

LAMENT OVER EGYPT

30:1-3 *“The word of the LORD came again to me saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Wail, ‘Alas for the day!’ ‘For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.’”*

This chapter is a repetition of 29:1-16 but in fuller detail given in a funeral dirge style. While it speaks specifically to the destruction of Egypt at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar in 568/67, it includes all that will happen in the future yet to come.

The day of the Lord is near - This phrase is used throughout the Word to describe the final period of history for this current age when all of the nations of the earth will be judged (Isa 13:6,9; Joel 1:15, 2:11, 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Zec 14:1; 1Thes 5:2; 2Thes 2:2; 2Pet 3:10). This time was called by Jesus the great tribulation (Mat 24:21; also called as such in Rev 7:14) and is what Revelation chapters 6-19 describe in detail. Daniel 11:42,43 speak of this future judgement on the nations as well.

30:4 *“A sword will come upon Egypt, and anguish will be in Ethiopia; when the slain fall in Egypt, they take away her wealth, and her foundations are torn down.”*

Anguish - literally “pangs with trembling as of a woman in childbirth.”. God is consistent with the use of idioms throughout scripture. This phrase is always linked to the future judgement on the nations. As the day of the Lord approaches, weather it be for the immediate future of Egypt and her neighbors or the end judgement of the nations, the scene is likened unto that of a woman in the beginning of labor itself.

Foundations are torn down - Hebrews 11:10 says of Abraham “for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Two ages and families are always contrasted in the Word. This current age and those who build upon its foundation are destined to face destruction and judgement. Those whose foundation is the Lord and the faith that He has given as a gift look to day yet not seen when the kingdom age will be established built on the foundation of faith in the redeemer of mankind; Jesus Christ.

30:5 *“Ethiopia, Put, Lud, all Arabia, Libya and the people of the land that is in league will fall with them by the sword.””*

All those allied with the great Egypt were to be overthrown. **The people of the land** - actually seems to literally mean “the sons of the land of the covenant” and may be referring to the Jews the Jews who migrated to Egypt and carried Jeremiah with them (Jer 42:1 - 44:30). Even they shall not escape (Jer 42:22 44:14).

All Arabia - or “all the mingled people” probably refers to the mercenary troops of Egypt from various lands, mostly from the interior of Africa (compare Eze 27:10 Jer 25:20, 24 46:9, 21). In light of the fact that the

final future judgement of the nations is in mind here, there are some commentators who speculate that this could be linked to the strange reference in Daniel 2:43;

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” (KJV)

This was the interpretation of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dreams that Daniel had been given. This portion of the image was the final aspects of world kingdoms depicted by the feet and toes of that statue prior to the “stone that was cut out of the mountain without human hands” or Jesus Christ striking and destroying the kingdoms of this age.

30:6-9 *“Thus says the LORD, “Indeed, those who support Egypt will fall and the pride of her power will come down; from Migdol to Syene they will fall within her by the sword,” declares the Lord GOD. They will be desolate in the midst of the desolated lands; and her cities will be in the midst of the devastated cities. And they will know that I am the LORD, when I set a fire in Egypt and all her helpers are broken. On that day messengers will go forth from Me in ships to frighten secure Ethiopia; and anguish will be on them as on the day of Egypt; for behold, it comes!”*

Those who support Egypt - Like Israel, several nations had sought protection arrangements from Egypt and will face the same fate as they are all judged together. Just like the nations whose confidence was not God but Tyre, all who had confidence in the mighty Egyptian empire would be not only in shock as the Chaldeans ransacked her, but would suffer the same fate. This will be the ultimate picture for all of the nations of the earth who place their hope and security in the final Babylon described in Revelation.

Messengers will go forth from Me in ships to frighten secure Ethiopia - The Ethiopians were warned by those who were able to flee up the Nile on “vessels of bulrushes” (Isa 18:2) about the impending doom to come. Ethiopia is described as “secure” dwelling in peace and safety as it seemed to them. The world will be resting on the proclamations of peace while the world enters into God's wrath. Jesus said it would be like it was in the days of Noah (Mat 24:37; Luke 17:26; see also 1Pe 3:20) when all of the peoples who had been warned were completely unsuspecting that judgement would actually come.

30:10-12 *“Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will also make the hordes of Egypt cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the most ruthless of the nations, will be brought in to destroy the land; and they will draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain. Moreover, I will make the Nile canals dry and sell the land into the hands of evil men. And I will make the land desolate and all that is in it, by the hand of strangers; I the LORD have spoken.””*

This is where Nebuchadnezzar is first named as the king who would be used by God to bring about this destruction on Egypt. The Chaldeans were notorious for their ruthless treatment of those they conquered and captured. Bodies would be mutilated, faces cut up with ears, noses and eyes being cut off or put out.

The Nile was the source of life to the Egyptians. They had made many canals in order to irrigate their fields for rich grains and other crops to be grown. These being dried up would cause scarcity and prepare the way for the invaders (Isa 19:5- 10).

