

Wages of War and the Horn of Salvation

Egypt and The Day of the LORD

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| <p>1 ^{29:17} In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸“Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre. Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against her.</p> <p>2 ¹⁹Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army.</p> <p>3 ²⁰I have given him the land of Egypt as his payment for which he labored, because they worked for me, declares the Lord GOD.</p> | <p>^{30:1-2} The word of the LORD came to me: ²“Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: “Wail, ‘Alas for the day!’</p> <p>3 For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.</p> <p>⁴A sword shall come upon Egypt, and anguish shall be in Cush, when the slain fall in Egypt, and her wealth is carried away, and her foundations are torn down.</p> <p>⁵Cush, and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya, and the people of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.</p> <p>⁶“Thus says the LORD:
Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down; from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword, declares the Lord GOD.</p> <p>⁷And they shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries, and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste.</p> <p>⁸Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken.</p> |

4 ²¹“On that day I will cause a horn to spring up for the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

⁹“On that day messengers shall go out from me in ships to terrify the unsuspecting people of Cush, and anguish shall come upon them on the day of Egypt’s doom; for, behold, it comes!

¹⁰“Thus says the Lord GOD:

“I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt,
by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

¹¹ He and his people with him, the most ruthless of nations,
shall be brought in to destroy the land,
and they shall draw their swords against Egypt
and fill the land with the slain.

¹² And I will dry up the Nile
and will sell the land into the hand of evildoers;
I will bring desolation upon the land and everything in it,
by the hand of foreigners;
I am the LORD; I have spoken.

¹³“Thus says the Lord GOD:

“I will destroy the idols
and put an end to the images in Memphis;
there shall no longer be a prince from the land of Egypt;
so I will put fear in the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ I will make Pathros a desolation
and will set fire to Zoan
and will execute judgments on Thebes.

¹⁵ And I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium,
the stronghold of Egypt,
and cut off the multitude of Thebes.

¹⁶ And I will set fire to Egypt;
Pelusium shall be in great agony;
Thebes shall be breached,
and Memphis shall face enemies by day.

¹⁷ The young men of On and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword,
and the women shall go into captivity.

¹⁸ At Tehaphnehes the day shall be dark,
when I break there the yoke bars of Egypt,
and her proud might shall come to an end in her;
she shall be covered by a cloud,
and her daughters shall go into captivity.

¹⁹ Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt.

Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 29:17:30:19

Egypt of Plunder

Today we're stepping into one of the most vivid and sobering pictures in Ezekiel: a lament over [a mighty empire's coming collapse](#). It pairs, as Ezekiel does so often, with God's surprising promise—albeit brief—of hope for His people. In the midst of judgment, there is grace. That empire is certainly one that we've all heard about: [Egypt](#). Let's think about Egypt for a few moments.

Egypt is one of the oldest and most enduring civilizations in human history. From an [orthodox secular viewpoint](#), its story begins around 3100 BC with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the first pharaohs. Over the centuries it experienced remarkable highs—the Old Kingdom (the age of the great pyramids at Giza), the Middle Kingdom, and especially the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1070 BC), when Egypt became a powerful empire stretching from Nubia in the south into the Levant. By the Late Period of Ezekiel's day (664–525 BC), known as the Saite Dynasty (26th Dynasty), Egypt was enjoying a cultural and political renaissance after throwing off Assyrian domination. Its wealth, monumental architecture, sophisticated administration, and control of the Nile made it one of the great powers of the ancient Near East.

Obviously, from a biblical perspective, Egypt's story is deeply woven into the drama of redemption. The Bible traces its origins to Mizraim (“Two Fortresses” likely a reference to the Upper and Lower Egypt), brother of Canaan, a son of Ham and grandson of Noah (Gen 10:6). It first appears as a place of refuge and testing for Abraham during a famine (Gen 12). Four generations later, God sovereignly elevated Joseph from slavery to Prime Minister (vizier) of Egypt, using him to preserve life during a severe famine. Jacob and his family—seventy-five souls in all—found safety and prosperity in the land of Goshen (Gen 46–47).

But what began as hospitality eventually turned to oppression. A new king “who did not know Joseph” (Ex 1:8) enslaved the rapidly growing Israelite population, forcing them to build store cities with brick and mortar. Yet God heard their cry and raised up Moses to deliver them through mighty signs and wonders, culminating in the Passover and the Exodus (Ex 1–15). Egypt's gods were judged, its army drowned in the Red Sea, and the proud empire learned that the LORD is greater than all earthly powers.

