Ezekiel 30

The Day of the LORD on Egypt: Pharaoh's Broken Arm

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."

Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The day of the LORD came to Egypt — its idols, its cities, its allies and its king. God broke Pharaoh's arm and put His own sword in Babylon's hand. Whoever is strong, God made strong; whoever is broken, no one can bind up but Him.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

EZEKIEL 30 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions | Green Command / instruction | ⇄ Sky Key repeated word

⚠ Rose Sin / warning | ★ Violet Promise / blessing | ◷ Amber Time / place / contrast

1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, prophesy and say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; Howl ye, Woe worth the day!

3 For the day is near, even ◷ the day of the LORD is near, ◷ a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

4 And ⚠ the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down.

5 Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the ⇄ sword.

6 Thus saith the LORD; ⚠ They also that uphold Egypt shall fall; and ⚠ the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the ⇄ sword, saith the Lord GOD.

7 And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.

8 And ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have set a fire in Egypt, and ⚠ when all her helpers shall be destroyed.

9 In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships ⚠ to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for, lo, it cometh.

10 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease ▲ by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

11 He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their ⇄ swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain.

12 And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: ▲ I the LORD have spoken it.

13 ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▲ I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.

14 And I will make Pathros desolate, and will set fire in Zoan, and ▲ will execute judgments in No.

15 And ▲ I will pour my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt; and I will cut off the multitude of No.

16 And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily.

17 The young men of Aven and of Pibeseth shall fall by the ⇄ sword: and these cities shall go into captivity.

18 At Tehaphnehes also ◷ the day shall be darkened , when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her: as for her, a cloud shall cover her, and her daughters shall go into captivity.

19 Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD.

20 And it came to pass ◷ in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

21 Son of man, ▲ I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, ⚠ it shall not be bound up to be healed , to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the ⇄ sword.

22 Therefore ▲ thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken; and I will cause the ⇄ sword to fall out of his hand.

23 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

24 And ▲ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and put my ⇄ sword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man.

25 But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall put my ⇄ sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt.

26 And ⚠ I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD.

Marked in the text

- **v2** ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD *(every occurrence)*
- **v2** Howl ye, Woe worth the day
- **v3** the day of the LORD is near
- **v3** a cloudy day
- **v4** ⚠ the sword shall come upon Egypt
- **v4** ⇄ sword *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** ⚠ They also that uphold Egypt shall fall
- **v6** ⚠ the pride of her power shall come down
- **v8** ⇄ they shall know that I am the LORD *(every occurrence)*
- **v8** ⚠ when all her helpers shall be destroyed
- **v9** ⚠ to make the careless Ethiopians afraid
- **v10** ▲ by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon
- **v12** ▲ I the LORD have spoken it
- **v13** ▲ I will also destroy the idols
- **v14** ▲ will execute judgments in No
- **v15** ▲ I will pour my fury upon Sin
- **v18** the day shall be darkened
- **v20** in the eleventh year, in the first month
- **v21** ▲ I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt
- **v21** ⚠ it shall not be bound up to be healed
- **v22** ▲ I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand
- **v24** ▲ I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon
- **v24** ▲ put my sword in his hand
- **v26** ⚠ I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 30:2 (KJV)

2 Son of man, prophesy and say, ▲ Thus saith the Lord GOD; ▮▮ Howl ye, Woe worth the day!

Setting

The first oracle (vv1–19) has no date of its own and continues the series against Egypt that began in 29:1 (January 587 BC). The second (vv20–26) is dated "in the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh of the month" (v20) — spring 587 BC, a few months before Jerusalem's wall was breached (Jer 39:2). Pharaoh Hophra had marched to help Zedekiah, and the Babylonians briefly lifted the siege to deal with him (Jer 37:5–11). Then Egypt went home. Ezekiel says God has already broken Pharaoh's arm.

