
EZEKIEL 32: 1 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

The prophet goes on to predict the fall of the king of Egypt, under the figure of an animal of prey, such as a lion or crocodile, caught, slain, and his carcass left a prey to the fowls and wild beasts, Eze 32:1-6. The figure is then changed; and the greatness of his fall (described by the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars) strikes terror into all the surrounding nations, Eze 32:7-10. The prophet adds, that the overthrow of the then reigning Egyptian dynasty was to be effected by the instrumentality of the king of Babylon, who should leave Egypt so desolate, that its waters, (alluding to the metaphor used in the second verse), should run as pure and smooth as oil, without the foot of man or the hoof of a beast to disturb them, Eze 32:11-16. A beautiful, nervous, and concise description of a land ruined and left utterly desolate. In the remaining part of the chapter the same event is portrayed by one of the boldest figures ever attempted in any composition, and which at the same time is executed with astonishing perspicuity and force. God is introduced ordering a place in the lower regions for the king of Egypt and his host, Eze 32:17, Eze 32:18. The prophet delivers his message, pronounces their fate, and commands those who buried the slain to drag him and his multitudes to the subterraneous mansions, Eze 32:19, Eze 32:20. At the tumult and commotion which this mighty work occasions, the infernal shades are represented as roused from their couches to learn the cause. They see and congratulate the king of Egypt, on his arrival among them, Eze 32:21. Pharaoh being now introduced into this immense subterraneous cavern, (see the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, where a similar imagery is employed), the prophet leads him all around the sides of the pit; shows him the gloomy mansions of former tyrants, tells their names as he goes along; beautifully contrasts their former pomp and destructive ambition, when they were a terror to the surrounding states, with their present most abject and helpless condition; declares that all these oppressors of mankind have not only been cut off out of the land of the living, but have gone down into the grave uncircumcised, that is, they have died in their sins, and therefore shall have no resurrection to eternal life; and concludes with showing Pharaoh the place destined for him in the midst of the uncircumcised, and of them that have been slain by the sword, Eze 32:22-32. This prophetic ode may be considered as a finished model in that species of writing which is appropriated to the exciting of terror. The imagery throughout is sublime and terrible; and no reader of sensibility and taste can accompany the prophet in this funeral procession, and visit the mansions of Hades, without being impressed with a degree of awe nearly approaching to horror.

Verse 1

In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month - On Wednesday, March 22, the twelfth year of the captivity of Jeconiah, A.M. 3417.

Instead of the twelfth year, five of Kennicott's MSS., and eight of De Rossi's, read בעשתי עשרה in the eleventh year. This reading is supported by the Syriac; and is confirmed by an excellent MS. of my own, about four hundred years old.

EZEKIEL 32: 2 Son of man, take up a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt, and tell him, You were likened to a young lion of the nations: yet you are as a monster in the seas; and you broke out with your rivers, and troubled the waters with your feet, and fouled their rivers.

Verse 2

Thou art like a young lion - and thou art as a whale in the seas - Thou mayest be likened to two of the fiercest animals in the creation; to a lion, the fiercest on the land; to a crocodile, תנינים tannim, (see Eze 29:3), the fiercest in the waters. It may, however, point out the hippopotamus, as there seems to be a reference to his mode of feeding. He walks deliberately into the water over head, and pursues his way in the same manner; still keeping on his feet, and feeding on the plants, etc., that grow at the bottom. Thus he fouls the water with his feet.

EZEKIEL 32: 3 Thus says the Lord GOD: I will spread out my net on you with a company of many peoples; and they shall bring you up in my net.

EZEKIEL 32: 4 I will leave you on the land, I will cast you out on the open field, and will cause all the birds of the sky to settle on you, and I will satisfy the animals of the whole earth with you.

EZEKIEL 32: 5 I will lay your flesh on the mountains, and fill the valleys with your height.

Verse 5

And fill the valleys with thy height - Some translate, with the worms, which should proceed from the putrefaction of his flesh.

EZEKIEL 32: 6 I will also water with your blood the land in which you swim, even to the mountains; and the watercourses shall be full of you.

Verse 6

The land wherein thou swimmest - Egypt; so called, because intersected with canals, and overflowed annually by the Nile.

EZEKIEL 32: 7 When I shall extinguish you, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light.

Verse 7

I will cover the heaven - Destroy the empire.

Make the stars thereof dark - Overwhelm all the dependent states.

I will cover the sun - The king himself.

And the moon shall not give her light - The queen may be meant, or some state less than the kingdom.

EZEKIEL 32: 8 All the bright lights of the sky will I make dark over you, and set darkness on your land, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 8

And set darkness upon thy land - As I did when a former king refused to let my people go to the wilderness to worship me. I will involve thee, and thy house, and thy people, and the whole land, in desolation and wo.

EZEKIEL 32: 9 I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I shall bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries which you have not known.

Verse 9

I will also vex the hearts - Even the remote nations, who had no connection with thee, shall be amazed at the judgments which have fallen upon thee.

EZEKIEL 32: 10 Yes, I will make many peoples amazed at you, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for you, when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of your fall.

EZEKIEL 32: 11 For thus says the Lord GOD: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come on you.

EZEKIEL 32: 12 By the swords of the mighty will I cause your multitude to fall; the terrible of the nations are they all: and they shall bring to nothing the pride of Egypt, and all its multitude shall be destroyed.

EZEKIEL 32: 13 I will destroy also all its animals from beside many waters; neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of animals trouble them.

