

# The Prophets

Lesson #46

Ezekiel 25:1-32:32

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## Notes

### **Ezekiel 25:1-32:32**

- Judgment on Judah's closest neighbors (25:1-17).
  - Judgment on Ammon (25:1-7).

- What Ezekiel's audience knows that the Ammonites do not is that Judah's calamity merely provided a temporary reprieve for Rabbah and Ammon.
- Ammon is accused of expressing satisfaction over the misfortune of Judah, her enemy and rival. This was clearly shown by the interjection "Aha!"
- The desolation of the land would be symbolized by the use of Rabbah, their capital, as a pasture for camels and the use of their land as a resting place for flocks. In so doing, the Ammonites would come to recognize God's power over even them.
- Judgment on Moab (25:8-11).
  - The Moabite relationship with Israel and Judah was similar to that of its Ammonite brothers. The first hostilities erupted because the Moabites feared the territorial incursions of the Israelites into Canaan.
  - Moab held the thought that tempted the Judean exiles themselves: the fall of Jerusalem demonstrates the impotence of God. This view was false and was an arrogant attack on God.
  - Moab's highly fortified frontier towns will fall to invaders and leave the area susceptible to further attacks. God's consistent purpose in judgment is stated again: that Moab would come to know that He is the Lord, the only true God.
- Judgment on Edom (25:12-14).
  - The accusation against Edom centered on her perpetual attitude of vengeance against Judah, an attitude that began with the conflict between Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom; cf. Genesis 25:30; 27:41-46; 32:4).
  - Edom would become a desolation as the Lord cut off both human-kind and cattle from that land. This devastation would be from Teman to Dedan.
  - In judgment, the Edomites would understand that He was the faithful God of Israel who would curse those who cursed His people. In turn Edom would observe that He was the only true God.
- Judgment on Philistia (25:15-17).
  - The Philistines were accused of responding with vengeance against Judah, especially with contempt and perpetual enmity. Their goal was to destroy Judah.
  - God's great vengeance against them was a judgment "in kind" for their revengeful attitude and actions against Judah.
  - His destruction of Philistia would be complete, even consuming the remnant of them that were on the coast. His wrath, however, was for correction, so that Philistia would come to know through this act on them that He was the only true God.

- Judgment on Tyre (26:1-28:19).
  - Judgment by Babylon (26:1-21).
    - A judgment prophecy against Tyre (26:1-14).
      - The length of this prophecy suggests the political and religious significance of this city. His indictment of Tyre is set forth in a series of four statements.
      - Ezekiel pictures the directing hand of God behind Nebuchadnezzar's actions. Thus, God will bring him to besiege and destroy Tyre.
      - The process of his siege of Tyre is fully described. The city's destruction and the slaying of its inhabitants are described, followed by the taking of spoils and the demolition of the remaining glories of Tyre.
    - The response of vassal nations to Tyre's fall (26:15-18).
      - Tyre had many vassals who had depended on her as their protector. In a telling metaphor, the inhabitants of Tyre will be clothed with terror both at the economic and physical prospects of their destruction.
      - Ironically, Tyre had the poor sense to rejoice over Jerusalem's fall. These cities, however, had the good sense to realize that Tyre's fall spelled the same for them.
    - The Lord's concluding verdict (26:19-21).
      - A prophecy of Tyre's eternal death was certainly an appropriate response to the funeral dirge of the nations.
      - God would make sure that she never again regained her place of prominence on this earth. Tyre would die. She would never again exist and play an important role in history as she had in the past. Though some might look for her, she would not be found.
  - Ezekiel's funeral dirge over Tyre (27:1-36).
    - The building of Tyre's ship of pride (27:1-11).
      - The destruction of Tyre would be lamented like the wreck of a magnificent ship. The imagery is sustained through the poem and climaxes in the wreckage.
      - The personnel who can be clearly identified come from the far reaches of the known world and demonstrate Tyre's far-reaching trade connections.
      - Truly Tyre became a magnificent maritime empire that attracted nations from all over the ancient Near East to trade with her and to come and experience her greatness as a city.

- Tyre's vast commercial relations (27:12-24).
  - Based on the descriptions in this section, the raw and manufactured wealth of the whole ancient Near East came to market in Tyre.
  - Tyre served the ancient world much like the ports of Los Angeles, New York and Hong Kong serve today's world. The loss of any one of these would cripple the worldwide economy. Likewise, the floundering of the *Tyre* will produce devastating commercial problems in the ancient world.
- The sinking of the ship of Tyre (27:25-36).
  - The "east wind" undoubtedly refers to the Babylonian attempt to conquer Tyre. The loss of the ship will entail the loss of all its wealth, merchandise and wares, as well as every hand on board.
  - Tyre's primary export was arrogance and self-sufficiency; all those who also traded in these commodities had reason to fear for their safety.
  - In fear and self-protection, they quickly turned from being ones who adored Tyre to ones who totally disowned her. They hissed at her in a derogatory manner. How quickly the proud fall!
- A judgment speech against the ruler of Tyre (28:1-10).
  - The boastful claim of Tyre's ruler, Ethbaal III, showed his smugness toward the transcendent realm. He claimed a seat among the pantheon of ancient Near Eastern gods.
  - The mighty fall hard, and Tyre and its king will be no exception. God would humble him by bringing him to a horrible, disgraceful death, the death of the uncircumcised at the hand of ruthless foreigners.
- A funeral dirge for the king of Tyre (28:11-19).
  - This lament is unusual in form and content. In form, it has few of the expected markers of a lament. In content, its description of the king of Tyre is extravagant, to say the least.
  - Ezekiel has used the lament form in a mocking way before (cf. 19:1-9), and this suggests a similar mockery here. Ezekiel portrays God in satirical agreement with the king of Tyre's self-evaluation as a divine being in vss. 1-10. If he is divine, he should be addressed and treated as such.
  - God would cast him to the ground before all the world's kings and cause fire to come forth from him to devour him. His death would be sudden and horrible, and he would exist no more.

