

Ezek. 29:1 In the tenth year, in the tenth *month*, in the twelfth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezek. 29:2 Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt:

It would seem that this message to Ezekiel came chronologically before the message directed to Tyre and its prince and king. It is a message directed against Egypt and its king, the Pharaoh.

Ezek. 29:3 Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river *is* mine own, and I have made *it* for myself.

“dragon” = a marine or land monster, i.e. sea-serpent or jackal

God addresses the Pharaoh as a great dragon lying in the land embraced by its rivers as a kingdom of his own making through his own power, authority and abilities. Just as the prince and king of Tyre, he is a ruler filled with pride.

Some translations and commentaries identify the “great dragon” as a crocodile. Burton Coffman’s commentary states:

“Historically, there is no excuse whatever for seeking sources here in ancient mythology. The crocodile was a well-known symbol of Egypt, found on Roman coins of that vintage, and being universally understood as a symbol of Egypt and its Pharaohs.”

It struck me that reference was made to the Pharaoh resting in the midst of his rivers (plural), yet referencing the river (singular) as of his own making. No one can deny that the prosperity of biblical Egypt was directly connected to the Nile River. In trying to understand the two references, I found the following at <http://www.lexicorient.com/e.o/egypt.htm>.

“The Nile Valley which extends at the maximum some kilometres on either side of the river, gives just about enough ground for the agriculture needed by the fast growing population in Egypt. The delta area, where the Nile divides into many smaller rivers, is of major importance to agriculture of Egypt.”

In claiming that the Nile was of his own making, the Pharaoh was declaring himself to be a god.

Ezek. 29:4 But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales.

Ezek. 29:5 And I will leave thee *thrown* into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven.

Though the crocodile was mighty and feared, God declares that He will put hooks in the jaws of the crocodile and remove it from its “kingdom” and source of sustenance leaving it to die in the wilderness (desert) and become food for the beasts of the field and scavenger birds of prey. This message is a word picture of how the Pharaoh and his people will be destroyed by its enemies.

Ezek. 29:6 And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I *am* the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

Ezek. 29:7 When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didst break, and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand.

These verses declare the reason for God's judgment upon Egypt in addition to the pride of the Pharaoh referenced in verse 3. They have been deceitful and undependable in their alliances with Israel. Though Israel had sought their alliance in direct disobedience to and rejection of God, He would stay true to His promises to Abraham—"I will bless those that bless thee, and curse those that curse thee." (Genesis 12:3)

Ezek. 29:8 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of thee.

Ezek. 29:9 And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD: because he hath said, The river *is* mine, and I have made *it*.

These verses are a statement of the extent of the destruction of Egypt. It will result in the death of much of its human and animal population and will make the land *desolate* (ruined, deprived of inhabitants) and *waste* (through drought, unproductive, worthless). God again declares that the people of Egypt will be made to recognize God as LORD. Pharaoh had no right to claim the Nile as his creation; it is part of the creation of God. Egypt enjoyed its benefit because God so allowed them the privilege.

Ezek. 29:10 Behold, therefore I *am* against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste *and* desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia.

Ezek. 29:11 No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.

Ezek. 29:12 And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries *that are* desolate, and her cities among the cities *that are* laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

The wording in the King James is confusing. Almost all the other translations I read, translated verse 10 to read "from Migdol to Syene." The Hebrew for the word *tower* is defined as referring to Migdol. This would make sense in that Migdol was a city in northern Egypt and Syene (today known as Aswan) was located on its southern border with Ethiopia (Cush); this statement clarifies that the whole land of Egypt from north to south will suffer judgment at the hand of God. God is declaring through the prophet that the land of Egypt will lay waste and desolate for 40 years. Verse 12 indicates that Egypt will not be the only nation to face destruction. The Egyptians, just as the Israelites, would be dispersed among the nations.

Ezek. 29:13 Yet thus saith the Lord GOD; At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered:

Ezek. 29:14 And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return *into* the land of Pathros, into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.

Ezek. 29:15 It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.

Even in this message of judgment, God declares a message of hope to the Egyptians. After 40 years He will cause the people of Egypt to return to their land, but its boundaries would be significantly smaller; they would occupy Pathros, a portion of its former empire also known as Upper Egypt, which was in the southern portion of the country between modern Cairo and Aswan according to the NIV Commentary. From that time on they would be one of the basest of kingdoms; in other words, they would never rise to the position of a world power again. They would never again rule over any of the nations.

Though I could not find specific documentation of the 40 years of dispersal, I agree with the assessment of the writers of the NIV Commentary.

“If Egypt fell to the Babylonians about 568 B.C., as implied in the chronicles of the Babylonian kings, then a forty-year “captivity” of Egypt would end under the Persians. Since the Persians returned many of the peoples displaced by the Babylonians, this very well may be the case. Just because there is no direct statement in ancient history concerning this dispersion does not mean that it did not occur. God’s word is more valid than our conjectures or ignorance.”

Ezek. 29:16 And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, which bringeth *their* iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them: but they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

Never again will Israel be tempted to look to Egypt for help. When the people of Israel look to Egypt, all they will see is a reminder of their sin in seeking help and protection from Egypt instead of God. They will understand that Egypt’s judgment has come at the hand of God.

I think it is significant to note that God’s message and purpose is constant: All the peoples on planet earth are to be made to recognize the Lord God, THE self-existent, eternal, one and only God.

Ezek. 29:17 And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first *month*, in the first *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

This message seems to be dated 17 years after the previous one. I would assume that it is included here because it is directly connected to the judgment upon Egypt.

Ezek. 29:18 Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head *was* made bald, and every shoulder *was* peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:

Ezek. 29:19 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

Ezek. 29:20 I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord GOD.

These verses describe the efforts made by Nebuchadnezzar and his men to capture the city of Tyre. As noted in chapter 26, history records that his siege of Tyre lasted for 13 years. During that time his men labored hard (to the point of losing their hair and getting raw shoulders as a result of the heavy loads they carried) yet came up empty handed. The NIV Commentary states that because Egypt and Tyre were allies, the Egyptians could have had a hand in thwarting Nebuchadnezzar in achieving his objective—an objective that was according to God’s purposes. Therefore, the Lord decided to give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as compensation for his efforts. Historical records indicate that Egypt fell to Nebuchadnezzar around 568 BC.

Ezek. 29:21 In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

“In that day” – The wording seems to indicate that this is referencing the day when Egypt falls captive to Nebuchadnezzar. It is connected to the time that Ezekiel will again be allowed to speak freely.

The Hebrew for *horn* is a reference to power and a ray of light among other things. This would seem to indicate that the fulfillment of this prophecy against Egypt would serve to strengthen the hope and expectation of Israel regarding the truth of God’s word and the fact that their judgment would come to an end and they would return to Israel to rebuild their nation and the temple as foretold by the prophets—including Ezekiel. It would be another affirmation that the prophet’s message was from God.

Again, God’s declaration—They shall know that I am the LORD.