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EZEKIEL 29: 1 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

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This and the three following chapters foretell the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, which he accomplished in the twenty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity. The same event is foretold by Jeremiah, Jer 46:13, etc. The prophecy opens with God's charging the king of Egypt (Pharaoh-hophra) with the same extravagant pride and profanity which were in the preceding chapter laid to the charge of the prince of Tyre. He appears, like him, to have affected Divine honors; and boasted so much of the strength of his kingdom, that, as an ancient historian (Herodotus) tells us, he impiously declared that God himself could not dispossess him. Wherefore the prophet, with great majesty, addresses him under the image of one of those crocodiles or monsters which inhabited that river, of whose riches and revenue he vaunted; and assures him that, with as much ease as a fisherman drags the fish he has hooked, God would drag him and his people into captivity, and that their carcasses should fall a prey to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of heaven, Eze 29:1-7. The figure is then dropped; and God is introduced denouncing, in plain terms, the most awful judgments against him and his nation, and declaring that the Egyptians should be subjected to the Babylonians till the fall of the Chaldean empire, Eze 29:8-12. The prophet then foretells that Egypt, which was about to be devastated by the Babylonians, and many of the people carried into captivity, should again become a kingdom; but that it should never regain its ancient political importance; for, in the lapse of time, it should be even the basest of the kingdoms, a circumstance in the prophecy most literally fulfilled, especially under the Christian dispensation, in its government by the Mameluke slaves, Eze 29:13-16. The prophecy, beginning at the seventeenth verse, is connected with the foregoing, as it relates to the same subject, though delivered about seventeen years later. Nebuchadnezzar and his army, after the long siege of Tyre, which made every head bald by constantly wearing their helmets, and wore the skin off every shoulder by carrying burdens to raise the fortifications, were disappointed of the spoil which they expected, by the retiring of the inhabitants to Carthage. God, therefore, promises him Egypt for his reward, Eze 29:17-20. The chapter concludes with a prediction of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, Eze 29:21.

#### Verse 1

In the tenth year - Of Zedekiah; and tenth of the captivity of Jeconiah.

The tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month - Answering to Monday, the first of February, A.M. 3415.

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EZEKIEL 29: 2 "Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt.

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#### Verse 2

Set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt - This was Pharaoh-hophra or Pharaoh-apries, whom we have so frequently met with in the prophecies of Jeremiah, and much of whose history has been given in the notes.

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EZEKIEL 29: 3 Speak and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers, that has said, 'My river is my own, and I have made it for myself.'

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Verse 3

The great dragon - התנינים hattannim should here be translated crocodile, as that is a real animal, and numerous in the Nile; whereas the dragon is wholly fabulous. The original signifies any large animal.

The midst of his rivers - This refers to the several branches of the Nile, by which this river empties itself into the Mediterranean. The ancients termed them septem ostia Nili, "the seven mouths of the Nile." The crocodile was the emblem of Egypt.

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EZEKIEL 29: 4 I will put hooks in your jaws, and I will make the fish of your rivers stick to your scales; and I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, with all the fish of your rivers which stick to your scales.

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Verse 4

I will put hooks in thy jaws - Amasis, one of this king's generals, being proclaimed king by an insurrection of the people, dethroned Apries, and seized upon the kingdom; and Apries was obliged to flee to Upper Egypt for safety.

I will cause the fish - to stick unto thy scales - Most fish are sorely troubled with a species of insect which bury their heads in their flesh, under their scales, and suck out the vital juices. The allusion seems to be to this. Pharaoh was the crocodile; the fish, the common people; and the sticking to his scales, the insurrection by which he was wasted and despoiled of his kingdom.

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EZEKIEL 29: 5 I'll cast you out into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers. You'll fall on the open field. You won't be brought together, nor gathered. I have given you for food to the animals of the earth and to the birds of the sky.

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Verse 5

I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness - Referring to his being obliged to take refuge in Upper Egypt. But he was afterwards taken prisoner, and strangled by Amasis. Herod. lib. 2 s. 169.

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EZEKIEL 29: 6 All the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am the LORD, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.

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## Verse 6

They have been a staff of reed - An inefficient and faithless ally. The Israelites expected assistance from them when Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem; and they made a feint to help them, but retired when Nebuchadnezzar went against them. Thus were the Jews deceived and ultimately ruined, see Eze 29:7.

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EZEKIEL 29: 7 When they took hold of you by your hand, you broke, and tore all their shoulders; and when they leaned on you, you broke, and paralysed all of their thighs."

EZEKIEL 29: 8 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will bring a sword on you, and will cut off man and animal from you.