While God calls Nebuchadnezzar his instrument of righteousness previously, here he calls his armies “**evil men**” to describe their treachery against those they defeated. The demonic horde that both Joel and Revelation describe as unleashed on mankind in the days of tribulation will more horrific than any human army the world has ever suffered under.

30:13 *“Thus says the Lord GOD, “I will also destroy the idols and make the images cease from Memphis. And there will no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt; and I will put fear in the land of Egypt.”*

God will single out 8 principal cities, 3 in lower and 5 in upper Egypt for destruction because they are the “home” for particular idols that the Egyptians had worshipped. Memphis was the home of the fire-god, Ptah and Apis the bull.

30:14 *“I will make Pathros desolate, set a fire in Zoan and execute judgments on Thebes.”*

Pathros is upper Egypt with Thebes as its capital, a city famed for its great buildings of which grand ruins remain. It is in antithesis to Zoan (called Tanis by the Greeks), a chief city in lower Egypt and home of the sun-god, Amon.

30:15 *“I will pour out My wrath on Sin, the stronghold of Egypt; I will also cut off the hordes of Thebes.”*

Sin - Pelusium, the frontier fortress on the northeast, therefore called "the strength (that is, the key) of Egypt." It stands in antithesis to No or Thebes at the opposite end of Egypt; “I will afflict Egypt from one end to the other”. Now it is completely buried in sand.

30:16-17 *“I will set a fire in Egypt; Sin will writhe in anguish, Thebes will be breached and Memphis will have distresses daily. The young men of On and of Pi-beseth will fall by the sword, and the women will go into captivity.”*

On - Aven meaning “vanity” or “iniquity” was called by the Greeks Heliopolis. Located about 7 miles NE of Cairo, the Egyptian hieroglyphics call it, Re Athom, the sun, the father of the gods, being impersonate in Athom or Adam, the father of mankind.

Pi-beseth - Bubastis, in Lower Egypt, near the Pelusiatic branch of the Nile: notorious for the worship of the goddess Bast, to whom the cat was sacred. The granite stones of whose temple still attest its former magnificence.

30:18-19 *“In Tehaphnehes the day will be dark when I break there the yoke bars of Egypt. Then the pride of her power will cease in her; a cloud will cover her, and her daughters will go into captivity. Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt, and they will know that I am the LORD.””*

Tehaphnehes - called from the queen of Egypt mentioned in 1Ki 11:19. The same as Daphne, near Pelusium, a royal residence of the Pharaohs (Jer 43:7, 9). Called Hanes (Isa 30:4). The Pharaoh’s exercised tyrannical supremacy over other nations. “They shall know that I am the Lord” occurs 54 times in Ezekiel and it is the purpose of Judgement for God’s people and the nations.

30:20-26 *“In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, behold, it has not been bound up for healing or wrapped with a bandage, that it may be strong to hold the sword. “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong and the broken; and I will make the sword fall from his hand. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands. For I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; and I will break the arms of Pharaoh, so that he will groan before him with the groanings of a wounded man. Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. When I scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands, then they will know that I am the LORD.’”*

This begins the fourth of the seven proclamations against Egypt. This would have been March -April 586 or 87, 3 months after Jer 29:1 and 4 months before the fall of Jerusalem.

Broken arm - refers probably to Pharaoh-Necho who was defeated by the Chaldeans at the Carchemish (2Ki 24:7; Jer 46:2) whereas **both the strong and the broken** probably refers to both Pharaoh Necho and Pharaoh Hophra (Jer 37:5). God uses Nebuchadnezzar as His instrument to bring about the judgement from which Egypt will never again gain world power status. Unfortunately most people will never acknowledge the Lord until it is too late.

ASSYRIA’S FATE TO WARN PHARAOH

31:1 *“In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,”*

Third month - two months later than the prophecy delivered in Eze 30:20.

EZEKIEL

“Strengthened by God”

Session 22 - Ezekiel 30 & 31

31: 2-3 *“Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes, ‘Whom are you like in your greatness? Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon with beautiful branches and forest shade, and very high, and its top was among the clouds.’”*

Whom are you like in your greatness? - The Pharaoh's were like the haughty Assyrian kings. Often times cedars are used to depict uncommon strength. The Lebanon cedar reaches heights of 80 feet with an even greater diameter. Its top or king was as lofty as the clouds; “much like you are now pharaoh”

31: 4-6 *“The waters made it grow, the deep made it high. With its rivers it continually extended all around its planting place, and sent out its channels to all the trees of the field. Therefore its height was loftier than all the trees of the field and its boughs became many and its branches long because of many waters as it spread them out. All the birds of the heavens nested in its boughs, and under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth, and all great nations lived under its shade.”*

Waters ... with its rivers - the Tigris with its branches and "rivulets," or "conduits" for irrigation, the source of Assyria's fertility. "The deep" is the ever flowing water, never dry. Metaphorically, for Assyria's resources, as the "conduits" are her colonies. As the tree grows the roots expand to the other trees and so Assyria had grown to draw in the peoples of many nations. Like all world empires, when the very top of the tree is a mere man full of sin, the tree or empire is destined to fall. Only the perfect King will be the top of a tree that doesn't fall.