For the next several centuries, Egypt largely receded from the center of Israel's story, though it remained a tempting but unreliable ally. The prophets repeatedly warned God's people against trusting in “the staff of this broken

reed” (Isa 36:6; Ezek 29:6–7). During the decline of Assyria and the rise of Babylon in the late 7th and early 6th centuries BC, Egypt—under ambitious pharaohs such as Necho II—sought to reassert influence in the Levant. In 609 BC, Necho marched north to support the collapsing Assyrian empire against Babylon; on the way he killed King Josiah of Judah at Megiddo (2Kgs 23:29–30). But four years later, he was decisively defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC (Jer 46:2). Nevertheless, Egypt continued to meddle in world affairs that it had no business involving itself in. It encouraged Judah and other small nations, including Tyre, to resist Babylonian dominance, offering military support and false security. Makes sense, because those nations were all that stood between Babylon and an exposed and naked Egypt, ripe for the taking.

This brings us to the days of the prophet Ezekiel. By the 27th year of Jehoiachin’s exile (around 571 BC), Nebuchadnezzar had already besieged Tyre for thirteen grueling years (586–573 BC). It was an exhausting campaign that left his army worn out and unpaid in plunder. Egypt, still wealthy and strategically positioned, had positioned itself as a rival power and a source of hope for Tyre and the surrounding nations (including Cush, Put, Lud, and Arabia). Instead of submitting to Yahweh’s declared instrument of judgment—

Babylon—Egypt trusted in its own strength, just as Tyre did—to its idols, its mighty Nile, and its network of alliances. It became a new embodiment of proud self-reliance that the prophets had long condemned.

In this historical moment, the word of the Lord comes to Ezekiel. God declares that He will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as “wages” for his hard labor against Tyre, because Egypt had worked—however unwittingly—within the sovereign purposes of the Lord. The “day of the LORD” draws near for this ancient nation: a day of clouds, sword, desolation, and the humbling of its proud might.

This backdrop sets the stage for our text today: Ezekiel 29:17-30:19. Egypt, long the protector and oppressor of God’s people, now finally stands under divine scrutiny. As we walk through the passage, we will see the justice, sovereignty, and mercy of the same God who once delivered Israel from Egypt and who now judges the nations while simultaneously promising a “horn” of salvation.

The Day of the LORD

But before we dive into the text, we need to understand a key phrase that drives the entire passage—the “*Day of the LORD*.” What exactly is this “day?” Where did the idea

come from? And why does it show up so often in the prophets and the NT, although it is rare in Ezekiel?

The phrase (or very similar expressions like “the day of Yahweh’s wrath” or simply “that day”) appears **more than two dozen times** across the prophetic books, with hundreds of related references to “the day” or “on that day.” It is one of the central threads running through the messages of Isaiah, Joel, Zephaniah, Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others.

Scholars debate its exact origins. Some trace its roots to Israel’s ancient holy war traditions—times when God dramatically intervened as the **Divine Warrior** to deliver His people or judge their enemies. Others connect it to the imagery of the autumn festival or enthronement celebrations, where **Yahweh was praised as King**. Still others see it emerging more directly from **the covenant**: the day when God would enforce the blessings and curses of His relationship with Israel. These are not mutually exclusive.

Whatever its background, by the time of the prophets the idea was already circulating among God’s people. Many in Israel and Judah seem to have held a popular, optimistic view: the “Day of the LORD” would be the glorious moment when God would **finally vindicate His people**, crush

their enemies (like the surrounding nations), and establish Israel's dominance. It sounded like a day of light, victory, and celebration.

Then came the prophets—with a shocking reversal.

The earliest clear use of the exact phrase appears in the book of Amos, in the mid-8th century BC. Amos looks at his comfortable, outwardly religious audience and declares: “Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light.” (Amos 5:18). In other words: *Be careful what you wish for*. The day you're longing for will not be the triumph you imagine. It will be a day of dark clouds, doom, and divine reckoning—first and foremost against God's own covenant people for their idolatry, injustice, and broken faith.

