

Ezekiel 29-32

I. Introduction

A. Summary Statement: Ezekiel calls us to remember we are exiles and as exiles to remember that God is near and is infinitely concerned for His own glory. Therefore Ezekiel calls us to refuse the temptation to place our hope in an imagined past or an alluring present but instead to repent and to wait for God's future salvation.

B. Outline:

1. God is Present in Exile Ezekiel 1-3
2. God is Present to Judge in Judah Ezekiel 4-24
3. God is Present to Judge the Nations Ezekiel 25-32
4. God is Present to Save His People Ezekiel 33-48

C. Detailed Outline:

We may be exiled among the nations, but turning to the world is not the answer	Ezekiel 25
The world's wealth may look like salvation, but it will perish with the world	Ezekiel 26-28

D. Continuing:

1. Last time we were in Ezekiel, we saw that in the second section there was first a look at the nations around Israel, showing that salvation was found nowhere else, and then there are two long oracles or sets of oracles: one against Tyre and Sidon and one against Egypt
 - a. Both Tyre and Sidon and Egypt had long histories with the nation of Israel and they represent two major aspects of the world - aspects of the world that the Israelites had been tempted to trust in before the fall of Jerusalem and assuredly would be tempted to find hope in after the fall of Jerusalem
 - b. Tyre and Sidon represented the world's wealth - they were trading cities that amassed massive wealth by transporting and trading the world's goods and Judah had traded with them for centuries
 - c. And Egypt represented the world's might - they were a military nation that at times had been the dominant power of the region and had alternatively battled and allied with Judah through the centuries
2. So, God gives detailed oracles against Tyre and Sidon and against Egypt, warning his people that there is no hope in the world - whether they are tempted to trust in the wealth or the might of the world, both will be destroyed by God

E. Proposition: Egypt represents the temptation to find our hope and stability in the power, might, and self-sufficiency of this world. Power may temporarily give hope and purpose but in the end it will be destroyed by God and those who rest in it will be destroyed as well. Our hope cannot be in this world, but waiting for God to recreate a new world.

1. Egypt: Trusting in the world's might
2. Judgment on Egypt: Trusting in the world's might is futile
3. Egypt and the Exiles: Salvation will come from God
4. Application

II. Egypt: Trusting in the World's Might

A. Egypt believed that she was self-sufficient, she was the ruler of her own fate

1. Ezekiel 29:3 - *Speak, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, 'My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.'*
2. Ezekiel 29:9b - *"Because you said, 'The Nile is mine, and I made it,'*
3. Ezekiel 32:2 - *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."*

B. Egypt believed that her might would save her

1. Ezekiel 29:15 - *It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations.*
2. Ezekiel 30:6 - *"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.*
3. Ezekiel 30:21-22 - *"Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and behold, it has not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so that it may become strong to wield the sword. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken, and I will make the sword fall from his hand.*
4. Ezekiel 32:31 - *"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.*

C. Egypt encouraged those around her to trust in her might as well

1. Ezekiel 29:6b-7 - *"Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel, when they grasped you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; and when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their loins to shake.*
2. Ezekiel 29:16 - *And it shall never again be the reliance of the house of Israel, recalling their iniquity, when they turn to them for aid.*
3. Ezekiel 31:2-3 - *Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: "Whom are you like in your greatness? Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with beautiful branches and forest shade, and of towering height, its top among the clouds.*

