

A Lament Over Egypt

Ezeki'el 30: 1-26

DIG: What does ADONAI say He is going to do to Egypt? Why? What will be the effect on all Egypt's military allies? Who will God use to punish Egypt? What kind of a nation are they? What are some of the specific things the LORD promises to do to Egypt? While Ezekiel chanted this lament, the Babylonians laid siege to Yerushalayim. Did Egypt save the day (Jeremiah 37:6-8)? Why did ADONAI have "a bone to pick" with Pharaoh? Why do you think God didn't want the Israelites to depend on Egypt for deliverance? Could the City have been saved from God's judgment if He desired?

REFLECT: The people in Jerusalem hoped that Ezekiel was wrong about the Babylonians and that Egypt would come to their rescue. Do you find yourself waiting for someone to rescue you? How do you feel "broken" and helpless? God had to take away Israel's false hope before He could help them. Is ADONAI doing this in any area of your life? Are you responding? Are you listening or gripping onto your hopes more tightly? Do you know anyone with false hopes? How can you help them?

This prophecy was given in Nisan, 587 BC,
one year before the destruction of Jerusalem at the end of Zedekiah's reign.
However, the prophecy wasn't fulfilled until many years later in 571 BC.

Ezekiel's second prophecy anticipates the coming judgment and defeat of Egypt; the forces of history and nature would combine to bring the mighty nation to her knees.

A far eschatological prophecy against Egypt: The word of ADONAI came to me. Son of man, prophesy and say that Adonai ELOHIM says: Wail, "Oh no! It's today!" Go into deep mourning for the day is near, the Day of the LORD, a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles (Ezekiel 30:1-3 CJB). The Day of ADONAI is the most common name for the Great Tribulation in the TaNaKh. That will be the time when the Gentiles will have their final judgment. It will be a day of clouds, emphasizing the Second Coming and judgment (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Jp - The Earth Will Mourn When They See the Son of Man Coming on the Clouds](#)) when the time of the Gentiles will come to an end (see the commentary on [Revelation An - The Times of the Gentiles](#)). The messianic Kingdom will be established on the ruins of the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

Since the context here is Egypt, Ezekiel will deal exclusively with Egypt and her allies. The sword will come against Egypt, and as if it were a chain reaction, Ethiopia will be in anguish, when the slain fall in Egypt, when they take away her wealth during the Great Tribulation, and her foundations are torn down. Egypt will suffer the kind of massive desolation that will set the stage for her forty years of desolation (Ezekiel 29:8-16). The allies of Egypt will also be judged: Ethiopia and Libya, Lydia and all Arabia, Kuv and the people of the covenant land will fall by the sword along with Egypt (Ezekiel 30:4-5). This judgment, however, will lead to the national salvation of Egypt (see the commentary on [Isaiah Eg - Blessed Be Egypt, Assyria and Isra'el](#)).

ADONAI says this: Those supporting Egypt will fall; its arrogant power will be brought down; from Migdol to Aswan they will die by the sword, says Adonai ELOHIM. They will be desolate even far more apparent when compared with other desolate countries, likewise her cities in comparison with other ruined cities. They will know that I am ADONAI when I set fire (a common figure in the Bible for the devastation caused by war) to Egypt, and when her allies are destroyed. On that day when Egypt and her ally's fall, messengers will go out from Me in ships to frighten Cush out of her complacency (Isaiah 18:2). Anguish will take hold of them on the day of Egypt's doom, for it is sure to come (Ezekiel 30:6-9).

A near historical prophecy against Egypt: Here is what Adonai ELOHIM says: I will destroy the hordes in Egypt through Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. God does use unbelievers to carry out his purposes. Nebuchadnezzar and his people, the most barbarous of the nations will be brought in to ravage the land. They will unsheathe their swords against Egypt and fill the land with corpses. I will dry up the life giving streams of the Nile and sell the land to an evil nation. The drying up of the Nile and destruction of its system of irrigation would inevitably bring desolation upon Egypt. Through the power of foreigners (the Babylonians) I will make the land and all that is in it desolate. I, ADONAI, have spoken (Ezekiel 30:10-12 CJB).