Structure

- vv1–5 — **the day of the LORD on Egypt:** "Wail, 'Alas for the day!'" (v2). "For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, A time of doom for the nations" (v3). "A sword will come upon Egypt" (v4), and her allies — Ethiopia, Put, Lud and others — fall with her (v5).
- vv6–9 — **her supporters fall:** "those who support Egypt will fall And the pride of her power will come down" (v6). "They will know that I am the LORD, when I set a fire in Egypt And all her helpers are broken" (v8). Messengers go out in ships "to frighten secure Ethiopia" (v9).
- vv10–12 — **Nebuchadnezzar as God's instrument:** "I will also make the hordes of Egypt cease By the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon" (v10) — "The most ruthless of the nations" (v11). "I will make the Nile canals dry" (v12). "I the LORD have spoken" (v12).
- vv13–19 — **city by city:** "I will also destroy the idols And make the images cease from Memphis" (v13). "I will put fear in the land of Egypt" (v13). Pathros, Zoan, Thebes (v14), Sin, "The stronghold of Egypt" (v15), On and Pi-beseth (v17), and Tehaphnehes, where "the day will be dark When I break there the yoke bars of Egypt" (v18). "Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt, And they will know that I am the LORD" (v19).
- vv20–26 — **Pharaoh's broken arms:** "I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, behold, it has not been bound up for healing" (v21). God "will break his arms, both the strong and the broken; and I will make the sword fall from his hand" (v22). "I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand" (v24), while Pharaoh groans like "a wounded man" (v24). "When I scatter the Egyptians among the nations … then they will know that I am the LORD" (v26).

Repeated words

Thus says the Lord GOD (vv2, 10, 13, 22); know that I am the LORD (vv8, 19, 25, 26); sword (vv4, 5, 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25); day (vv2, 3, 9, 18); fire (vv8, 14, 16); arm / arms (vv21, 22, 24, 25); Pharaoh (vv21, 22, 24, 25); king of Babylon (vv10, 24, 25); desolate (vv7, 12, 14); execute judgments (vv14, 19); scatter (vv23, 26).

Contrasts

"the pride of her power" (v6) ⟷ "the pride of her power will cease" (v18). Egypt's helpers (v8) ⟷ helpers broken (v8). "Secure Ethiopia" (v9) ⟷ frightened Ethiopia (v9). The arms of Pharaoh broken (vv21–22) ⟷ the arms of the king of Babylon strengthened (vv24–25). Pharaoh's sword falls from his hand (v22) ⟷ God puts "My sword" in Babylon's hand (v24). A bright day for Israel's hope ⟷ "a day of clouds" (v3) and darkness at Tehaphnehes (v18).

Chapter theme (my words)

The day of the LORD came to Egypt — its idols, its cities, its allies and its king. God broke Pharaoh's arm and put His own sword in Babylon's hand. Whoever is strong, God made strong; whoever is broken, no one can bind up but Him.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 30:21 (KJV)

21 Son of man, ▲ I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, lo, ⚠ it shall not be bound up to be healed , to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the ⇄ sword.

"The day of the LORD is near" (vv1–5)

In the prophets, "the day of the LORD" is any time God steps into history to judge — and each one points ahead to the final Day (Joel 2:1–2; Zeph 1:14–16; 1 Thess 5:2). Here it is a near, historical judgment on Egypt. Guzik doesn't call v3 an end-times prophecy; he treats it as Egypt's judgment and quotes Wright that such past judgments become "patterns of the final Day." Wiersbe, in Guzik, notes the irony: Israel once left Egypt guided by God's bright cloud, but now Egypt would sit under a dark one. To prophesy this against Egypt — ancient, rich, proud — took courage. Vawter and Hoppe, in Guzik: "It was either outrageous delusion or great faith that led the prophet to utter this oracle of judgment against Egypt."

Her helpers fall (vv5–9)

Egypt relied on allies and hired soldiers from Cush (Ethiopia), Put (Libya), Lud and others. Feinberg, in Guzik, suggests some of the peoples listed in v5 were probably foreign mercenaries in Egypt's army. The point: if Egypt was Judah's reed staff (29:6–7), Egypt's own supporters were reeds too. Clarke, in Guzik, pictures Nebuchadnezzar's ships going up the Nile and striking terror into "secure Ethiopia" — people who thought they were too far away to be touched.

Nebuchadnezzar, God's sword (vv10–12)

God names the instrument: Nebuchadnezzar. Taylor, in Guzik, argues the foreign armies are God's agents, because His word sets the events in motion. "I the LORD have spoken" (v12) is the guarantee.

Nebuchadnezzar did invade Egypt around 568 BC. Clarke, in Guzik, explains that the "Nile canals" were the irrigation channels drawn off the river — dry them up and Egypt dies.

City by city (vv13–19)

Ezekiel walks the map of Egypt. The standard identifications: Memphis (Noph) — the old capital; Pathros — Upper (southern) Egypt; Zoan — Tanis in the Delta; Thebes (No) — the great southern religious center; Sin — Pelusium, the border fortress, "the stronghold of Egypt"; On (Aven) — Heliopolis, city of the sun god; Pi-beseth — Bubastis; Tehaphnehes — Tahpanhes, the border city where Jeremiah was later taken by the Jews who fled to Egypt (Jer 43:7–9). God's judgment falls first on the idols (v13) — the gods that were supposed to protect them. McGee, in Guzik, describes Memphis's ruins and says God "did exactly what He said He was going to do." "There will no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt" (v13) is borne out in history: from the Persian conquest (525 BC) on, Egypt was ruled for centuries by foreign powers.