From that point forward, the prophets use “Day of the LORD” language with remarkable flexibility and power. Sometimes it refers to near-term historical judgments such as God using enemy armies (like Assyria or Babylon) as instruments of discipline against Israel or Judah. Sometimes it turns the tables to judge proud foreign nations—Egypt, Edom, Babylon, Tyre, and others. At other times, the language has broader cosmic and supernatural dimensions: darkened skies, shaking mountains, falling stars, universal

accountability, and the ultimate revelation that “**I am the LORD.**”

There has never been full agreement on how to put all these pieces together. Conservative interpreters across the centuries have recognized both *the immediate force* of these oracles in their original settings, but also their *larger role* in the unfolding story of redemption. This has become popularly known as the “**already-not yet.**”¹ Some things have *already* been fulfilled in these prophecies, other things have *not yet* been.

Ezekiel 29:17-30:19 Context and Structure

That brings us to Ezekiel. By the time we reach chapters 29 and 30, *Jerusalem has already fallen*. The people are in exile. And now the prophet turns his gaze to Egypt. In our passage, the “Day of the LORD” arrives in the second of two woven oracles. It’s target is not Israel, but Egypt and her allies. The prophet calls for wailing: “**Alas for the day! For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near; it will be**

¹ Likely originating with George Eldon Ladd’ (1911-82) *The Presence of the Future*, Ladd was an historic premillennialist. However, the idea has roots that go back to Reformed scholars such as Herman Ridderbos and Geerhardus Vos.

a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations” (Ezek 30:2–3).

The pairing of Ezekiel 29:17–21—the second of the seven Egypt oracles—with 30:1–19 functions as a deliberate transitional hinge. The first oracle provides the historical and theological rationale: Nebuchadnezzar’s unrewarded, exhausting labor against Tyre is sovereignly redirected by God as “wages” paid by Egypt. It is grounded, political, and earthly — a gritty transaction that God claims as His own (“because they worked for me”). Immediately following it, 30:1–19 lifts the same reality into a heightened, poetic lament with the explicit “day of the Lord” language. The weave thus moves from quiet divine economy to public cosmic judgment, showing how ordinary historical events serve Yahweh’s larger universal purposes.

Structurally, four rows create a clear progression. Row 1 establishes parallel openings with the arrival of the prophetic Word. Row 2 links the two oracles through the shared motif of Egypt’s wealth being carried off by Babylon. Row 3 grounds the judgment in God’s sovereign purpose against Egypt. Row 4 delivers the sharpest and most revealing theological contrast: “On that day” brings a horn and

restored voice for Israel, while “on that day” brings messengers of terror and Egypt’s doom. It concludes with the unified recognition formula on both sides that everyone will know that “I am the LORD.”

The **two stories laid side-by-side** as columns create a dynamic that reinforces the movement from **natural to supernatural**, which is identical to what we’ve seen in the recent Tyre cycles and Sidon-Egypt weaves. The first oracle (left column) remains largely historical and concrete — labor, unpaid wages, political payment, and a quiet hope for Israel. The second (right column) ascends into the supernatural realm — lament, “day of the Lord,” divine fire, cosmic anguish, and the repeated declaration that “**they will know that I am the Lord.**” This vertical contrast shows how God takes something very human and messy (unpaid military labor) and turns it into an event of cosmic significance.

On one side, we see God’s surprising justice—rewarding even a pagan king’s hard labor. On the other, we hear a detailed lament of sword, fire, desolation, and the humbling of Egypt’s pride, wealth, idols, and mighty Nile itself. As we walk through this powerful weave of Scripture, we will watch **God settle accounts** in history. We will see His sovereignty over empires. And we will glimpse **how every such**

“day” reveals the same unchanging truth: “Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s Wages (Ezekiel 29:17-21)

We begin with these striking words: “In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month...” (Ezek 29:17). That date points to New Year’s Day, April 571 BC — making this the very latest dated prophecy in the entire book of Ezekiel. In fact, it is 16-17 years after the next closest and even two full years after the Temple prophecies at the end of the book (chs. 40-48)!

That fact raises an obvious question: Why is this oracle placed here, right in the middle of the messages against Egypt, fully out of order chronologically with the others? To answer that, we must go back to the earlier prophecies against Tyre in chapters 26–28. There, Ezekiel repeatedly announced that Nebuchadnezzar would totally destroy Tyre. As we will see, this oracle is directly linked to the Tyre oracles. But historically, after a brutal thirteen-year siege, Nebuchadnezzar *did not* fully conquer or devastate the island city. That complete destruction only came centuries later under Alexander the Great in 332 BC.

