

CHAPTER 32

Still we are upon the destruction of Pharaoh and Egypt, which is wonderfully enlarged upon, and with a great deal of emphasis. When we read so very much of Egypt's ruin, no less than six several prophecies at divers times delivered concerning it, we are ready to think, Surely there is some special reason for it. And,

I. Perhaps it may look as far back as the book of Genesis, where we find (¹⁵⁴Genesis 15:14) that God determined to judge Egypt for oppressing his people; and, though that was in part fulfilled in the plagues of Egypt and the drowning of Pharaoh, yet, in this destruction, here foretold, those old scores were reckoned for, and that was to have its full accomplishment.

II. Perhaps it may look as far forward as the book of the Revelation, where we find that the great enemy of the gospel-church, that makes war with the Lamb, is spiritually called Egypt, ⁶¹⁸Revelation 11:8. And, if so, the destruction of Egypt and its Pharaoh was a type of the destruction of that proud enemy; and between this prophecy of the ruin of Egypt and the prophecy of the destruction of the antichristian generation there is some analogy. We have two distinct prophecies in this chapter relating to Egypt, both in the same month, one on the 1st day, the other that day fortnight, probably both on the sabbath day. They are both lamentations, not only to signify how lamentable the fall of Egypt should be, but to intimate how much the prophet himself should lament it, from a generous principle of love to mankind. The destruction of Egypt is here represented under two similitudes: —

1. The killing of a lion, or a whale, or some such devouring creature (v. 1-16).
2. The funeral of a great commander or captain-general (v. 17-32). The two prophecies of this chapter are much of the same length.

³⁵¹EZEKIEL 32:1-16

THE FALL OF EGYPT

Here,

I. The prophet is ordered to *take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt*, v. 2. It concerns ministers to be much of a serious spirit, and, in order thereunto, to be frequent in taking up lamentations for the fall and ruin of sinners, as those that have not desired, but dreaded, the woeful day. Note, Ministers that would affect others with the things of God must make it appear that they are themselves affected with the miseries which sinners bring upon themselves by their sins. It becomes us to weep and tremble for those that will not weep and tremble for themselves, to try if thereby we may set them a weeping, set them a trembling.

II. He is ordered to show cause for that lamentation.

1. Pharaoh has been a troubler of the nations, even of his own nation, which he should have procured the repose of: He is *like a young lion of the nations* (v. 2), loud and noisy, hectoring and threatening as a lion when he roars. Great potentates, if they be tyrannical and oppressive, are in God's account no better than beasts of prey. He is *like a whale*, or dragon, like a crocodile (so some) *in the seas*, very turbulent and vexatious, as the *leviathan that makes the deep to boil like a pot*, ^{<3812>}Job 41:31. When Pharaoh engaged in an unnecessary war with the Cyrenians he *came forth with his rivers*, with his armies, *troubled the waters*, disturbed his own kingdom and the neighbouring nations, *fouled the rivers*, and made them muddy. Note, A great deal of disquiet is often given to the world by the restless ambition and implacable resentments of proud princes. Ahab is he that troubles Israel, and not Elijah.

2. He that has troubled others must expect to be himself troubled; for the Lord is righteous, ^{<4025>}Joshua 7:25.

(1.) This is set forth here by a comparison. Is Pharaoh like a *great whale*, which, when it comes up the river, gives great disturbance, a leviathan which Job cannot *draw out with a hook*? (^{<3811>}Job 41:1), yet God has a net for him which is large enough to enclose him and strong enough to secure him (v. 3): *I will spread my net over thee*, even the army of the Chaldeans, *a company of many people*; they shall force him out of his fastnesses, dislodge him out of his possessions, throw him like a great fish upon dry ground, *upon the open field* (v. 4), where being out of his element, he must die of course, and be a prey to the birds and beasts, as was foretold, ^{<4095>}Ezekiel 29:5. What can the strongest fish do to help itself when it is out of the water and lies gasping? *The flesh* of this great whale shall be *laid*