Pharaoh's broken arm (vv20–22)

The flexed arm was a well-known Egyptian symbol of royal power, and Alexander, in Guzik, notes that Hophra took the title "possessed of a muscular arm." God says: I have already broken it — likely Hophra's failed attempt to relieve Jerusalem (Jer 37:5–11) — and no one will splint it (v21). Morgan, in Guzik: "Many were still looking to Egypt in hope of help from her." Guzik: "God wanted Jerusalem and Judah to know that Egypt had no power, no strength to help her." Then God breaks "both the strong and the broken" (v22). Hophra's end came about 570 BC: Taylor, in Guzik, says he was killed in a civil war after a disastrous Libyan campaign set off a revolt under Ahmose — just as Jeremiah had said, God handed him over to his enemies (Jer 44:30).

Two kings, one God (vv23–26)

The same God weakens one king and strengthens another. Babylon doesn't hold its own sword — God calls it "My sword" (vv24–25). Morgan, in Guzik: both monarchs were "completely in His power." Pharaoh's groaning "implies that Pharaoh himself will be killed" (Block, in Guzik). And all of it has one goal, repeated four times: "they will know that I am the LORD" (vv8, 19, 25, 26).

Word study (Hebrew)

- **wail — *yalal* (H3213):** to howl, lament loudly.
- **alas — *hahh* (H1929):** ah! — a cry of grief.
- **day — *yom* (H3117):** day, time.
- **near — *qarob* (H7138):** near, at hand.
- **clouds — *anan* (H6051):** cloud, cloud mass.
- **helpers — *azar* (H5826):** to help, support.
- **hordes — *hamon* (H1995):** multitude, crowd, wealth.
- **idols — *gillulim* (H1544):** idols — literally "dung things."
- **images — *elil* (H457):** worthless things, idols.
- **wrath — *chemah* (H2534):** heat, fury.
- **yoke bars — *motah* (H4133):** a pole, yoke.
- **arm — *zeroa* (H2220):** arm, strength, power.

- **strengthen — *chazaq* (H2388):** to make strong, harden.
- **groan — *naaq* (H5008):** to groan.
- **scatter — *puts* (H6327):** to disperse.

Cross-references

Exod 6:6; Exod 15:6; Ps 20:7–8; Ps 89:10; Isa 19:1–4; Isa 31:1–3; Isa 51:9; Jer 37:5–11; Jer 43:7–13; Jer 44:30; Jer 46:13–26; Joel 2:1–2; Zeph 1:14–16; Luke 1:51–52; Rom 13:1; 1 Thess 5:2–3.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · EZEKIEL 30:3 (KJV)

3 For the day is near, even the day of the LORD is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.

Command to obey — "Wail."

God told Ezekiel to cry "Alas for the day!" (v2). Judgment isn't entertainment. When I read of God's day of reckoning, I'm meant to feel its weight and warn the people I love while it is still "near" and not yet here.

Sin to confess — trusting the strong arm

Judah looked at Pharaoh's muscular arm instead of God's outstretched arm (Exod 6:6). I confess the times I've trusted a client, a contract, a bank balance or a connection more than the Lord. Those arms can be broken in a day (v21).

Warning to heed — "secure Ethiopia."

Ethiopia felt safe because it was far away (v9). Many of the men I disciple once felt the same: "It won't catch up with me." Then the knock came. False security is the most dangerous kind. If I'm living in a sin I think is out of God's reach, the day is near.

Promise to trust — God strengthens arms

God broke Pharaoh's arms and strengthened Babylon's (v24). He decides whose arm is strong. For the man coming out of prison with no résumé and no support, this matters: the God who breaks proud arms also strengthens weak hands (Isa 35:3). Your strength isn't in your own arm — it's in His.

Example to follow — Ezekiel's courage

Ezekiel, an exile with no army, pronounced doom on the oldest empire on earth. He spoke because God had spoken (v12). When I write, teach or counsel, I want that same confidence — not in my voice, but in God's word.

Worship

You are the LORD of the day. You rule over Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar alike. You break the arm of the proud and strengthen whom You will. Every idol falls before You, and in the end, all will know that You are the LORD.

Prayer

Lord GOD, forgive me for trusting strong arms that are not Yours. Break my false security before Your day breaks it for me. Strengthen the weak hands of the men I serve, and let them lean on Your outstretched arm. Give me Ezekiel's courage to speak Your word plainly. Amen.