III. Judgment on Egypt: Trusting in the World's Might is Futile

A. Egypt's might was not a blessing to the world, but a curse

1. Ezekiel 32:2 - *"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."*

B. Egypt's might was unable to save even the powerful around her

1. Ezekiel 31:2-9 - *"Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: "Whom are you like in your greatness? Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with beautiful branches and forest shade, and of towering height, its top among the clouds. The waters nourished it; the deep made it grow tall, making its rivers flow around the place of its planting, sending forth its streams to all the trees of the field. So it towered high above all the trees of the field; its boughs grew large and its branches long from abundant water in its shoots. All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth to their young, and under its shadow lived all great nations. It was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its roots went down to abundant waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it, nor the fir trees equal its boughs; neither were the plane trees like its branches; no tree in the garden of God was its equal in beauty. I made it beautiful in the mass of its branches, and all the trees of Eden envied it, that were in the garden of God."*
2. Ezekiel 31:10-17 - *"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because it towered high and set its top among the clouds, and its heart was proud of its height, I will give it into the hand of a mighty one of the nations. He shall surely deal with it as its wickedness deserves. I have cast it out. Foreigners, the most ruthless of nations, have cut it down and left it. On the mountains and in all the valleys its branches have fallen, and its boughs have been broken in all the ravines of the land, and all the peoples of the earth have gone away from its shadow and left it. On its fallen trunk dwell all the birds of the heavens, and on its branches are all the beasts of the field. All this is in order that no trees by the waters may grow to towering height or set their tops among the clouds, and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height. For they are all given over to death, to the world below, among the children of man, with those who go down to the pit. "Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day the cedar went down to Sheol I caused mourning; I closed the deep over it, and restrained its rivers, and many waters were stopped. I clothed Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field fainted because of it. I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit. And all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the world below. They also went down to Sheol with it, to those who are slain by the sword; yes, those who were its arm, who lived under its shadow among the nations."*
3. Ezekiel 31:18 - *"Whom are you thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? You shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the world below. You shall lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword."*
4. Ezekiel 29:6b-9 - *"Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel, when they grasped you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; and when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their loins to shake. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring a sword upon you, and will cut off from you man and beast, and the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste. Then they will know that I am the LORD."*
5. Ezekiel 32:18-32 - *"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: 'Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.' They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword. Egypt is delivered to the sword; drag her away, and all her multitudes. 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.' "Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword,... "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.... "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.... "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... "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. "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. 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."*

C. Egypt was not the ruler of her own destiny, God was

1. Ezekiel 29:3-6a - *speak, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, 'My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.' I will put hooks in your jaws, and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales; and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams, with all the fish of your streams that stick to your scales. And I will cast you out into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams; you shall fall on the open field, and not be brought together or gathered. To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens I give you as food. Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD.*
2. Ezekiel 29:9b-12 - *"Because you said, 'The Nile is mine, and I made it,' therefore, behold, I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Cush. No foot of man shall pass through it, and no foot of beast shall pass through it; it shall be uninhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated countries, and her cities shall be a desolation forty years among cities that are laid waste. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries.*

D. So Egypt's might would be ultimately destroyed by God

1. Ezekiel 30:2-9 - *"Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Wail, 'Alas for the day!' 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. A 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. Cush, 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. "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. And they shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries, and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken. "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!*
2. Ezekiel 30:18-19 - *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. Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt. Then they will know that I am the LORD."*
3. Ezekiel 30:20-26 - *In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and behold, it has not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so that it may become strong to wield the sword. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken, and I will make the sword fall from his hand. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them through the countries. And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a man mortally wounded. I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall. Then they shall know that I am the LORD, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD."*
4. Ezekiel 32:2-9 - *"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. 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. 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. I will strew your flesh upon the mountains and fill the valleys with your carcass. I will drench the land even to the mountains with your flowing blood, and the ravines will be full of you. 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. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord GOD.*

IV. Egypt and the Exiles: Salvation Will Come from God

A. When the world's might is cast down, God's glory will be revealed

1. Ezekiel 29:6 - *Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD.*
2. Ezekiel 29:9 - *Then they will know that I am the LORD.*
3. Ezekiel 29:16 - *Then they will know that I am the Lord GOD.*
4. Ezekiel 30:8 - *Then they will know that I am the LORD*
5. Ezekiel 30:19 - *Then they will know that I am the LORD.*
6. Ezekiel 30:25 - *Then they shall know that I am the LORD*
7. Ezekiel 30:26 - *Then they will know that I am the LORD*
8. Ezekiel 32:15 - *then they will know that I am the LORD*