31: 7-9 *“So it was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its roots extended to many waters. The cedars in God's garden could not match it; the cypresses could not compare with its boughs, and the plane trees could not match its branches. No tree in God's garden could compare with it in its beauty. I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches, and all the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it.”*

While this language sounds a bit familiar with how the king of Tyre was described (Ezek 28 13), it probably is more directly related to the fact that the location of the cedars of Lebanon that depict this king of Assyria and the Assyrian empire were watered by the same waters that fed Eden, the Tigris and Euphrates (Gen 2:1-14). If there is any parallel to the king of Tyre it can only be that the force behind world dominion is, once again, Satan.

One can't help to again think of the heart behind Satan and these earthly kings who are full of pride that lead to their destruction. The tree that Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat from was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan caused Eve to be discontented with all of the other trees and see that the fruit of the tree was “desirable to make one wise” (Gen 3:6). Either way pride leads to destruction (Prov 16:18)!

31: 10-12 *“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Because it is high in stature and has set its top among the clouds, and its heart is haughty in its loftiness, therefore I will give it into the hand of a despot of the nations; he will thoroughly deal with it. According to its wickedness I have driven it away. Alien tyrants of the nations have cut it down and left it; on the mountains and in all the valleys its branches have fallen and its boughs have been broken in all the ravines of the land. And all the peoples of the earth have gone down from its shade and left it.”*

The Assyrian king and kingdom was brought down from its lofty arrogance to the ravines of the earth. This is the same imagery that was used in the case of the king of Tyre (Satan) and seems to be the same that describes the Pharaoh. Even the neo - Babylonian empire would eventually fall to the Medes and Persians. Every king and kingdom whom God allows or even uses to depose another are corrupted by the influences of darkness. Again notice how all of the peoples of the earth are effected.

The only King who will be perfectly and righteously effective in world dominion will be the Son of Man who is qualified to take the position. All of the birds that take refuge in His branches will not be disappointed.

31: 13-14 *“On its ruin all the birds of the heavens will dwell, and all the beasts of the field will be on its fallen branches so that all the trees by the waters may not be exalted in their stature, nor set their top among the clouds, nor their well-watered mighty ones stand erect in their height. For they have all been given over to death, to the earth beneath, among the sons of men, with those who go down to the pit.”*

Notice that no tree, or earthly kingdom, will be able to exalt itself. Not even a kingdom built by “Christians” without Christ here on earth will be able to stand. As this age perishes, all who are bound to it as the “sons of men” will perish also. But those who are born again by the Spirit into Christ have become the sons of God through faith (Gal 3:26; Rm 8:14-19).

31: 15-17 *“Thus says the Lord GOD, “On the day when it went down to Sheol I caused lamentations; I closed the deep over it and held back its rivers. And its many waters were stopped up, and I made Lebanon mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted away on account of it. I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall when I made it go down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit; and all the well-watered trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, were comforted in the earth beneath. They also went down with it to Sheol to those who were slain by the sword; and those who were its strength lived under its shade among the nations.”*

When great empires fall, those who mourn do so not because the empire fell, but because they were so heavily invested in it. They might ask “how will I survive now?” “What about my 401K and my retirement?” The comfort that this passage speaks of is a self - assumed comfort. One that is imagined by all the well watered trees and the choicest and best of Lebanon. But as the cedar of Lebanon goes down to sheol, so do all who are comforted by her. Think of how Israel took comfort in treaties she made with Egypt that utterly failed. Not even Egypt and its Pharaohs could stand against God’s hand of judgement.

31: 18 *“To which among the trees of Eden are you thus equal in glory and greatness? Yet you will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth beneath; you will lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those who were slain by the sword. So is Pharaoh and all his hordes!” Declares the Lord GOD.””*

So this dirge ends with this final summary rhetorical question. All of the trees in Eden were created by God and nothing created is God. For anyone man, being or world empire to aspire to be like any tree in Eden of their choice, they can only ever achieve the heights of what is merely created. All that is under the curse is destined to the pit of the shameful (uncircumcised). Even Eden in all its beauty became tarnished by the fall.

The ultimate icon of the final worldly king driven directly by Satan is famed by his icon “666”. The Lord tells us to calculate the number of his name. It is not a formula to help us try to figure out who it is exactly, rather it is for all men to consider who wonder after the beast that Satan, his false son and the false prophet are rendered as incomplete!

The final world empire and emperor with all of the powers of Satan unleashed will never provide salvation for those who cling to it. All power and lust for money and the treasures of earth will supremely disappoint those who invest all of themselves in it. But for those whose God is the Lord and Like Abraham look to that future city total joy, rest and satisfaction is in store, never to be run out.