Some scholars jump on this and declare that Ezekiel's prophecy failed, and that this late oracle is the prophet's (or a later editor's) attempt to cover it up by giving Nebuchadnezzar Egypt as a consolation prize. Nonsense, if not outright sacrilege. More careful readers, following scholars like Daniel Block,² point out that biblical prophecy is never mechanical. Its power lies not in the words themselves but in the sovereign freedom of Yahweh who speaks them. When circumstances changed — when Tyre submitted in some measure to Babylonian authority — God had every right to reassign the “wages” of Nebuchadnezzar's hard labor. Egypt would now become Babylon's payment.

But I believe the woven structure of these two chapters gives us an even deeper and more satisfying answer. Notice something crucial: this short oracle in 29:17–21 has no strict “day of the LORD” language attached to it. By itself, it can sound like a straightforward historical prediction that must be fulfilled completely in the 6th century BC or else it fails. But when we read it side-by-side with chapter 30 as the language itself begs us to do — with all its “day of the LORD” language that is present there — the picture changes.

² For this and what follows, see Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997–), 147-49.

By weaving these two oracles together, the Holy Spirit is telling us that this judgment on Egypt (and its connection to Tyre) belongs to the larger reality of the Day of the LORD. And the Day of the LORD, as the prophets use it, almost always carries both **a near fulfillment** in history and a farther, **fuller fulfillment** in God's redemptive plan. We will see more of this as we go along.

As is often the case, and will be for both oracles today, “**The Word of the LORD comes**” again to Ezekiel—the “**son of Man.**” He says, “**Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre**” (18a). There's your direct link back to the **Tyre** oracles and thus this oracle must be read in light of those. He continues, “**Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against her**” (18b). Bald heads and bare shoulders is a very picturesque image of the long, hard campaign of soldiers who wear helmets and carry packs for days and months on end. These men were absolutely dedicated to one thing: the destruction of Tyre.

Yet, the mighty Nebuchadnezzar—most powerful king in the world—**could not defeat** the island-city, even after 13

years! Yet, defeat them he would. And that is put in the language of “pay for the labor he had performed against her.” That’s fascinating, because it means that Nebuchadnezzar was working for someone to destroy Tyre. Who was he working for? Who does the king of the world work for? If you say, “No one,” you would be wrong. He works for *Yahweh*. Did not Nebuchadnezzar come to learn this at the end of Daniel 4 after becoming like a wild beast for seven years?

This is a wild thought, and one that is poorly understood in an age of conspiracies. For example, when you get a good president, people think he is working for them. When you get an evil one, people think he is working for the deep state. The reality is, God holds all kings in the palm of his hand and whatever they do is worked out according to his sovereign plan. For God alone is the True King of kings. In this case, the language is so explicit, it cannot be denied.

With this now understood, “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army” (19). That’s fascinating. The LORD is going to give Egypt—a much bigger prize than Tyre (even though it was tremendously wealthy)—into the Babylonian’s hand. At

this point in history, having already taken the Assyrians and Israel, **what greater prize is left?**

So it says, “I have given him *the land of Egypt* as his payment for which he labored, because they worked for me, declares the Lord God” (20). Now, this isn’t talking about literally taking over and annexing Egypt. That never happened, nor would anyone in those days think that was the promise. That isn’t how it worked. Walton explains, “God is promising Nebuchadnezzar the land of Egypt as booty and compensation for his failure in plundering Tyre. Both in the Bible and in the ancient Near Eastern texts, booty is represented as a gift from the national deity (cf. Deut 20:14).”³ And that’s the language of **the wage**. He will get plenty of compensation for his efforts, and in fact, historical records show that he did.⁴ God came through on his promise to Nebuchadnezzar via this prophecy through Ezekiel who was himself in Babylon when it was given. Makes me wonder if the old king might have himself known about it and believed it and thus go to Egypt to get his bounty.

³ John H. Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 469–470.

⁴ “From the fragmentary inscription that tells of it ([Nebuchadnezzar’s 37th-year tablet, aka BM 33041] cf. ANET, p. 308), it appears that Nebuchadnezzar did not aim at permanent conquest, but rather sought by a punitive expedition to deter Egypt from further meddling in Asia.” John Bright, *Jeremiah*, Anchor Bible, 21 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 265.

