

## *Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

### *Ezekiel Chapter 31-32*

*3/9/16*

### *Ezekiel Chapter 31*

#### *Pharaoh as a Felled Cedar of Lebanon - Verses 1-10*

<sup>1</sup>In the eleventh year, in the third month on the first day, the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>"Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes: "'Who can be compared with you in majesty? <sup>3</sup>Consider Assyria, once a cedar in Lebanon, with beautiful branches overshadowing the forest; it towered on high, its top above the thick foliage. <sup>4</sup>The waters nourished it, deep springs made it grow tall; their streams flowed all around its base and sent their channels to all the trees of the field. <sup>5</sup>So it towered higher than all the trees of the field; its boughs increased and its branches grew long, spreading because of abundant waters. <sup>6</sup>All the birds of the sky nested in its boughs, all the animals of the wild gave birth under its branches; all the great nations lived in its shade. <sup>7</sup>It was majestic in beauty, with its spreading boughs, for its roots went down to abundant waters. <sup>8</sup>The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it, nor could the junipers equal its boughs, nor could the plane trees compare with its branches—no tree in the garden of God could match its beauty. <sup>9</sup>I made it beautiful with abundant branches, the envy of all the trees of Eden in the garden of God.

**31:1** This message was given in 587 B.C. Ezekiel compared Egypt to Assyria, calling Assyria a great cedar tree. The Egyptians were to look at the fall of the mighty nation of Assyria (whose demise they had seen) as an example of what would happen to them. Just like Assyria, Egypt took pride in its strength and beauty; this would be its downfall. She would crash like a mighty tree and be sent to the place of the dead. There is no permanence apart from God, even for a great society with magnificent culture and military power.

#### **Verses 10-18**

<sup>10</sup>"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because the great cedar towered over the thick foliage, and because it was proud of its height, <sup>11</sup>I gave it into the hands of the ruler of the nations, for him to deal with according to its wickedness. I cast it aside, <sup>12</sup>and the most ruthless of foreign nations cut it down and left it. Its boughs fell on the mountains and in all the valleys; its branches lay broken in all the ravines of the land. All the nations of the earth came out from under its shade and left it. <sup>13</sup>All the birds settled on the fallen tree, and all the wild animals lived among its branches. <sup>14</sup>Therefore no other trees by the waters are ever to tower proudly on high, lifting their tops above the thick foliage. No other trees so well-watered are ever to reach such a height; they are all destined for death, for the earth below, among mortals who go down to the realm of the dead. <sup>15</sup>"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day it was brought down to the realm of the dead I covered the deep springs with mourning for it; I held back its streams, and its abundant waters were restrained. Because of it I clothed Lebanon with gloom, and all the trees of the field withered away. <sup>16</sup>I made the nations tremble at the sound of its fall when I brought it down to the realm of the dead to be with those who go down to the pit. Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, the well-watered trees, were consoled in the earth below. <sup>17</sup>They too, like the great cedar, had gone down to the realm of the dead, to those killed by the sword, along with the armed men who lived in its shade

among the nations. <sup>18</sup> "Which of the trees of Eden can be compared with you in splendor and majesty? Yet you, too, will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth below; you will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword. "This is Pharaoh and all his hordes, declares the Sovereign LORD."

**31:10-14** Assyria became too proud of its power. Because of this, God gave it to the 'ruler of the nations'. He was the king of the nation that was most cruel. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed Assyria. He defeated Assyria completely. He acted like a man who cuts down a tall tree. And that tree meant Assyria. What happened to Assyria was to warn the nations. God hates proud persons and proud nations. In the end, all the great nations in the world become proud. God will destroy them all (Daniel 2:44).

**31:15-17** The \*Lord had brought down the great tree, which meant Assyria. It fell with a loud noise and all the nations heard it. All of them felt the effect when Assyria fell. They all trembled because of fear. Many were sad because of the end of such a great nation. The army of Babylon then destroyed many of the nations that had been friendly with Assyria.

**31:18** Egypt was also a proud country. And, like Assyria, God compares Egypt to a great tree. It was at that time like the best trees in the Garden called Eden. (See Genesis 2:8-9.) But because Egypt was proud, God would destroy it. God will cut down that tree as he had cut down all the previous great trees. In other words, God would destroy Egypt as he had destroyed great nations like Assyria in the past. This was a clear message that the \*Lord would kill the king of Egypt. And he would punish the \*Egyptians. God destroyed Assyria, which was greater than Egypt. So, Egypt could not avoid its punishment, because God would destroy Egypt as well.