Here is what Adonai ELOHIM says: I will destroy the idols; put an end to the false gods in Memphis, the capital of lower Egypt, a site for the temples of the Egyptian gods, Ptah and Apis. In the destruction of Egypt's population, her religious institutions will also be involved. No longer will there be a prince from the land of Egypt; I will spread fear throughout the land. I will lay waste Upper Egypt, set fire to Zoan, in the eastern back of the second arm of the Nile, and inflict punishment on Thebes, the capital of upper Egypt is associated with the worship of the god Amon. I will pour out My wrath on Pelusium on the eastern frontier of Egypt, the stronghold of Egypt, and

wipe out the hordes of Thebes. I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium will writhe in agony. Thebes will be taken by storm; Memphis will be in constant distress. The young men of Heliopolis in lower Egypt and Bubastis, meaning "the city of the cat-shaped idol." Cats were considered holy in this city and were actually mummified. Nevertheless, their little cat gods would prove worthless to them. Bubastis would still fall by the sword, and the cities themselves will go into captivity. Dark will be the day at Tahpanhes, one of the chief residences of Pharaoh, when I break the yoke of Egypt; there her proud strength will come to an end. She will be covered with clouds (in utter despair), and her villages will go into captivity in Babylon. Many of the Jews who fled after Gedaliah was assassinated, lived in Tahpanhes (Jeremiah 43:7). The tyranny that Egypt inflicted upon other nations will be inflicted upon her. All the places given in verses 13-18 seem to have been the centers of different forms of idolatry. So I will inflict punishment on Egypt, and they will know that I am the LORD (Ezekiel 30:13-19).

A third prophecy against Egypt came in the eleventh year, in the first month on the seventh day of Nisan (that date was April 29, 587 BC), the word of ADONAI came to me. It had been almost four months since his first prophecy against Egypt (see Fo - I'm Against You, Pharaoh, King of Egypt). Pharaoh's army had marched out of Egypt in an attempt to rescue Isra'el from Babylon (see Fm - Jeremiah in Prison). This near historical prophecy was recorded before the Babylonians defeated Egypt.³²⁸

God said: Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. This is a play upon words on the name of Pharaoh Hophra. The name Hophra means a strong-armed man. But now this strong-armed man has his arm broken. The allusion is to the advance of Pharaoh Hophra to relieve Jerusalem while the Babylonians besieged it. It brought only a temporary relief. The Egyptian army withdrew and the Babylonians renewed the attack. It has not been bound up to be healed or put in a splint so that it may become strong enough to hold a sword (Ezekiel 30:20-21).

Therefore this is what Adonai ELOHIM says: I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break both his arms (again a play on words according to his name), the good arm as well as the broken one, and make the sword fall from his hand. Defeat will follow defeat until Egypt is rendered completely powerless.

I will disperse the Egyptians as slaves among the nations under the control of Babylon, and scatter them through those countries. I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; Nebuchadnezzar would be God's instrument for punishing Egypt. Here the Spirit of God is mocking a very common theme found in Egyptian

paintings, sculpture and literature, which was a god giving a sword to Pharaoh. **But I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before [Nebuchadnezzar] like a mortally wounded man. I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall limp.** Just as long as Aaron and Hur held up the arms Moses, **God caused the Israelites to win and the Amalekites to be defeated (Exodus 17:11).** So strengthening the arms of the king of Babylon would also mean certain defeat for the Egyptians. **Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he brandishes it against Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar was doing God's work in Egypt just as he had done God's work against Tyre. Egypt will be defeated and become part of the Babylonian empire. I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries. Then they will know that I am ADONAI (Ezk 30:22-26).**

When one collects the number of references to the Day of the LORD in the Bible (see the commentary on [Isaiah 61 - The Rapture and the Great Tribulation](#)), one is struck with the fact that in a coming day ADONAI will no longer be silent in His government of the universe. **He will take over and intervene manifestly in the consummation of the world's affairs. How is it with your spiritual house? Is all in order?**³²⁹