upon the mountains (v. 5) and the *valleys* shall be *filled with his height*. Such numbers of Pharaoh's soldiers shall be slain that the dead bodies shall be scattered upon the hills and there shall be heaps of them piled up in the valleys. Blood shall be shed in such abundance as to swell the rivers in the valleys. Or, Such shall be the bulk, such the height, of this leviathan, that, when he is laid upon the ground, he shall fill a valley. Such vast quantities of blood shall issue from this *leviathan* as shall *water the land of Egypt*, the land wherein *now he swims*, now he sports himself, v. 6. It shall reach *to the mountains*, and the waters of Egypt shall again be *turned into blood* by this means: *The rivers shall be full of thee*. The judgments executed upon Pharaoh of old are expressed by the *breaking of the heads of leviathan in the waters*, ^{<57413>}Psalm 74:13, 14. But now they go further; this old serpent not only has now his head bruised, but is all crushed to pieces.

(2.) It is set forth by a prophecy of the deep impression which the destruction of Egypt should make upon the neighbouring nations; it would put them all into a consternation, as the fall of the Assyrian monarchy did, ^{<57415>}Ezekiel 31:15, 16. When Pharaoh, who had been like a blazing burning torch, is *put out* and *extinguished* it shall make all about him look black, v. 7. The heavens shall be hung with black, the *stars darkened*, the sun eclipsed, and the moon be deprived of her borrowed light. It is from the upper world that this lower receives its light; and therefore (v. 8), when the *bright lights of heaven* are *made dark* above, darkness by consequence is *set upon the land*, upon the earth; so it shall be on the land of Egypt. Here the plague of darkness, which was upon Egypt of old for three days, seems to be alluded to, as, before, the turning of the waters into blood. For, when former judgments are forgotten, it is just that they should be repeated. When their privy-counsellors, and statesmen, and those that have the direction of the public affairs, are deprived of wisdom and made fools, and the things that belong to their peace are hidden from their eyes, then their lights are darkened and the land is in a mist. This is foretold, ^{<57413>}Isaiah 19:13. *The princes of Zoan have become fools*. Now upon the spreading of the report of the fall of Egypt, and the bringing of the news to remote countries, *countries which they had not known* (v. 9), people shall be much affected, and shall feel themselves sensibly touched by it.

[1.] It shall fill them with vexation to see such an ancient, wealthy, potent kingdom thus humbled and brought down, and the pride of worldly glory, which they have such a value for, stained. The *hearts of many people* will

be *vexed* to see the word of the God of Israel fulfilled in the destruction of Egypt, and that all the *gods of Egypt* were not able to relieve it. Note, The destruction of some wicked people is a vexation to others.

[2.] It shall fill them with admiration (v. 10): They shall be *amazed at thee*, shall wonder to see such *great riches* and power *come to nothing*, ~~687~~ Revelation 18:17. Note, Those that admire with complacency the pomp of this world will admire with consternation the ruin of that pomp, which to those that know the vanity of all things here below is no surprise at all.

[3.] It shall fill them with fear: even *their kings* (that think it their prerogative to be secure) shall be *horribly afraid for thee*, concluding their own house to be in danger when their neighbour's is on fire. *When I shall brandish my sword before them they shall tremble every man for his own life*. Note, When the sword of God's justice is drawn against some, to cut them off, it is thereby brandished before others, to give them warning. And those that will not be admonished by it, and made to reform, shall yet be frightened by it, and made to tremble. They shall *tremble at every moment, because of thy fall*. When others are ruined by sin we have reason to quake for fear, as knowing ourselves guilty and obnoxious. *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?*

(3.) It is set forth by a plain and express prediction of the desolation itself that should come upon Egypt.

[1.] The instruments of the desolation appear here very formidable. It is the *sword of the king of Babylon*, that warlike, that victorious prince, that shall *come upon thee* (v. 11), the *swords of the mighty*, even the *terrible of the nations, all of them* (v. 12), an army that there is no standing before. Note, Those that delight in war, and are upon all occasions entering into contention, may expect, some time or other, to be engaged with those that will prove too hard for them. Pharaoh had been forward to quarrel with his neighbour and to come forth *with his rivers*, with his armies, v. 2. But God will now give him enough of it.

