



EZEKIEL: *Death and Resurrection*

A Bible Study with John Oswalt

EZEKIEL 29–30

Background: The four chapters focused on Egypt (29–32) are composed of seven prophecies (29:1–16; 29:17–21; 30:1–19; 30:20–26; 31:1–18; 32:1–16; 32:17–32)

- All the prophecies except 30:1–18 are dated. But they are not given to us in chronological order. There may be some sense of progress in the content: for instance, in chapter 29 Pharaoh is fallen, and in 32 he goes down to Sheol, the underworld. We will explore this possibility as we proceed through the chapters.
 - Texts for the end of Nebuchadnezzar's reign are missing, but it seems likely that he did capture Egypt finally in 568 BC (as per Ezekiel 29:17–20).
 - From 663 – 525 BC Egypt was ruled by a family from Sais in the Nile delta. Initially, these kings tried to prop up the waning Assyrian empire (probably as a cushion between Egypt and the rising Babylonians). After the last attempt failed and Babylon was supreme, the Egyptian foreign policy was dominated by the concern to keep Babylon at bay. Judah always figured largely in those concerns.
 - In 588 BC the Pharaoh Hophra, fulfilling a pledge to Zedekiah, brought an army to try to break the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. It was unsuccessful and the Babylonians drove him back to Egypt. (See Jeremiah 37:5–8)
 - In 525 BC the Persian Cambyses captured Egypt, and it was never a major player on the world stage again.
1. What is the imagery in 29:3–5? Why does the prophet describe Pharaoh in these ways?
 2. What is the Pharaoh's error in verse 9? Who made the Nile? Why is that a stunning thought?
 3. How does the Biblical doctrine of creation relate to verses 10–12?
 4. Look at verses 13–16 in the light of the background above.

5. 29:17–21 raises a number of issues: 1) it appears that Ezekiel's earlier prophecy about Tyre's fall to Nebuchadnezzar had not come true; what about that? 2) why is Yahweh required to give Nebuchadnezzar a consolation prize? What truths should we draw from this material

6. As Judah endured the siege between January 588 and July 586 they constantly looked to Egypt for help. But Egypt will offer no hope. Instead, we have a lament for fallen Egypt. Between verses 13 and 18 many of the Egyptian cities are specifically named. Why is this, do you think?

7. As noted above in Background, Pharaoh Hophra's sally would have given the Judeans hope. 30:20–26 is Yahweh's response. In Egyptian iconography, the Pharaoh is often depicted with his arm raised over his head, about to bash down some poor, lowly desert-dweller. What was Pharaoh's error in trying to break the siege of Jerusalem? Look at the repeated refrain in Isaiah 9:8 – 10:4.