- Judgment on Sidon (28:20-24).
  - Although the beginning of this prophecy is similar to the others, it is unlike all others so far. It does not include any specific charges of Sidon's sin or disposition. All we learn is that God is against Sidon.
  - Sidon's punishment will consist of elements of the covenant curses announced to Israel: pestilence and sword (Leviticus 26:24-25; cf. 5:17).
  - When these judgments are completed, Israel would be free from these despising and harassing nations' constant pain that she had received for so long. Israel would then recognize and know that the Lord truly is her God.
- Israel's restoration from the nations (28:25-26).
  - It was never God's purpose for punishment to be the last word among His people. Instead, after He implements the curses of the covenant, He intends on bringing His people back to Himself.
  - By the judgment of the nations around Israel, Ezekiel encourages the exiles that God faithfully exercises His righteousness against other nations as well as against Judah.
- Judgment on Egypt (29:1-32:32).
  - The introductory prophecy of judgment on Egypt (29:1-16).
    - Pharaoh is likened to a dragon in the midst of the Nile that the Lord would catch, pull from the Nile and leave on the dry land to die. In the imagery the dragon represented the pharaoh, the protector of Egypt, who dominated the Nile (i.e., all Egypt). This was Hophra's arrogant self-image.
    - God will treat Egypt with a similar kindness as that in store for Samaria, Sodom and Jerusalem (cf. 16:53-58; 39:25-29). Egypt's restoration, however, will not be to its former glory. The might that once was Egypt will be gone.
  - A day of the Lord: the consummation of Egypt's judgment (29:17-30:19).
    - Babylonia's compensation of Egypt for the spoils of Tyre (29:17-21).
      - Nebuchadnezzar was unable to take the city. For 13 years, his armies had surrounded the mainland city, and tried to starve it out and overrun its walls. In lieu of Tyre's wealth, God will give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar.
      - God used Babylonia's conquest of Egypt to strengthen and encourage Israel in exile. The passage treats the judgment on Egypt and states that at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion "a horn" will grow for Israel. The symbol refers to the strength and encouragement that Israel was to receive when she ob-

served God's faithfulness in executing His judgment on her enemy, Egypt.

- Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt (30:1-19).
  - Egypt's day of the Lord, a day of doom, would be a dark day in her history ("a cloudy day"). The masses would fear as Egypt's proud strength ceased before Nebuchadnezzar's sword.
  - God tolerates no national arrogance, whether from His own people, or from others not as closely associated with Him.
  - The focus on the land strikes at the heart of individual and national identity for ancient Near Easterners. One's land was the place where one's gods reigned supreme, where one felt secure and where one was kept alive through family memory.
  - The judgment would be comprehensive and awful, encompassing the major historical cities and regions, though God's purpose would be accomplished. This judgment was a manifestation of God's grace; for through it He would finally cause the Egyptians to understand that He, the Lord God of Israel, is the only true God.
- Pharaoh's broken arms (30:20-26).
  - Ezekiel uses the word "arm" as a theme in a deliberate, ironic attack on Hophra's self-given pharaonic title, "Strong arm." "Arm" is a well-known biblical metaphor for strength.
  - Addressed to Ezekiel's fellow exiles, they likely heard and took heart at the news that Babylon had broken off the siege of Jerusalem because of Hophra's intervention. This prophecy announces that their jubilation was premature. Babylon thoroughly defeated the Egyptians and went back to their siege of Jerusalem.
- Egypt's fall compared with Assyria's fall (31:1-18).
  - This beautiful poetic message was delivered two months after the previous prophecy concerning the shattering of Egypt's strength (May/June 587 B.C.). The implication is that Egypt was still proud.
  - The great power and prestige of Assyria was, by Ezekiel's day, already legendary. Ezekiel furthermore describes its matchless grandeur and beauty. Historically, no previous empire had as vast a reach or might as Assyria at the height of its power.
  - If Egypt thought she was more majestic and had greater splendor than other nations of her day, the Lord reminds her that she too would "be brought down." She would "die" disgracefully as an uncircumcised foreigner without a decent burial -- a horrible thought for proud Egyptian royalty that cherished its royal burial and despised foreigners.

- A funeral dirge for Egypt (32:1-16).
  - God's sentence against the arrogance of the whale is carried out by a great multitude of people, a reference to the marauding bands of 30:10-12.
  - Vss. 7-8 use seven phrases to show how God will bring darkness over Pharaoh's land. This brings to mind the plague of darkness just before the exodus (Exodus 7:20-24; 10:21-23). However, the strongest parallel seems to be with Isaiah 13:1-14:27 where God is going to judge Babylon's arrogance.
  - The slaughter of Egypt would occur at the hands of the Babylonians, the most ruthless of all peoples. Everyone and every place would be touched, including the great Nile. When all life had disappeared, then the Nile would cease to be stirred up and would flow as smoothly as oil.
- Ezekiel's summary lament over Egypt (32:17-32).
  - This is Ezekiel's final prophecy against Egypt, and it concludes his prophecies against the nations.
  - Ezekiel must wail for the Egyptians because they too would descend into the pit of death, as had all other mighty nations that had preceded them. Egypt would not be favored over the uncircumcised nations she had proudly hated.
  - She too would die a shameful, barbarian's death like all the other countries. God had wrought His terror on them, and He would continue to bring His terror on any nation that dealt violently with others in this world. That is the reason God quickly brought His terror through the Babylonians against Egypt.