[2.] The instances of the desolation appear here very frightful, much the same with what we had before, ~~690~~ Ezekiel 29:10-12; 30:7. *First*, The multitude of Egypt shall be destroyed, not decimated, some picked out to be made examples, but all cut off. Note, The numbers of sinners, though they be a multitude, will neither secure them against God's power nor entitle them to his pity. *Secondly*, The pomp of Egypt shall be spoiled, the

pomp of their court, what they have been proud of. Note, in renouncing the pomps of this world we did ourselves a great kindness, for they are things that are soon spoiled and that cheat their admirers. *Thirdly*, The cattle of Egypt, that used to feed by the rivers, shall be destroyed (v. 13), either cut off by the sword or carried off for a prey. Egypt was famous for horses, which would be an acceptable booty to the Chaldeans. The rivers shall be no more frequented as they have been by man and beast, that came thither to drink. *Fourthly*, The *waters of Egypt*, that used to flow briskly, shall now grow deep, and slow, and heavy, and shall *run like oil* (v. 14), a figurative expression signifying that there should be such universal sadness and heaviness upon the whole nation that even the rivers should go softly and silently like mourners, and quite forget their rapid motion. *Fifthly*, The whole country of Egypt shall be stripped of its wealth; it shall be *destitute of what whereof it was full* (v. 15), corn, and cattle, and all the pleasant fruits of the earth; when those are *smitten that dwell therein* the ground is untilled, and that which is gathered becomes an easy prey to the invader. Note, God can soon empty those of this world's goods that have the greatest fulness of those things and are full of them, that enjoy most and have their hearts set upon those enjoyments. The Egyptians were full of their pleasant and plentiful country, and its rich productions. Every one that talked with them might perceive how much it filled them. But God can soon make their *country destitute of that whereof it is full*; it is therefore our wisdom to be full of treasures in heaven. When the country is made destitute,

1. It shall be an instruction to them: *Then shall they know that I am the Lord*. A sensible conviction of the vanity of the world, and the fading perishing nature of all things in it, will contribute much to our right knowledge of God as our portion and happiness.

2. It shall be a lamentation to all about them: *The daughters of the nations shall lament her* (v. 16), either because, being in alliance with her, they share in her grievances and suffer with her, or, being admirers of her, they at least share in her grief and sympathize with her. They shall lament *for Egypt and all her multitude*; it shall excite their pity to see so great a devastation made. By enlarging the matters of our joy we increase the occasions of our sorrow.

EGYPT'S DESTRUCTION COMPLETED

This prophecy concludes and completes the burden of Egypt, and leaves it and all its multitude in the pit of destruction.

I. We are here invited to attend the funeral of that once flourishing kingdom, to lament its fall, and to take a view of those who attend it to the grave and accompany it in the grave.

1. This dead corpse of a kingdom is here brought to the grave. The prophet is ordered to *cast them down* to the pit (v. 18), to foretel their destruction as one that had authority, as Jeremiah was set over the kingdoms, ~~340~~ Jeremiah 1:10. He must speak in God's name, and as from him who will cast them down. Yet he must foretel it as one that had an affectionate concern for them; he must *wail for the multitude of Egypt*, even when he *casts them down*. When Egypt is slain, let her have an honourable funeral, befitting her quality; let her be buried *with the daughters of the famous nations*, in their burying-places and with the same ceremony. It is but a poor allay to the reproach and terror of death to be buried with those that were famous; yet this is all that is allowed to Egypt. Shall Egypt think to exempt herself from the common fate of proud and imperious nations? No; she must take her lot with them (v. 19): "*Whom dost thou surpass in beauty? Art thou so much fairer than any other nation that thou shouldst expect therefore to be excused? No; others as fair as thou have sunk into the pit; go down therefore, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised. Thou art like them and art likely to lie among them. The multitude of Egypt shall all fall in the midst of those that are slain with the sword, now that there is a general slaughter made among the nations.*" Egypt with the rest must drink of the bloody cup, and therefore she is *delivered to the sword*, to the sword of war (but, in God's hand, the sword of justice), is delivered to be publicly executed. *Draw her and all her multitude*; draw them either as the dead bodies of great men are drawn in honour to the grave, in a hearse, or as malefactors are drawn in disgrace to the place of execution, on a sledge; draw them to the pit, and let them be made a spectacle to the world.