## *Ezekiel Chapter 32*

### *A Lament Over Pharaoh - Verses 1-16*

<sup>1</sup>In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month on the first day, the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>"Son of man, take up a lament concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him: "You are like a lion among the nations; you are like a monster in the seas thrashing about in your streams, churning the water with your feet and muddying the streams. <sup>3</sup>"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "With a great throng of people I will cast my net over you, and they will haul you up in my net. <sup>4</sup>I will throw you on the land and hurl you on the open field. I will let all the birds of the sky settle on you and all the animals of the wild gorge themselves on you. <sup>5</sup>I will spread your flesh on the mountains and fill the valleys with your remains. <sup>6</sup>I will drench the land with your flowing blood all the way to the mountains, and the ravines will be filled with your flesh. <sup>7</sup>When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud and the moon will not give its light. <sup>8</sup>All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you; I will bring darkness over your land, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>9</sup>I will trouble the hearts of many peoples when I bring about your destruction among the nations, among lands you have not known. <sup>10</sup>I will cause many peoples to be appalled at you, and their kings will shudder with horror because of you when I brandish my sword before them. On the day of your downfall each of them will tremble every moment for his life. <sup>11</sup>"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "The sword of the king of Babylon will come against you. <sup>12</sup>I will cause your hordes to fall by the swords of mighty men—the most ruthless of all nations. They will shatter the pride of Egypt, and all her hordes will be overthrown. <sup>13</sup>I will destroy all her cattle from beside abundant

waters no longer to be stirred by the foot of man or muddied by the hooves of cattle. <sup>14</sup> Then I will let her waters settle and make her streams flow like oil, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>15</sup> When I make Egypt desolate and strip the land of everything in it, when I strike down all who live there, then they will know that I am the LORD.' <sup>16</sup> "This is the lament they will chant for her. The daughters of the nations will chant it; for Egypt and all her hordes they will chant it, declares the Sovereign LORD."

**32:1** 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.

**32:2** Pharaoh thought of himself as a strong lion, the proud king of an extensive kingdom. But in God's eyes he was nothing but a sea monster, heaving around, muddying the water of the Nile River. God's judgment would reduce Pharaoh to his true size. Anyone who defies God will face his judgment.

### *Egypt's Descent Into the Realm of the Dead - Verses 17-32*

<sup>17</sup> In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>18</sup> "Son of man, wail for the hordes of Egypt and consign to the earth below both her and the daughters of mighty nations, along with those who go down to the pit. <sup>19</sup> Say to them, 'Are you more favored than others? Go down and be laid among the uncircumcised.' <sup>20</sup> They will fall among those killed by the sword. The sword is drawn; let her be dragged off with all her hordes. <sup>21</sup> From within the realm of the dead the mighty leaders will say of Egypt and her allies, 'They have come down and they lie with the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.' <sup>22</sup> "Assyria is there with her whole army; she is surrounded by the graves of all her slain, all who have fallen by the sword. <sup>23</sup> Their graves are in the depths of the pit and her army lies around her grave. All who had spread terror in the land of the living are slain, fallen by the sword. <sup>24</sup> "Elam is there, with all her hordes around her grave. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword. All who had spread terror in the land of the living went down uncircumcised to the earth below. They bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. <sup>25</sup> A bed is made for her among the slain, with all her hordes around her grave. All of them are uncircumcised, killed by the sword. Because their terror had spread in the land of the living, they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit; they are laid among the slain. <sup>26</sup> "Meshek and Tubal are there, with all their hordes around their graves. All of them are uncircumcised, killed by the sword because they spread their terror in the land of the living. <sup>27</sup> But they do not lie with the fallen warriors of old, who went down to the realm of the dead with their weapons of war—their swords placed under their heads and their shields resting on their bones—though these warriors also had terrorized the land of the living. <sup>28</sup> "You too, Pharaoh, will be broken and will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword. <sup>29</sup> "Edom is there, her kings and all her princes; despite their power, they are laid with those killed by the sword. They lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit. <sup>30</sup> "All the princes of the north and all the Sidonians are there; they went down with the slain in disgrace despite the terror caused by their power. They lie uncircumcised with those killed by the sword and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. <sup>31</sup> "Pharaoh—he and all his army—will see them and he will be consoled for all his hordes that were killed by the sword, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>32</sup> Although I had him spread terror in the land of the living, Pharaoh and all his hordes will be laid among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword, declares the Sovereign LORD."

**32:18** 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 and built the pyramids 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.

**32:21-32** In these verses, Ezekiel conducts a guided tour of "the realm of the dead"—the place of the afterlife. In this realm of the dead, 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.

**32:24-26** 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. Meshek and Tubal were territories located in the eastern region of Asia Minor, now eastern and central Turkey. In chapters 38 and 39 they are described as allies of Gog, the chief prince of a confederacy. They are included with the evil nations that will be judged for fighting against God's people.

**32:32** 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 (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.