

EZEKIEL

Chapter 32

A Lament over Pharaoh and Egypt

In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him: “You consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas; you burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet, and foul their rivers. 3 Thus says the Lord GOD: I will throw my net over you with a host of many peoples, and they will haul you up in my dragnet. 4 And I will cast you on the ground; on the open field I will fling you, and will cause all the birds of the heavens to settle on you, and I will gorge the beasts of the whole earth with you. 5 I will strew your flesh upon the mountains and fill the valleys with your carcass. 6 I will drench the land even to the mountains with your flowing blood, and the ravines will be full of you. 7 When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. 8 All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord GOD. 9 “I will trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries that you have not known. 10 I will make many peoples appalled at you, and the hair of their kings shall bristle with horror because of you, when I brandish my sword before them. They shall tremble every moment, every one for his own life, on the day of your downfall. 11 “For thus says the Lord GOD: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. 12 I will cause your multitude to fall by the swords of mighty ones, all of them most ruthless of nations. “They shall bring to ruin the pride of Egypt, and all its multitude shall perish. 13 I will destroy all its beasts from beside many waters; and no foot of man shall trouble them anymore, nor shall the hoofs of beasts trouble them. 14 Then I will make their waters clear, and cause their rivers to run like oil, declares the Lord GOD. 15 When I make the land of Egypt desolate, and when the land is desolate of all that fills it, when I strike down all who dwell in it, then they will know that I am the LORD. 16 This is a lamentation that shall be chanted; the daughters of the nations shall chant it; over Egypt, and over all her multitude, shall they chant it, declares the Lord GOD.” 17 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 18 “Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and send them down, her and the daughters of majestic nations, to the world below, to those who have gone down to the pit: 19 ‘Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.’ 20 They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword. Egypt is delivered to the sword; drag her away, and all her multitudes. 21 The mighty chiefs shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of Sheol: ‘They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’ 22 “Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, 23 whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit; and her company is all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living. 24 “Elam is there, and all her multitude around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised into the world below, who spread their terror in the land of the living; and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. 25 They have made her a bed among the slain with all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for terror of them was spread in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit; they are placed among the slain. 26 “Meshech-Tubal is there, and all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread their terror in the land of the living. 27 And they do not lie with the mighty, the fallen from among the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose iniquities are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living. 28 But as for you, you

shall be broken and lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword. 29 “Edom is there, her kings and all her princes, who for all their might are laid with those who are killed by the sword; they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit. 30 “The princes of the north are there, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror that they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. 31 “When Pharaoh sees them, he will be comforted for all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, declares the Lord GOD. 32 For I spread terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord GOD.”

32:1 The sixth oracle against Egypt. (CSB)

twelfth year ... twelfth month ... first day. Mar. 3, 585 B.C.; the tenth date in Ezekiel (see 1:2; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1). If the Septuagint and Syriac are followed (“eleventh year”), then the chronological order of the Egypt oracles is preserved (and the date would be Mar. 13, 586). Cf. 29:1; 30:20; 31:1. (CSB)

Mar 3, 585 BC. A year and a half after the fall of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

32:2 *lamentation.* The dirge Ezekiel was to compose was not to express pity or sadness over the king’s impending end but to mock his pretensions to be “a lion of the nations,” frightening them into submission by his roaring. He will not be safe, even in his homeland. (TLSB)

lion of the nations. A figure for royalty and grandeur (see 19:1–9). (CSB)

dragon. This lament is a prophecy of destruction. (TLSB)

seas ... rivers. Canals of the Nile. (CSB)

32:3 *throw my net.* Earlier it was Zedekiah over whom God’s net was thrown (see 12:13; 17:20; 19:8). (CSB)

Forced submission to God’s power is asserted by the same figure of speech in 12:13; 17:20. The following description of the monster’s disposal resembles the language of an ancient myth in which a god in the heathen pantheon establishes supremacy by slaying a rival dragon (cf Is 27:1; 51:9). Defeat of God’s enemies is at times expressed by similar terms, though there is a vast difference in substance. The authority of the Lord of hosts is never in question. He has only to speak His omnipotent word to have men, angels, and devils do His will. The forces of nature are at His beck and call. (TLSB)

32:4 *I will cast.* God’s actions here are very similar to those described in 29:3–5. (CSB)