2. This corpse of a kingdom is bid welcome to the grave, and Pharaoh is made free of the congregation of the dead, and admitted into their regions, not without some pomp and ceremony. As the surprising fall of the king of Babylon is thus illustrated, *Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming*, and to introduce thee into those mansions of darkness (²³⁴⁹Isaiah 14:9, etc.), so here (v. 21), *They shall speak to him out of the midst of hell*, as it were congratulating his arrival and calling him to join with them in acknowledging that which neither he nor they would be brought to own when they were in their pomp and pride, that it is in vain to think of contesting with God, and none ever hardened their hearts against him and prospered. They shall say to him, and to those that pretended to help him, Where are you now? What have you brought your attempts to at last? Divers nations are here mentioned as gone down to the grave before Egypt that are ready to give her a scornful reception and upbraid her with coming to them at last. These nations here spoken of were probably such as had been of late years ruined and wasted by the king of Babylon, and their princes cut off; let Egypt know that she has *neighbour's fare*. When she goes to the grave she does but *migrare ad plures* — *migrate to the majority*; there are *innumerable before her*. But it is observable that though Judah and Jerusalem were just about this time, or a little before, utterly ruined and laid waste, yet they are not mentioned here among the nations that welcome Egypt to the pit; for though they suffered the same things that these nations suffered, and by the same hand, yet the kind intentions of their affliction, and its happy issue at last, and the mercy God had yet in reserve for them, altered the property of it; it was not to them a *going down to the pit*, as it was to the heathen; they were not *smitten as others were*, nor *slain according to the slaughter of other nations*, (²³⁷⁷Isaiah 27:7. But let us see who those are that have *gone to the grave* before Egypt, that *lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword*, with whom she must now take up her lodging.

(1.) There lie the Assyrian empire, and all the princes and mighty men of that monarchy (v. 22): *Asshur is there and all her company*, all the countries that were tributaries to and had dependence upon that crown. That mighty potentate who used to lie in state, with his guards and grandees about him, now lies in obscurity, with his *graves about him* and his soldiers in them, unable any longer to do him service or honour; they are *all of them slain, fallen by the sword*. The number of their months was *cut off in the midst*, and, being *bloody and deceitful men*, they were not

suffered to *live out half their days*. Their *braves were set in the sides of the pit*, all in a row, like beds in a common chamber, v. 23. All their company is such as were *slain, fallen by the sword*; a vast congregation there is of such, who had *caused terror in the land of the living*. But as the death of those to whom they were a terror put an end to their fears (in the grave *the prisoners rest together and hear not the voice of the oppressor*, ~~Job~~ Job 3:18), so the death of these mighty men puts an end to their terrors. Who is afraid of *a dead lion*? Note, Death will be a king of terrors to those who, instead of making themselves blessings, make themselves terrors, in their generation.

(2.) There lies the kingdom of Persia, which perhaps within the memory of man at that time had been wasted and brought down: *There is Elam and all her multitude*, the king of Elam and his numerous armies, v. 24, 25. They also had *caused their terror in the land of the living*, had made a fearful noise and bluster among the nations in their day. But Elam has now a grave by herself, and the graves of the common people *round about her, fallen by the sword*; she has *her bed in the midst of the slain* that went down *uncircumcised, unsanctified*, unholy, and not in covenant with God. They have *borne their shame with those that go down to the pit*; they have fallen under the common disgrace and mortification of mankind, that they die and are buried; nay, they die under particular marks of ignominy, which God and man put upon them. Note, Those who cause their terror shall, sooner or later, bear their *shame*, and be made a terror to themselves. The king of Elam is *put in the midst of those that are slain*. All the honour he can now pretend to is to be buried in the chief sepulchre.

(3.) There lies the Scythian power, which, about this time, was busy in the world. *Meshech and Tubal*, those barbarous northern nations, had lately made a descent upon the Medes, and *caused their terror* among them, lived among them upon free quarter for some years, making every thing their own that they could lay their hands on; but at length Cyaxares, king of the Medes, drew them by a wile into his power, but off abundance of them, and obliged them to quit his country, v. 26. There lie Meshech and Tubal, and all their multitude; there is a burying place for them, with their chief commander in the midst of them, *all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword*. These Scythians, dying ingloriously as they lived, are not laid, as the other nations spoken of before, in the bed of honour (v. 27): *They shall not lie with the mighty*, shall not be buried in state, as those are, even by consent of the enemy, that are slain in the field of battle, that *go down*

to their graves with their weapons of war carried before the hearse, or trailed after it, that have particularly *their swords laid under their heads*, as if they could sleep the sweeter in the grave when they laid their heads on such a pillow. These Scythians are not buried with these marks of honour, but *their iniquities shall be upon their sons*; they shall, for their iniquity, be left unburied, though they were the *terror even of the mighty in the land of the living*.