EZEKIEL 32: 14 Then will I make their waters clear, and cause their rivers to run like oil, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 14

Cause their rivers to run like oil - Bring the whole state into quietness, there being no longer a political hippopotamus to foul the waters - to disturb the peace of the country.

EZEKIEL 32: 15 When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate and waste, a land destitute of that of which it was full, when I shall strike all those who dwell therein, then shall they know that I am the LORD.

Verse 15

Shall be destitute of that whereof it was full - Of corn, and all other necessaries of life.

EZEKIEL 32: 16 This is the lamentation with which they shall lament; the daughters of the nations shall lament therewith; over Egypt, and over all her multitude, shall they lament therewith, says the Lord GOD.

EZEKIEL 32: 17 Also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, the LORD's word came to me, saying,

Verse 17

In the twelfth year - Two of Kennicott's MSS., one of De Rossi's, and one of my own, (that mentioned Eze 32:1), have, in the Eleventh year; and so has the Syriac, as before. This prophecy concerns the people of Egypt.

EZEKIEL 32: 18 Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, to the lower parts of the earth, with those who go down into the pit.

Verse 18

Cast them down - Show them that they shall be cast down. Proclaim to them a casting down prophecy.

EZEKIEL 32: 19 Whom do you pass in beauty? Go down, and be laid with the uncircumcised.

Verse 19

Whom dost thou pass in beauty? - How little does it signify, whether a mummy be well embalmed, wrapped round with rich stuff, and beautifully painted on the outside, or not. Go down into the tombs, examine the niches, and see whether one dead carcass be preferable to another.

EZEKIEL 32: 20 They shall fall in the midst of those who are slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword; draw her away and all her multitudes.

EZEKIEL 32: 21 The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of Sheol with those who help him: they are gone down, they lie still, even the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

Verse 21

Out of the midst of hell - שְׁאוֹל sheol, the catacombs, the place of burial. There is something here similar to Isa 14:9, where the descent of the king of Babylon to the state of the dead is described.

EZEKIEL 32: 22 Asshur is there and all her company; her graves are all around her; all of them slain, fallen by the sword;

Verse 22

Asshur is there - The mightiest conquerors of the earth have gone down to the grave before thee; there they and their soldiers lie together, all slain by the sword.

EZEKIEL 32: 23 whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit, and her company is around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who caused terror in the land of the living.

Verse 23

Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit - Alluding to the niches in the sides of the subterranean caves or burying-places, where the bodies are laid. These are numerous in Egypt.

EZEKIEL 32: 24 There is Elam and all her multitude around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who are gone down uncircumcised into the lower parts of the earth, who caused their terror in the land of the living, and have borne their shame with those who go down to the pit.

Verse 24

There is Elam - The Elamites, not far from the Assyrians; others think that Persia is meant. It was invaded by the joint forces of Cyaxares and Nebuchadnezzar.

EZEKIEL 32: 25 They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude; her graves are around her; all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for their terror was caused in the land of the living, and they have borne their shame with those who go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of those who are slain.

EZEKIEL 32: 26 There is Meshech, Tubal, and all their multitude; their graves are around them; all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they caused their terror in the land of the living.

Verse 26

There is Meshech, Tubal - See on Eze 27:13 (note).

EZEKIEL 32: 27 They shall not lie with the mighty who are fallen of the uncircumcised, who have gone down to Sheol with their weapons of war, and have laid their swords under their heads, and their iniquities are on their bones; for they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

Verse 27

Gone down to hell with their weapons of war - Are buried in their armor and with their weapons lying by their sides. It was a very ancient practice, in different nations, to bury a warrior's weapons in the same grave with himself.

EZEKIEL 32: 28 But you shall be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shall lie with those who are slain by the sword.

EZEKIEL 32: 29 There is Edom, her kings and all her princes, who in their might are laid with those who are slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with those who go down to the pit.

Verse 29

There is Edom - All the glory and pomp of the Idumean kings, who also helped to oppress the Israelites, are gone down into the grave. Their kings, princes, and all their mighty men lie mingled with the uncircumcised, not distinguished from the common dead: "Where they an equal honor share,

Who buried or unburied are.

Where Agamemnon knows no more

Than Irus, he condemned before.

Where fair Achilles and Thersites lie,

Equally naked, poor, and dry."

EZEKIEL 32: 30 There are the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who are gone down with the slain; in the terror which they caused by their might they are put to shame; and they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.

Verse 30

There be the princes of the north - The kings of Media and Assyria, and all the Zidonians - the kings of Tyre, Sodom, and Damascus. See Calmet.

EZEKIEL 32: 31 Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 31

Pharaoh shall see them - Pharaoh also, who said he was a god, shall be found among the vulgar dead.

And shalt be comforted - Shall console himself, on finding that all other proud boasters are in the same circumstances with himself. Here is a reference to a consciousness after death.

EZEKIEL 32: 32 For I have put his terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, says the Lord GOD.

Verse 32

I have caused my terror in the land of the living - I have spread dismay through Judea, the land of the living God, where the living oracles were delivered, and where the upright live by faith. When Pharaoh-necho came against Josiah, defeated, and slew him at Megiddo, fear and terror were spread through all the land of Judea; and the allusion here is probably to that circumstance. But even he is now laid with the uncircumcised, and is no more to be distinguished from the common dead.

Much of the phraseology of this chapter may be illustrated by comparing it with Isaiah 14 (note), where see the notes, which the intelligent reader will do well to consult.