EZEKIEL 29: 9 The land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste; and they shall know that I am the LORD. Because he has said, 'The river is mine, and I have made it;'

EZEKIEL 29: 10 therefore, behold, I am against you, and against your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from the tower of Seveh even to the border of Ethiopia.

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## Verse 10

From the tower of Syene - ממגדל מונה mimmigdol seveneh, "from Migdol to Syene." Syene, now called Essuan, was the last city in Egypt, going towards Ethiopia. It was famous for a well into which the rays of the sun fell perpendicularly at midday.

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EZEKIEL 29: 11 No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of animal shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years.

EZEKIEL 29: 12 I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of the countries that are desolate; and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be a desolation forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries."

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## Verse 12

Shall be desolate forty years - The country from Migdol or Magdolan, which was on the isthmus between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, was so completely ruined, that it might well be called desert; and it is probable that this desolation continued during the whole of the reign of Amasis, which was just forty years. See Herod. lib. 3 c. 10; and see Calmet.

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EZEKIEL 29: 13 For thus says the Lord GOD: "At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the peoples where they were scattered;

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## Verse 13

Will I gather the Egyptians - It is probable that Cyrus gave permission to the Egyptians brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, to return to their own country. And if we reckon from the commencement of the war against Pharaoh-hophra by Nebuchadnezzar, to the third or fourth year of Cyrus, the term will be about forty years.

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EZEKIEL 29: 14 and I will bring back the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their birth; and they shall be there a base kingdom.

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#### Verse 14

Into the land of Pathros - Supposed to mean the Delta, a country included between the branches of the Nile, called Δ delta, from its being in the form of the Greek letter of that name. It may mean the Pathrusim, in Upper Egypt, near to the Thebaid. This is most likely.

Shall be there a base kingdom - That is, it shall continue to be tributary. It is upwards of two thousand years since this prophecy was delivered, and it has been uninterruptedly fulfilling to the present hour.

1. Egypt became tributary to the Babylonians under Amasis.
2. After the ruin of the Babylonish empire, it became subject to the Persians.
3. After the Persians, it came into the hands of the Macedonians.
4. After the Macedonians it fell into the hands of the Romans.
5. After the division of the Roman empire it was subdued by the Saracens.
6. About a.d. 1250, it came into the hands of the Mameluke slaves.
7. Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks, conquered the Mamelukes, a.d. 1517, and annexed Egypt to the Ottoman empire, of which it still continues to be a province, governed by a pacha and twenty-four beys, who are always advanced from servitude to the administration of public affairs. So true is it that Egypt, once so glorious, is the basest of kingdoms. See Newton on the prophecies.

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EZEKIEL 29: 15 It shall be the base of the kingdoms; neither shall it any more lift itself up above the nations: and I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.

EZEKIEL 29: 16 It shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel, bringing iniquity to memory, when they turn to look after them: and they shall know that I am the Lord GOD."'"

EZEKIEL 29: 17 It came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

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#### Verse 17

The seven and twentieth year - That is, of the captivity of Jeconiah, fifteen years after the taking of Jerusalem; about April 20, 3432. The preceding prophecy was delivered one year before the taking of Jerusalem; this, sixteen years after; and it is supposed to be the last which this prophet wrote.

EZEKIEL 29: 18 Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyre: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was worn; yet had he no wages, nor his army, from Tyre, for the service that he had served against it.

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Verse 18

Caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus - He was thirteen years employed in the siege. See Joseph. Antiq. lib. 10 c. 11. In this siege his soldiers endured great hardships. Being continually on duty, their heads became bald by wearing their helmets; and their shoulders bruised and peeled by carrying baskets of earth to the fortifications, and wood, etc., to build towers, etc.

Yet had he no wages, nor his army - The Tyrians, finding it at last impossible to defend their city, put all their wealth aboard their vessels, sailed out of the port, and escaped for Carthage; and thus Nebuchadnezzar lost all the spoil of one of the richest cities in the world.

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EZEKIEL 29: 19 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off her multitude, and take her plunder, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

EZEKIEL 29: 20 I have given him the land of Egypt as his recompense for which he served, because they worked for me, says the Lord GOD.

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Verse 20

I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor - Because he fulfilled the designs of God against Tyre, God promises to reward him with the spoil of Egypt.

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EZEKIEL 29: 21 In that day will I cause a horn to sprout for the house of Israel, and I will give you the opening of the mouth in their midst; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

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Verse 21

Will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud - This may refer generally to the restoration; but particularly to Zerubbabel, who became one of the leaders of the people from Babylon. Or it may respect Daniel, or Mordecai, or Jeconiah, who, about this time, was brought out of prison by Evil-merodach, and afterwards kindly treated.