Vs. 21 ends our short first oracle. “On that day I will cause a horn to spring up for the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the Lord.” “On the day” is the one hint in this oracle that we might be dealing with something that goes beyond fulfillment in Nebuchadnezzar’s day, however. Keep this in mind, we will return to it in the next oracle. The prophecy here suddenly shifts, as we’ve seen many times before, from the red laser sight on Egypt, back to God’s people.

It brings up “a horn” here. A horn will spring up *for the house of Israel*. It will cause their lips to open among them, that they will know that the LORD is God. The horn (*qeren*) motif in the Bible is a common symbol of strength, power, dignity, or national vitality. Many see this prophecy fulfilled when **Cyrus the Great** allowed Israel to return to their land and begin prospering again as a nation. And surely, that is not wrong. However, **Psalm 132:17** says, “I will make a horn sprout for David.” It’s the exact same verb in both the Hebrew and Greek as **Ezek 29:21**.⁵ But that Psalm verse, in turn, appears in **Luke 1:69** as being fulfilled in the birth of Jesus! And therefore, as many have suggested, this could

⁵ See the discussion in **Mark L. Strauss**, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995)100-104.

very well be a cryptic verse that foresees the coming of the Messiah. As John Mayer said long ago, “As he concluded Ezekiel 28 with comfort for the Israelites, so he does this by the horn budding forth (**Ezek 29:21**), understanding something to come long after, bringing far greater spiritual and everlasting comfort by Christ. Wherefore Christ and not Zerubbabel, as some say, is this horn, for so he is called, “the horn of salvation” raised up for Israel (**Lk 1:69**)” (**John Mayer**, *Commentary Upon All the Prophets*).⁶

It will cause the lips of the people to open. This is the very same thing the only other time we’ve seen “on that day” appear in Ezekiel say. But on that occasion, it the mouth of the prophet and it was because a messenger of doom had come to proclaim the capture of Jerusalem and thus his torment of not being allowed to speak was finally over. “On that day your mouth will be opened to the fugitive, and you shall speak and be no longer mute. So you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD” (**Ezek 24:27**). But this time, the opening of the lips is because

⁶ **Carl L. Beckwith**, Timothy George, and Scott M. Manetsch, eds., *Ezekiel, Daniel: Old Testament*, vol. 12, Reformation Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 150–151. See also **Daniel I. Block**, “Ezekiel 17:22–24: Ezekiel’s Tender Sprig and the Messiah,” in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2019), 1063–1064.

of a great deliverance and it is corporate—the house of Israel.

The Day of the LORD Against Egypt (Ezekiel 20:1-19)

We move now to the second oracle. It begins the same as the previous. “The word of the Lord came to me: ‘Son of man...’” (Ezek 30:1-2a). “Prophecy, and say, Thus says the Lord God: “Wail, ‘Alas for the day!’ For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near...” (2b-3a). We just saw “the day” brought up in the last verse of the previous oracle for the time (and only times) in all the oracles against the nations (including the remaining Egypt oracles). So this clearly links the two oracles together thematically.

It mentions the Day *three times*. Not once. Not twice. Thrice. This is Happy Days. “Wail,” “Alas.” The day is near. It is near! What kind of a day? “It will be *a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations*” (3b). Note how day (*yom*) and time (*‘et*) are in parallel construction. Contrary to some, the word “day” *does not always mean “24 hours.”* It can mean a period of time—even a thousand years is like a day to the

Lord. So it is not talking here about one short 24 hour period and then it is over. No. Wail for this day will last a long time.

Clouds are images of a coming storm, a storm that lasts. Doom. The Hebrew is literally, “**A time of the nations.**” Plural. Doom is implied. This is the day the nations get their comeuppance, a word I use specifically to contrast with the wealth and booty received by Nebuchadnezzar.

Nations in Ezekiel 30:4-5



As we move into vv. 4-5, I want to start comparing the columns of the two stories. “A sword shall come upon Egypt.” Previously, 29:19 had said, “I will give the land of Egypt...” Egypt was fully in focus in the first oracle. But now, while Egypt is still in the sites, it expands to “anguish in Cush” and “Put” and “Lud” and “All Arabia and Libya.” With the possible exception of Lud, which some place in Asia Minor, this appears to be entirely a coalition of African nations allied with Egypt.

For it says “the people of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.” Where as the sword begins vs. 4 and ends vs. 5, in the middle, “her wealth is carried away.” This is exactly parallel to Nebuchadnezzar “carrying off its wealth” in 29:19, further showing that the two oracles are related. Truly, this is a day of judgment against the entire confederation of nations aligned with Egypt.

