to suffer the fate that the Lord announced, and this would be of some comfort to him. Even though the Lord terrified him with the Babylonians while he was alive, he and his people would find some rest in death because they would lie with other peoples who had experienced a similar end.

The Egyptians took pride in their preparations for death and their burial customs thinking that these assured them safe passage to the nether world and rest there. But Ezekiel said they would die just like other proud, oppressive peoples, and their rest would be the common rest that all the dead enjoy, circumcised and uncircumcised alike.

Ezekiel refused to be mesmerized by the spectacle of Egypt's military power or captivated by Judean dreams of the political renewal that might be served thereby. History's theatrical wardrobe was cluttered with the national costumes of those who had strutted across its stage for a while, until the curtain fell on their particular scene. They lived on only in popular infamy—or, in terms of contemporary beliefs about the underworld, in the deeper regions of Sheol. Such would be Egypt's fate, instead of a Valhalla of chivalrous warriors who rested in peace and honor.

³⁰ Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible commentary : Old Testament* (Eze 32:30). Chicago: Moody Press.

In contemplating the relevance of Ezekiel's vision of the netherworld for Christian doctrine, the reader must keep in mind that the primary aim of this oracle is not doctrinal but rhetorical—to inspire hope in the hearts of his fellow exiles by announcing the eventual demise of their prideful foreign enemies. The caricatured and contrary-to-fact features of this prophecy suggest that one should interpret the passage as a literary cartoon rather than a literary photograph.

The oracles against the nations in Ezek 25—32 were originally delivered to the people of Judah. Although the words written seem to be solely for those particular nations, they are foremost for the people of Judah in Jerusalem and Babylon and serve at least three purposes. First, the oracles in Ezek 25—32 reveal God's judgment against the nations that either mocked or aided in Jerusalem's fall [cf. Gen. 12:3]. Second, as with both the king of Tyre and the Pharaoh of Egypt, God would throw them down from their self-elevated positions of power—there is no room for such arrogance and pride in God's creation. Third, the oracles are essentially a dismantling of the gods of the nations, which is in turn a dismantling of the gods Judah had begun to rely wrongly upon, and the proclamation that Yahweh is the one and only true God for all nations. . . . the phrase “know I am the LORD” occurs nineteen times. The primary purpose of these oracles is that everyone should come to 'know the LORD.

Pharaoh: Now the message (vv. 17–32) comes full circle. The point is that Egypt and Pharaoh will die like the other nations at the hand of the living God, who judges every nation with justice.

ESV 31–32: The oracle returns full circle (cf. vv. 18–21), affirming Pharaoh's destiny.

Ezekiel 32:32

For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with *them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.*

There was frequent mention of ‘the uncircumcised.’ That was a term used to indicate those who were in something other than a covenant relationship with God.

Also, it is clear as we go through all of this lament, that the scope indictment, if you will.

Clarke: I have caused my terror in the land of the living—I have spread dismay through Judea, the land of the living God, where the living oracles were delivered, and where the upright live by faith. When Pharaoh-necho came against Josiah, defeated, and slew him at Megiddo, fear and terror were spread through all the land of Judea; and the allusion here is probably to that circumstance. But even he is now laid with the uncircumcised, and is no more to be distinguished from the common dead.

Much of the phraseology of this chapter may be illustrated by comparing it with Isaiah 14 (note), where see the notes, which the intelligent reader will do well to consult.

LAN: After reading Ezekiel's prophecies against all these foreign nations, we may wonder if he was blindly loyal to his own nation. But Ezekiel spoke only when God gave him a message (Ezekiel 3:27). Besides, God's prophets pronounced judgment on God's sinful people just as much as on God's enemies. But if Babylon was God's enemy, why isn't it mentioned in Ezekiel's judgments? Perhaps because (1) God wanted to foster a spirit of cooperation between the exiles and Babylon in order to preserve his people; (2) God was still using Babylon to refine his own people; (3) God wanted to use Daniel, a powerful official in Babylon, to draw the Babylonians to him.

McGee: Ezekiel only gives us a glimpse of that unseen world called sheol. Remember, we see only a fleeting view of this place. Don't try to build a skyscraper, or a merchandise center, or a mall, or a shopping area, on a place that only has a foundation big enough for a tool shed! In other words, you can't build a theology on this, because all we have had is a little peek into the unseen world. And it is all God intended for us to see.³¹

³¹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 32:32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Missler: Egypt and the Aswan Dam

Let us turn to Isaiah 19 which deals with Egypt, its decline and collapse and blessing at the end. Verses 5 through 10 are particularly interesting to us because of the Aswan Dam which has disrupted the ecology.

Since the Aswan Dam has been put in place, the water is no longer muddy; it is clear, it is wonderful, they've got it all under control. Except the problem is that what the Nile always did was bring nutrients down river which provided an attraction for fish in the Mediterranean, so that the fishing industry of Egypt was always rich and plentiful. It is no longer rich, and therefore it is no longer a good harvest for fishermen, and they are all starving to death! Now Egypt is a 40-million people nation which has a problem feeding itself.

Furthermore, it turns out that there are some snails that attack the flax which makes linen, and those reeds and various things upon which Egypt had been dependent for millennia. The snails were always washed away by the annual flooding of the Nile. With the Aswan Dam control, the snails have multiplied and killed off all those crops upon which Egypt used to gain enormous economic benefit. Some have suggested that one of the best things they could do would be to blow the Dam up.

See Isaiah 19:19-20. People have wondered what this business of an altar to the Lord and a pillar. The altar is in the midst of Egypt, and the pillar at the border of it. The Nile Delta is roughly a semicircle, and the center of that radius was classically the border between Upper and Lower Egypt. At that very location is the Great Pyramid of Cheops. The Great Pyramid was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and is the only one of those seven still standing. If you study Egyptology, you discover that all the pyramids are alike except for this one.

There is evidence in the Book of Job that Job was aware of the Great Pyramid in his time. Some believe that at the right time the real purpose of the Great Pyramid will be unveiled, and will be in effect a testimony of the Lord's redemptive plan. That is a concept. For those who like to get into side trips, this could be interesting and provocative. It might also be Satan's tool to get you away from a more profitable study of the Scriptures.

The whole chapter of Isaiah 19 deals with Egypt. Isaiah 19 is a very famous chapter and there is a peculiar hint in verse 19, that the Lord may have a very, very interesting work surface in Egypt.

A central message in Scripture from the beginning to the end is to beware of pride. Recognize that God giveth grace to the humble. Let us become alert to the symptoms of our pride. Let us become aware of the dangers of taking anything away from God's glory. Give Him the credit for our land, our lives, our families, and above all our redemption. Let us spend time and our emotions and our commitments giving Him the glory.

Psalms 22:3 says that He inhabits his praises. Let us start and close every day with the praises to the Lord. Every time something good happens in our life, first of all watch for it, and approach it with a grateful heart. God has done it. Let us keep an eye on the Creator, not the creation.³²

³² Chuck Missler, Notes on the book of Ezekiel, khouse.org