

NOVEMBER 15

Ezekiel 31-32

These are the final two chapters focused on the punishment to Egypt. We need to ask ourselves why God was so upset with Egypt. If anything, it seems they were trying to help Israel. We have four chapters of judgment directed to them. In reality, Egypt encouraged Israel to rebel against God. They promised a false hope and they used Israel as a pawn against Nebuchadnezzar, trying to occupy his strength and distract him. Jerusalem was off the beaten track, in the hills. If Neb had to go after Jerusalem, he couldn't trouble himself with the Egyptians. For all of these reasons, Egypt deserved to be punished. It was because they encouraged Jerusalem and Judah to disobey the Lord and to scorn the words of the prophets.

Ezekiel 31

The point of this entire chapter is that if God punished Assyria for its dealings with Israel, He would certainly punish Egypt.

V. 1 This prophecy was pronounced on 11.3.1. This is two months after the prophecy in Ezekiel 30:20. On 11.4.9, just a month later, Jerusalem would fall.

Vs. 2-14 The example of Assyria. Kings and their kingdoms were often likened to great trees, and the kings of trees were the cedars of Lebanon. In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar will also hear this illustration used for him.

V. 14 This is the reason God did this. It kind of goes along the lines of Matthew 23:12, *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

Vs. 15-17 Many smaller nations looked to the larger, stronger nations for support and help. When Egypt would fall, many nations would mourn and be shaken.

V. 18 And this will happen to Pharaoh too.

Ezekiel 32

There are a lot of repeated phrases. Enjoy.

V. 1 This is now about a year and a half after Jerusalem fell. This chapter is out of chronological order because it is dealing with the judgment on Egypt. Actually, chapter 33 takes place two months before this. By now the exiles knew that Jerusalem had fallen. As this was written, Nebuchadnezzar was setting up Gedaliah as governor of Israel (2 Kings 25:24). Soon Gedaliah would be assassinated, and the remnant of the survivors would kidnap Jeremiah and head south to Egypt where they would be safe. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if this prophecy coincided with either the remnant marching south with Jeremiah, or with Jeremiah burying the stone before the palace.

Vs. 2-8 This is a very poetic and cosmic pronouncement of destruction on Egypt. Apparently Egypt had a pretty high opinion of itself. It is as if a mythical god were dying.

Vs. 9-10 Again, all the nations would mourn as they watched this.

Vs. 11-15 And God will use Nebuchadnezzar as His tool. It is interesting how God uses the arrogance of men to accomplish His purposes. In Neb's mind he was simply doing what he wanted to do and being successful at it because he was such a super-awesome dude. Unknown to him, he'd soon be back in Babylon eating hay.

Vs. 16-32 This is the lamentation, or funeral chant, that was given to Ezekiel two weeks later. Pharaoh will have some famous company in Hades. What a poetic consolation prize, but alas, there is no party in hell, only punishment. What is interesting is that soon after this, God personally would humble Nebuchadnezzar. While Neb was grazing, God would teach him to

respect the Lord and thereby save Nebuchadnezzar the fate of Pharaoh. It sounds weird to say, but it is possible that Neb and Darius the Mede were saved.

As disciples, we need to learn the entire counsel of God. It is great to share redemption and the love of Christ, but when God says so much about judgment for the rebellious, how can we ignore that? We need to present God as He is, not as we would like to dress Him, to be more acceptable to a fallen world.

Hebrews 12:14-29

Vs. 14-17 Notice that there is a warning here to avoid three things. Giving up on following Christ and shipwrecking your faith causes damage on earth. This is not talking about loss of salvation, but the loss of blessing and protection (all found in growing close to Christ) that enduring in faith and following Him on earth brings. It is like choosing to walk in front of a car as a Christian. You'll still go to heaven, but the rest of your time on the planet will be walked with a limp, or worse.

Vs. 18-24 Notice the contrast between vs. 18-21 and vs. 22-24. In 22-24, notice again that Jesus is the true focus.

Vs. 25-29 This has come full circle to Hebrews 1:2. God has spoken through His Son. But notice that it is the Christians who are supposed to give heed to this. This is for us.

V. 29 This could be looked at as a warning, or it could be looked at as saying that God consumes what is offered to Him. Depending on our relationship to God, being consumed by Him and His love might not be a bad thing. To hold ourselves back when we are called by the glory of His love and mercy, by His Son, to present ourselves as living sacrifices, is to miss what full faith and abandonment to His love would give us. Jesus says in John 14:21-23 that what we truly gain is Him. It's time for disciples to step into the fire and be consumed.

Psalms 113-114

"Psalms 113-118 form the Hallel, a collection of songs sung at the great festivals of Israel--Passover, Pentecost, the Tabernacles--as well as on other holy days. At the Passover, for example, Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal, and 115-118 after it." ([Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT](#), p. 875)

Psalm 113

If you want to see something interesting, compare this psalm to Mary's prayer in Luke 1:46-55. Mary would not have been taught in the synagogues, but she would have known these songs. Also, as Mary declared this, she was standing before Elizabeth who was *advanced in years*, who had been barren, but was now suddenly pregnantly plump.

V. 1 Notice that this call to praise is to the *servants of the Lord*.

Vs. 2-3 Basically this is when the Lord should be praised, that is, forever and every waking moment.

Vs. 4-6 This would have been a good guiding thought in thinking about the Passover and it was an important thought for Mary.

Vs. 7-9 This was not only seen in God saving Israel, but Mary found it true in that God reached out to the lowly in bringing His good news to the world.

Psalm 114

Vs. 1-2 This is not only talking about Israel coming out of Egypt, but it shows that God was present among His people as He led them. *Judah became His sanctuary* and *Israel became His dominion*.

Vs. 3-6 This is the crossing of the Red Sea and the fireworks on top of Mt. Sinai. The physical world responded to God's presence not only in obedience, but with fear.

Vs. 7-8 Interestingly enough, God not only used His power to make the creation tremble, but also to provide water for His people. God's presence was for the good of His people and was a sign of His love. Notice the shaking in today's reading of Hebrews. Apparently shaking comes before blessing.

Proverbs 27:18-20

If v. 18 were linked to v. 17, that sharpening process would have to do with diligence and loyalty.

Verses 19-20 look like they hang together well. Verse 19 has to do with the heart, and v. 20 has to do with the eyes, which really are regulated by the heart. Jesus said a lot about the heart, and something we as disciples need to attend to. We need to be cultivating our own hearts and to be conscious of when we are having heart problems.