However, it is fascinating to note that Egypt (Gen 10:6), Cush (same), Put (same), Lud (13; Ludites), and Arabia (7, via the names listed there) all appear in Genesis 10. Because they all appear in the Table of Nations, it seems very likely to me that while they are clearly in mind in a near fulfillment, a far fulfillment as we often—perhaps almost always

find with the Day of the LORD, would include all the nations, not just these. They are merely representing the totality of the list of Genesis 10. This is just prophetic shorthand, after all, who wants to list all the nations again!

Vv. 6-8 take up our next block. “Thus says the LORD: Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down; from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword, declares the Lord GOD (Sovereign LORD)” (6). Midgol to Syene appeared in the first Egyptian oracle (29:10) and it refers to the totality of north to south, towers to markets.

Why mention that again? Because Egypt is right in the middle of this coalition. Thus, “They shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries, and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste. And they will know that I am the LORD, when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken” (7-8).

The parallel with this was God giving Nebuchadnezzar Egypt as his wages for which he labored (29:20). That was very *earthly* kind of language, transactional. But this is *apocalyptic*, as if a storm from heaven itself is about to fall like the fire of Sodom upon these places. In this way, the Day of the LORD column truly is giving us a more cosmic perspective

of the same events that the previous oracle did from a more earthly perspective.

The climax comes in vv. 9-19. Note how vs. 9 begins, “On that day...” It’s the same as 29:21, “On that day.” Previously, the message was short. A horn will spring up for the house of Israel. This is its opposite, both in its length, its content, and its recipients. “Messengers shall go out from me in ships to terrify the unsuspecting people of Cush, and anguish shall come upon them on the day of Egypt’s doom; for, behold, it comes!” (30:9).

If Cush is the rough equivalent of modern Ethiopia, where could ships come from? They could come from the Red Sea inland. Or, they could come right up the Nile from Egypt. Either way, the people wouldn’t see the invasion coming, for they thought they were protected by Egypt. It is the fool who places his trust in the Egyptian to save him.

But in the end, the focus was always on Egypt. “Thus says the Lord God: ‘I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the most ruthless of nations, shall be brought in to destroy the land, and they shall draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain’ (10-11). The war language of these OANs is just brutal. The

most *ruthless* of nations? Massacres, trampling by horse, rape, pillage, sieges, babies crying in the streets, you name the horror, those who faced the fury of the Babylonian were always met with the same horrific fate. The Babylonian war-machine couldn't care less. Heartless. Ruthless. Merciless. Brutal. Those who haven't lived through war can't possibly understand, yet we pretend to because we watch TV.

Truly apocalyptic language comes in **vs. 12**. “**And I will dry up the Nile and will sell the land into the hand of evil-doers...**” Though this could very well be figurative language for the end of Egypt's economy, Nebuchadnezzar **never dried up the Nile**, even figuratively. His invasion was terrible, but still limited. At any rate, it *says* that *God* will do this, not the king of Babylon. But this is coming in an oracle (column) of the Day of the LORD, of cosmic events that reign down and thus it seems to me that this is pointing to something beyond his invasion, even as the Horn is doing. They should be read together.

But how might we do that? You must return again to something said earlier. Think beyond near fulfillment, which partially took place. **Move your gaze to the days of the Messiah**, when the horn of salvation was lifted up in song

by Zechariah in **Luke 1:69**, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us...” The Messiah then grew and lived his life as our Prophet, Priest, and King, dying on the cross, and rising from the dead.

But then the Lord ascended into heaven. The reason? So that he might send the Holy Spirit, who filled that house on the first Pentecost morning and caused Peter to preach the following words, “But this is what which was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days...’” (**Acts 2:16-17**). He then immediately quotes the cosmic signs: the sun turned to darkness, the moon to blood, and the outpouring of the Spirit, ending with “Before the great and magnificent day of the Lord comes” (**Acts 2:20**).

What’s so interesting about that? Listening in on Peter’s first sermon were people from **Egypt ... Libya ... and Arabs** (**Acts 2:10-11**). In other words, the very peoples being judged in Ezekiel 30. But what is Peter saying? Two things. He is saying on the one hand that **the Final Judgment on the nations is not yet**. Yet, the grace of God through the coming of the Spirit has actually given humanity **a temporary reprieve of doom**.