32:7–8 The judgment to be executed on Egypt was certain to materialize, for it would overtake the land with the force of the day of the Lord. God’s commands are obeyed by the stars, the sun, the moon. Cf Is 2:12; Jl 2:10–11; Am 8:9. (TLSB)

32:7 *I will cover the heavens.* The first of seven clauses threatening the darkness associated with the day of the Lord (see Joel 2:2, 10, 31; 3:15; Am 5:18–20; Zep 1:15). (CSB)

32:9 *trouble the hearts.* This and the next verse reflect the fear brought about whenever great world powers fall, reminding lesser nations that they are even more vulnerable. Cf. similar feelings aroused by Tyre's fall (26:16–18; 27:35; 28:19). (CSB)

32:10 *hair ... shall bristle with horror.* Other rulers would experience hair-raising fear when they saw how God condemned Egypt. (TLSB)

32:12 *most ruthless of nations.* Babylon. (CSB)

32:13 With the inhabitants of Egypt eliminated, none will wade in the Nile anymore. (TLSB)

32:14 *rivers to run like oil.* Their surface undisturbed by any form of life. This is the only place in the Bible where this eerie metaphor is used to describe desolation. (CSB)

The silt will settle out of the water, restoring a darker, oily appearance. (TLSB)

32:16 *daughters of the nations.* A world chorus of professional wailers (see Jer 9:17–18). (CSB)

They will play the part of professional mourning women and chant this doleful lament (vv 12–15). (TLSB)

32:17–31 In the seventh and last oracle against Egypt, Ezekiel brings to a climax his portrayal of the utter futility of all attempts to interfere with God's plans and decrees. He wails "over the multitude of Egypt" by conjuring up a scene from the netherworld, surpassing Milton's *Paradise Lost* for unearthly grandeur. (TLSB)

32:17 The seventh and last oracle against Egypt. (CSB)

twelfth year ... fifteenth day. No month is given (as in 26:1; 40:1). The whole year dates from Apr. 13, 586, to Apr. 1, 585 B.C. The Septuagint suggests the first month, the 15th day of which would be Apr. 27, 586. (CSB)

32:19 *uncircumcised.* The Egyptians practiced circumcision. Being associated with uncircumcised people may have been just as repugnant to them as it was to faithful Israelites. (TLSB)

32:21 *mighty chiefs ... with their helpers.* When Egypt is doomed to go the way of mortal flesh, the mighty chiefs who earlier have gone down to the pit are there to welcome the new arrival. (TLSB)

32:22 *Assyria.* The mighty empire disappeared from the face of the earth in 612 BC, less than 30 years before Ezekiel spoke this elegy (cf ch 31). (CSB)

32:23 *graves ... in the uttermost parts of the pit.* Every corner was filled. (TLSB)

who spread terror. Egypt shares the same fate with such stalwarts as Assyria (v 22), Edom (v 29), and the princes of the north (v 30). (TLSB)

land of the living. Earth. (TLSB)

32:24 *Elam.* A country east of Assyria; in present-day Iran. (CSB)

Occupying territory east of Babylon, this nation was a formidable power in the ancient world until the Assyrians subjugated it. (TLSB)

bear their shame. Humiliation in defeat. (TLSB)

32:26–27 *Meshech-Tubal.* Peoples in Asia Minor, cf 38:2. They do not lie with heroic warriors, who were granted a funeral with military honors. (TLSB)

32:26 *Meshech and Tubal.* Peoples and territories in Asia Minor. (CSB)

32:27 *swords ... under their heads.* A burial practice. (TLSB)

32:28 *you.* Pharaoh. (TLSB)

32:30 *princes of the north are there.* Syrian states and Phoenician cities, such as Sidon, were north of Israel. (TLSB)

32:31 As Pharaoh joins them, he can comfort himself only with the thought that others fare no better than he. (TLSB)

32:32 *I spread terror in the land of the living.* The Lord bumps them from their pride of place and takes their tauntings as His spoil. (TLSB)

Ch 32 After the fall of Jerusalem, God commands Ezekiel to record laments for Pharaoh, his sixth and seventh prophecies against Egypt. God lists nations like Egypt who turned away and are no more (vv 22–30). In truth, the grave awaits us all. But the One who “spread terror in the land of the living” also holds the keys of death and hell (Rv 1:18). Our champion, the resurrected Lord, will deliver us. • Father, send Your Holy Spirit to dampen our pride; let us boast only in You and Your grace through Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)