(4.) There lies the kingdom of Edom, which had flourished long, but about this time, at least before the destruction of Egypt, was made quite desolate, as was foretold, ⁴⁵³Ezekiel 25:13. Among the sepulchres of the nations *there is Edom*, v. 29. There lie, not dignified with monuments or inscriptions, but mingled with common dust, *her kings and all her princes*, her wise statesmen (which Edom was famous for), and her brave soldiers. These *with their might are laid by those that were slain by the sword*; their might could not prevent it, nay, their might helped to procure it, for that both encouraged them to engage in war and incensed their neighbours against them, who thought it necessary to curb their growing greatness. A great deal of pains they took to ruin themselves, as many do, who *with their might*, with all their might, are *laid by those that were slain with the sword*. The Edomites retained circumcision, being of the seed of Abraham. But that shall stand them in no stead; they shall *lie with the uncircumcised*.

(5.) There lie the *princes of the north, and all the Zidonians*. These were as well acquainted with maritime affairs as the Egyptians were, who relied much upon that part of their strength, but they have *gone down with the slain* (v. 30), down to the pit. Now they are *ashamed of their might*, ashamed to think how much they boasted of it and trusted to it; and, as the *Edomites with their might*, so these *with their terror*, are laid with those that are *slain by the sword* and are forced to take their lot with them. They *bear their shame with those that go down to the pit*, die in as much disgrace as those that are cut off by the hand of public justice.

(6.) All this is applied to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who have no reason to flatter themselves with hopes of tranquillity when they see how the wisest, and wealthiest, and strongest, of their neighbours have been laid waste (v. 28): “*Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised*; when God is pulling down the unhumiliated and unreformed nations thou must expect to come down with them.”

[1.] It will be some extenuation of the miseries of Egypt to observe that it has been the case of so many great and mighty nations before (v. 31): *Pharaoh shall see them and be comforted*; it will be some ease to his mind that he is not the first king that has been slain in battle — his not the first army that has been routed, his not the first kingdom that has been made desolate. Mr. Greenhill observes here, “The comfort which wicked ones have after death is poor comfort, not real, but imaginary.” They will find little satisfaction in having so many fellow-sufferers; the rich man in hell dreaded it. It is only in point of honour that Pharaoh can *see and be comforted*.

[2.] But nothing will be an exemption from these miseries; for (v. 32) *I have caused my terror in the land of the living*. Great men have caused their terror, have studied how to make every body *fear them*. *Oderint dum metuant* — *Let them hate, so that they do but fear*. But now the great God has *caused his terror in the land of the living*; and therefore he laughs at theirs, because he sees that *his day is coming*, ¹³⁷¹³ Psalm 37:13. In this day of terror Pharaoh *and all his multitude* shall be *laid with those that are slain by the sword*.

II. The view which this prophecy gives us of ruined states may show us something,

1. Of this present world, and the empire of death in it. Come, and see the calamitous state of human life; see what a dying world this is. The strong die, the mighty die, Pharaoh and all his multitude. See what a killing world this is. They are all *slain with the sword*. As if men did not die fast enough of themselves, men are ingenious at finding out ways to destroy one another. It is not only a great pit, but a great cock-pit.

2. Of the other world. Though it is the destruction of nations as such that perhaps is principally intended here, yet here is a plain allusion to the final and everlasting ruin of impenitent sinners, of those that are uncircumcised in heart; they are *slain by the sword* of divine justice; their *iniquity is upon them*, and with it they *bear their shame*. Those, Christ's enemies, that would not have him to reign over them, *shall be brought forth and slain before him*, though they be as pompous, though they be as numerous, as Pharaoh and *all his multitude*.