In fact, it is much more glorious. God had predicted the horn would spring up “for the house of Israel” and God will “open your lips among them.” This seems to refer, as it did in ch. 24, with the opening of *Ezekiel’s* lips among the house of Israel. However, if we are reading this with the NT, it seems to me that Acts 2 is a beautiful escalation and fulfillment of that promise of which you, if you believe in Christ, are the product of. Jesus, the horn, did *not* spring up in Ezekiel’s day. He sprang up in *Peter’s* day. *Peter’s lips* are now opened. And who is listening? *Jewish people*—the house of Israel—who have all gathered there at Pentecost even from Egypt and Arabia. They will become the foundation of Jesus’ church—which will soon incorporate *Gentiles* who worshiped god through idols from all the nations. These—will become the true House of Israel—the Israel of God (*Gal 6:16*). Who would have thought an oracle against Egypt would have Pentecost ramifications?

I want us to finish by thinking about the very interesting *supernatural transition* that occurs in *30:13ff*. “*I will destroy the idols and put an end to the image in Memphis.*” You all know that in every city in Egypt, there were statues, monuments, and entire palaces and tombs and pyramids to the gods. This prophecy predicts that *the LORD will finally destroy* them.

In my mind, it makes good sense not to see this as ending in **vs. 14** as a kind of one-off verse, but as the spiritual weight beyond the tour of cities we now read about. For **Numbers 33:4** says, “For the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them. *On their gods* also the LORD executed judgment.” With that in mind, listen to the following from Ezekiel.

“There shall no longer be a prince from the land of Egypt; so I will put fear in the land of Egypt” (**13b**). Pharaoh was considered a god (Horus incarnate). This strikes at divine kingship, especially as this is the same word used for the “prince” rather than “king” of Tyre.

“I will make Pathros a desolation and will set fire to Zoan,” like Sodom before it and **the plague of hail**, “and will execute judgments on Thebes” (**14**), like the Plagues of Egypt on its gods before it. For **Exodus 12:12** said, “... and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments.” The language deliberately echoes here in Ezekiel.

“I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium the stronghold of Egypt, and cut off the multitude of Thebes” (**15**), like the armies of Pharaoh drown in the sea, a kind of “cutting off.” ‘And I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium shall be in great ag-

ony; Thebes shall be breached, and Memphis shall face enemies by day” (16). The young men of On and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword, and the women shall go into captivity” (17). “At Tehaphnehes the day shall be dark,” like the plague of Egypt, “when I break there the yoke bars of Egypt, and her proud might shall come to an end in her; she shall be covered by a cloud, and her daughters shall go into captivity” (18). “Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD” (19), exactly as we find of the whole point of the plagues of Egypt (Ex 7:5; 17; 8:10; 22; 9:14, 28; 10:2; 14:4, 18).

The repetition of the cities reinforces this. Memphis in the shadow of the Pyramids was the major religious center of Ptah. Thebes had the massive temple to Amun. On was the major center for the sun worship of Ra. Pi-beseth was famous for the worship of the cat goddess Bastet. Others are along the Nile, the source of life which will be dried up on the Great Day. In its totality, this is still future and what a day to dread it will be. A day of wailing and moaning.

But lest you think this is *only* a future fulfillment, that’s why I wanted to focus on the supernatural elements. Recall how in Athens Paul tells the people, “Being Then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like

gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.” That’s *the idols*! “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead” (**Acts 17:29-31**). Effectively, *the idols and gods have been judged at the cross*. For at the cross (that is already), Jesus made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over the powers and authority whom he disarmed (**Col 2:15**). And in John, “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (**John 12:31-32**). You see, biblical prophecy is more complicated than “it’s all in our future.” Indeed, so much of it points to Christ’s *first* coming, that event which is sure and certain rather than speculative and often guesswork. That’s why the cross is what we must always come back to wherever we are in Scripture. For everything funnels through that singular event of history. Our salvation. Their doom.

This is *the Horn and the Judgment coming together*, kissing one another at one “already” point in our past. Yes, there were initial fulfillments of these prophecies against

Egypt and the nations. And yes, there is still something coming that has not yet happened. But beloved, the whole point of today is that we are dealing here with something special in Ezekiel—*the Day of the LORD*. That day is both already and not-yet because Jesus Christ has come and brought the initial true final inaugurated fulfillments of these prophecies to past. Our horn and our salvation. Our reprieve of doom. And the judgment upon the one who holds so many still in darkness.

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