

A Lament Over Pharaoh

Ezeki'el 32: 1-32

DIG: What animals join the list of metaphors for Egypt and Pharaoh? What will ADONAI do to Pharaoh (Ezeki'el 32:3-8)? How will the birds and beasts react? The moon and the stars? What is the ultimate destination of Pharaoh and his mighty army (Ezeki'el 32:18)? Who will share this fate? What had these other nations been like in their prime? Circumcision was thought to be rite of purification. Why would it be particularly shameful to be buried with the uncircumcised? With those who had been killed by the sword? Why would Pharaoh be consoled when he saw that his fate was the same as the great nations of the past (Ezeki'el 32:31)?

REFLECT: Did the reality of an afterlife motivate you in any way to believe in Yeshua as Messiah? Why or why not? What do you fear most about dying? Why? What hope do you have about facing death? What hope does ADONAI want you to have? All of the world powers have eventually fallen. What might help a mighty nation to survive God's judgment?

The prophecy was fulfilled in 571 BC

This concludes the section dealing with the judgment of the Gentile nations, and is dated about a-year-and-a-half after the fall of Yerushalayim. Isra'el could not see how futile her trust had been in Egypt, and the prophetic warnings against an alliance with that country had been completely vindicated. This realization lends color and force to Ezekiel's prophecy of Egypt's destruction. Babylon would be used as the divine instrument for the execution of judgment upon her. Egypt's calamity would strike terror into the hearts of many people who lamented over her calamity. The prophet himself pronounced a dirge over her humiliating end in Sh'ol where she found other nations that suffered a similar fate. Ishma'el's flight to Egypt would provide no escape for the assassination of Gedaliah. The long arm of Nebuchadnezzar would find them there.

Back in Yerushalayim, after each of the first three deportations, the pro-Egypt party was hard at work. They always seemed to think that if they could just align Judah with Egypt that they would be protected. This never materialized, but they kept trying. It was the pro-Egypt party that kept Zedekiah off balance for much of his reign. And it was the pro-Egypt party that was eventually responsible for taking Jeremiah and Baruch hostage and forcibly took them down to Egypt against their will after the assassination of Gedaliah.

Jeremiah's sixth prophecy: In the twelfth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, in the twelfth month of Adar, February-March 585 BC, on the first day, the word of ADONAI came to me: Son of man, rise a funeral lament for Pharaoh king of Egypt, say to him: From a human perspective, you compared yourself to a lion among the nations. But from God's perspective, you are more like a crocodile in the lakes. It will be the result of Ha'Shem's perspective that Egypt will suffer her destruction. Thrashing about in your streams, you churn with your feet and muddy the waters (Ezeki'el 32:1-2). Egyptian ambition made her think of herself as a lion roaming proudly among the nations and intimidating them with terror, but in fact, she was like a crocodile whose domain is limited to the lakes. Egypt dreamt of far-flung conquests; but she should have restricted herself to her own back yard.

So here is what Adonai ELOHIM says:

The judgment of Pharaoh: With many nations assembled, I will spread My net over you, and they will haul you up in My dragnet. ADONAI has declared to put an end to the crocodile's destructive ways by drawing him out of his natural habitat, and being very vulnerable, catching it in His dragnet. The many nations assembled are Babylon and her allies. Then I will throw you on the shore, hurl you into an open field, make all the birds in the air settle on you and let the animals of the whole earth eat their fill of you. Like a fish out of water dies, so Pharaoh, drawn out of his natural habitat in the Nile River, will also die. As the Egyptian warriors fall in battle with Pharaoh, YHVH will leave their flesh on the mountains and fill the valleys with their rotten carcass. The destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptian belief system surrounding his deity will bring destruction upon the whole land of Egypt (see the commentary on Exodus Bc - Pharaoh as god and upholder of Ma'at). The blood of the slain will be poured out upon the land and defiled. I will drench the land in which you swim with your blood, as far as the mountains; the waterways will be full of you (Ezeki'el 32:3-6 CJB).

The mourning for Pharaoh: There will be two different groups that would be mourning. The first group is the heavens. When I extinguish you (as seen in verses 3-6), figuratively, I will cover the sky and make its stars black; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. The rabbis teach that Egypt is compared to a great fire, that when extinguished, sends up a cloud of smoke obscuring the sky. All the shining lights in the sky I will darken above you; I will spread darkness over your land, says Adonai ELOHIM. Secondly, the nations mourn. I will anger many peoples when I bring the news of your destroyed ones in among the nations, into countries you have not known. Just as many nations were affected when Assyria fell, so will many nations be affected when Egypt falls. I will make many people aghast at you; their kings will shudder in horror over you when I brandish My sword, Babylon, before them. On the

day of your downfall they will tremble continuously, each will tremble continuously for their own life (Ezeki'el 32:7-10 CJB).³⁸⁹

Babylon's role in Egypt's fall: For Adonai ELOHIM says this:

The army of Babylon will destroy Pharaoh and his army. The sword of the king of Babylon will come against Pharaoh. With the swords of the warriors I will cause your hordes to fall. Babylon was the most barbarous of nations, and she would shatter the glory of Egypt - all its hordes will be destroyed (Ezeki'el 32:11-12 CJB).

A far eschatological prophecy against Egypt: I will destroy all her cattle beside her plentiful waters. No human foot will trouble them again, nor the hoof of any animal. During the messianic Kingdom, Egypt will be completely desolate for the first forty years (see the commentary on **Revelation Fk - Gentiles in the Messianic Kingdom**). Then, as a result of no human habitation for forty years, I will make their water clear and cause their streams to flow like oil, says Adonai ELOHIM. When the land of Egypt is humanly abandoned, a land stripped of all that filled it; when I strike all those who live there; they will know that I am ADONAI (Ezeki'el 32:13-15 CJB).