B. When God's people see God's glory, then they will be ready for God's salvation

1. Ezekiel 29:21 - *"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."*

V. Application: Are we not exiled in Egypt?

A. We live among a people who rely on their power and self-sufficiency

1. We can see the core reliance of our culture on power just by the straight parallels to Egypt - we fund an overwhelming military force, many times larger than the next largest military, and we have created a cult of the warrior in our country
2. But, honestly, I don't think this is our culture's biggest failing here, although hopefully it helps us open our eyes. I think the reliance on power and self-sufficiency is much deeper than that.
3. In our culture, we believe that we have gained power over this world. Not only external power - military power to conquer our enemies and control the pathways of this world, to "protect our national interests," but also power over the baser things of this world - we believe that we have gained power over death, power over disease, power over natural disasters, power to control our destiny in this world. Like Egypt, our culture lifts our arms up against God, whether acknowledged or not, and says this land is ours.
4. And we can see this very clearly when we are reminded that we don't have absolute power over this world. When disasters come, when disease strikes, when attacks happen, when other countries exert their power, we react violently, impulsively to try to exert control again. Those who believe that they have power over this world hate being reminded that not everything is in their control and they will do anything to bring it back under their control.
5. That's the culture that we live in and I'm afraid it is all too easy to imbibe the spirit of our age and to pursue power with them. It is easy to set aside the necessity of trusting in God for every breath and for every provision and believe that we have conquered this world on our own.
 - a. Just as a point of diagnosis, a great question to ask ourselves is this: when I am afraid of something, what do I run to? When I am afraid of something, with what do I comfort myself? When I am afraid of something, what do I hope in?
6. So, as those who have been exiled in the Egypt of our day, we need to emphatically remind ourselves of several core truths from Scripture:

B. We must remember that the world's power will always fail us

1. Psalm 20:7-8 - *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.*
2. This has always been a danger for God's people, so God has called His people throughout Scripture to remember that their hope cannot be in the power of this world.
3. That means we can't look to our government to save us from the perils of this world. We can't look to our military to save us from the dangers of the nations. Our hope can't be found there. Not only will it be a fruitless hope, it will take our eyes off of God.
4. Our world will always be filled with myriad dangers. Instead of hoping in the powers of this world to save us, we must place our reliance on God. When we do that, then we will be able to face the dangers of this world unafraid, knowing that He who created and rules this world is our protector. *They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.*

C. Therefore, we must be careful never to make an alliance with or place our trust in the power of this world

1. Isaiah 31:1-3 - *Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD! And yet he is wise and brings disaster; he does not call back his words, but will arise against the house of the evildoers and against the helpers of those who work iniquity. The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together.*
2. God doesn't just call us to see that placing our hope in the powers of this world is fruitless, He pronounces a woe over it
3. God says that those who hope in the power of this world are NOT trusting in Him, they have placed their faith in something else and will find themselves destroyed by Him when He casts down the powers of this world

D. Instead, we must wait for our salvation and our victory to come from God

1. Isaiah 31:4-5 - For thus the LORD said to me, "As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called out against him he is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the LORD of hosts will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill. Like birds hovering, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it; he will spare and rescue it."
2. Psalm 20:1-6 - May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you! May he send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion! May he remember all your offerings and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices! Selah May he grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans! May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions! Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand.
3. Psalm 91 -
 - 1 *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.*
 - 2 *I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."*
 - 3 *For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.*
 - 4 *He will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.*
 - 5 *You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.*
 - 7 *A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.*
 - 8 *You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.*
 - 9 *Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place---
the Most High, who is my refuge---*
 - 10 *no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.*
 - 11 *For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.*
 - 12 *On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.*
 - 13 *You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.*
 - 14 *"Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.*
 - 15 *When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.*
 - 16 *With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation."*