This is the lament that they will rise; as the lament is seen in verse 2, like bookends, so it is repeated here. The emphasis is the nature of the prophecy against Egypt. The daughters, the professional mourners of the nations, will use it to mourn; they will chant it for Egypt and all its troubles, says Adonai ELOHIM (Ezk 32:11-16).³⁹⁰

Jeremiah's seventh prophecy - Pharaoh and his followers descend into Sh'ol: Fourteen days later, in the twelfth year of 585 BC, in the twelfth month of Adar, on the fifteenth day, the word of ADONAI came to Ezekiel again, adding more information to his prophecy (Ezeki'el 32:17 CJB):

Son of man, wail for the multitudes of Egypt; send them with the daughters of mighty nations down to the underworld, with those who had already descended to the pit. In the shadowy existence that continued after death in the subterranean regions, the Gentile nations are pictured as preserving and continuing their national identity. Are you more beautiful than the others? No, but you think you are, especially Assyria (see Fq - **Pharaoh as a Felled Cedar of Lebanon**). And just as Assyria had descended into Sh'ol, Egypt would go down to Sh'ol, lie with the uncircumcised dead! Even if you think you are superior to other nations, you will not escape their fate! The Egyptians will fall among those killed by the sword; she is given to the sword; pull her down with her hordes. The prophet was addressing the nations (see verses 22-30 below) already in Sh'ol, exhorting them to drag Egypt down into their midst. From the depths of Sh'ol the

mightiest warriors will speak of Egypt with her allies. They went down; they lie still, the uncircumcised, killed by the sword (Ezeki'el 32:17-21 CJB). The leaders of the nations already in Sh'ol are represented as speaking about Pharaoh and his allies as they appeared in their midst, referring to them in the third person:

Assyria in Sh'ol: Assyria is there with her hordes; their graves are all around them, all of them slain, killed by the sword. Their graves are in the deepest parts of the pit, her hordes are all around her grave, all of the slain, killed by the sword, those who terrorized the land of the living (Ezeki'el 32:22-23 CJB). The Egyptian dead are lying around the Assyrian dead. His dead warriors surround the king. This describes the complete disappearance from the land of the living that they had terrorized.

Elam in Sh'ol: Once a mighty power, Elam became subordinated to Assyria (see Ei - A Message Concerning Elam). But the prophet refers to the time when she was great and powerful. Elam is there, with her hordes around her grave, all of them slain, killed by the sword, descended, even more degrading, uncircumcised to the underworld, those who terrorized the land of the living; they bear their shame together with those who descended to the pit. Elam, because of her ruthless tyranny, rests in shame with the other nations that played a similar role. They have given her a bed among the slain with her hordes; her graves are all around them, all of them uncircumcised, killed by the sword, because they terrorized the land of the living; they bear their shame with those who descended to the pit; they are put among those who were slain (Ezeki'el 32:24-25 CJB).

Meshek-Tubal and their followers in Sh'ol: They will meet with a more humiliating end than the other nations. Meshek-Tubal with her horde is there, her graves are all around them, all of them uncircumcised, killed by the sword, because they terrorized the land of the living. They do not lie with the other fallen warriors of the uncircumcised who descended to Sh'ol with their weapons of war, their swords laid under their heads in death, and their crimes upon their bones. The other fallen warriors descend into Sh'ol with their weapons of war, but Meshek and Tubal lie among them stripped of their arms (see the commentary on Revelation Bi - Set Your Face Against Gog, of the land of Magog, the Chief Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal). But you will lie broken, with no weapons of war, among the uncircumcised, with those who were killed by the sword (Ezeki'el 32:26-28 CJB).

Edom, the Princes of the North and the Sidonians in Sh'ol: There is Edom, her kings and all her princes, who, despite all their power, are laid with those who were killed by the sword, with the uncircumcised, with those who descended to the pit. There are all the princes of the north/**Lebanon in general**, all of them, and focuses on one particular Lebanese city of Tzidon, who descended with the slain, ashamed of all the terror they caused when they were in power; but now they lie uncircumcised with those killed by the sword, bearing their shame with those who descended to the pit (Ezk 32:29-30 CJB).

Pharaoh's Doom: After talking about all of these nations that had preceded Egypt down to Sh'ol, the seventh and last prophecy against Egypt and Pharaoh comes to an end. Pharaoh will see all the other nations that had preceded him down into Sh'ol, and he will be comforted about his hordes, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, says Adonai ELOHIM. **In Ezekiel 31:16, the fallen nations found comfort from Egypt's demise; but here Egypt finds consolation in the sight of others having shared in her doom. Ultimately it is God's might that prevails in the world.** For I have put My terror in the land of the living. It was ADONAI who brought Egypt into power. But just as YHVH brought Egypt to power, God will also be the One to bring Egypt down to Sh'ol. And just as the other nations suffered the degradation of lying among the uncircumcised, Pharaoh will also lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword, Pharaoh and all his hordes (Ezeki'el 32:31-32 CJB).³⁹¹

In reading this chapter, one cannot fail to be impressed with the seriousness of the awful eternal end of all nations/persons who let pride rule their lives instead of bowing their knee to YHVH and to the Jewish Messiah whom He sent. YHVH has graciously given people a choice to accept the sacrifice YHVH planned for the sins of the world. Yeshua Meshiach offered the sacrifice, but the blood can only be applied to those who choose to repent, turning away from their prideful sins and turning in love to Yeshua as their Lord and Savior. As ADONAI says: Just as Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sins, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him (Hebrews 9:27-28).