

Ezekiel Chapter 31

Verses 1-18

In the fifth oracle, Egypt is compared with Assyria, its former ally.

Assyria is said to have been a cedar in Lebanon (verse 3).

However, God cut him off (verse 12), a reference to Assyria's destruction at the hands of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father (in 612 B.C.).

The implication for Egypt was clear: like Assyria, God says, "yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden".

Ezekiel 31:1 "And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third [month], in the first [day] of the month, [that] the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,"

We see this is about two months after the last dated prophecy (in chapter 30).

Verses 2-18

“Whom art thou like ... ?”

Ezekiel filled this chapter with a metaphor/analogy comparing Egypt to a huge tree that dominates a forest to a king/nation that dominates the world (17:22-24; Dan. 4:1-12, 19-27).

He reasoned that just as a strong tree like Assyria (verse 3) fell, so will Egypt.

If the Egyptians tend to be proud and feel invincible, let them remember how powerful Assyria had fallen already.

Ezekiel 31:2 "Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness?"

This prophecy is sent not only to Pharaoh, but to his people as well.

Their pride is going to be dealt with here.

Ezekiel 31:3 "Behold, the Assyrian [was] a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs."

Assyria is spoken of as a cedar of Lebanon.

The cedar is spoken of as a powerful, magnificent tree.

This could be calling Assyria a big powerful empire.

This was a very tall tree.

The Cedar of Lebanon was a beautiful, tall tree.

The trees were as high as 80 feet, and were an example of supreme power and domination, particularly the great cedars which grew in the mountains north of Israel.

The history of the Assyrian empire had been one of greatness.

The Assyrian empire had risen very high, but like all others, will not be able to stand against the judgment of God.

Ezekiel 31:4 "The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field."

For a tree to grow big and strong, it must be fed with water regularly.

This was the case here.

The cedar tree grew close to the river bank.

The other trees, away from the large body of water grew, but not as large as this tree with abundant water.

Ezekiel 31:5 "Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth."

This is speaking of Assyria rising above the little nations around her.

This is all speaking of worldly strength.

Ezekiel 31:6 "All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations."

In the sight of the world, Assyria was a very great nation.

All of the countries around her wanted her protection.

It was God who had allowed Assyria to become a great nation for His purposes.

The tree will dry up and die, if the source of growth is cut off.

God (water), is the source of its growth.

God had made it great.

Assyria was a great nation that many could benefit from.

She must stay humble, and realize her strength comes from God.

Ezekiel 31:7 "Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters."

The deeper the root of the tree goes, the stronger the tree is.

The root will go deep and seek water.

That is what is intended here.

The root feeds the tree, and makes it grow tall and strong.

The soul of man needs nourishment, like this tree.

The water symbolizes the Word of God.

It is the Word of God that makes us strong.

Verses 8-9

“Garden or God ... trees of Eden”:

Since Assyria was in the area of the Garden of Eden, Ezekiel used the ultimate of gardens as a point of relative reference by which to describe tree-like Assyria.

Ezekiel 31:8 "The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty."

Jesus is the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden.

The Tree of Life was in the center of the garden.

The lesser trees were out in the garden.

Adam and Eve could have come to the center of the garden, and eaten of the Tree which brought life eternal.

They were like many church goers today, who just nibble around the edge of Christianity, and never go to the Tree of Life.

Adam and Eve never partook of life eternal.

They preferred worldly gifts, rather than Life, which God gives.

The sad thing is, they partook of the tree which appealed to their eyes.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil appealed to the flesh of man.

Ezekiel 31:9 "I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that [were] in the garden of God, envied him."

The tree, which was so beautiful to the eye, was the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Eve looked, and lusted, and then partook of this beautiful tree, and gave of its fruit to Adam.

They fell, just as this beautiful tree (Assyria) falls.

Beauty to the eye does not bring happiness, or peace.

Generally speaking, this type of beauty causes lust in the man.

Ezekiel 31:10 "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height;"

They felt that they had lifted themselves up by their own achievements.

They had forgotten where their root was.

They forgot their strength came from God.

"His heart is lifted up" speaks of pride.

Ezekiel shifted from the historical illustration of Assyria's pride and fall to the reality of Egypt.

God was using Assyria to teach the nations the folly of earthly power and might.

Ezekiel 31:11 "I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness."

Just as Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden, it is Nebuchadnezzar who attacks Assyria.

It is truly a judgment of God upon them.

They fall to Babylon.

They had been great, but their fall came suddenly.

Ezekiel 31:12 "And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him."

The people of the earth (branches), no more looked to Assyria.

This had been a vast empire that controlled many nations.

Now, they are fallen.

They do not control anyone.

Ezekiel 31:13 "Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches:"

The ruin is so great; there will no longer be an Assyrian empire.

The wild animals hover over the dead bodies.

Verses 14-16

“The pit”:

The scene shifts from earth and the Garden of God to the grave (32:18), as God again refers to the destruction of Assyria and all her allies (“all the trees,” “all that drink water”).

Ezekiel 31:14 "To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit."

Assyria, and all of her allies, are brought down to death.

"Pit":

Is Sheol, or Hades.

Not only have their bodies died, but they have lost their soul to hell as well.

Ezekiel 31:15 "Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning: I covered the deep for him, and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed: and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him."

Lebanon became black from the devastation.

There must have been terrible fires to cause this blackness.

Mourning, in this instance, speaks of that blackness.

It appeared that all the rivers dried up, and the trees withered and died.

Ezekiel 31:16 "I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth."

We see from the fact that they were cast into hell, that they had committed sin.

Nineveh, its capital, was a massive city.

To see all of Assyria fall to such a fate, would bring thoughts of pity from the hardest heart.

The last of this verse, seems to indicate that those already in hell, were somewhat comforted by knowing they were not the only ones to fall.

What comfort this could possibly be, I cannot tell.

Ezekiel 31:17 "They also went down into hell with him unto [them that be] slain with the sword; and [they that were] his arm, [that] dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen."

Not only did Assyria fall to this terrible fate, but all of its allies, as well.

This is the fate of all who put their trust in the world and the power it has.

Those who do not live for the LORD, can expect the same fate as these Assyrians and their allies.

Ezekiel 31:18 "To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the

earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with [them that be] slain by the sword. This [is] Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD."

Egypt, like all the other great nations, including Assyria, will be felled by God.

Ezekiel was a good Hebrew, and he connected the state of someone's being uncircumcised, with their being lost, and winding up in hell.

This is saying that not only Pharaoh and all of physical Egypt would be in hell with these Assyrians and their allies, but all who are worldly.

Revelation 20:14-15 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Ezekiel Chapter 31 Questions

1. When was this prophecy given?
2. Who is it addressed to?
3. Who was spoken of as a cedar of Lebanon?
4. What is this calling Assyria?
5. What makes a tree grow big and strong?
6. What is verse 5 saying about Assyria?
7. Who made Assyria great?
8. The deeper the root grows on the tree, the _____ the tree is?
9. It is the _____ of _____ that makes us strong.
10. _____ is the Tree of Life.
11. Where was the Tree of Life located in the Garden of Eden?
12. Why did Adam and Eve partake of the tree of knowledge?
13. What similarity is between Adam and Eve, and Assyria?
14. "His heart lifted up" speaks of _____.
15. Who was the mighty one of the heathen?

16. How did their fall come?
17. Who do the branches in verse 12 represent?
18. What happens to the Assyrian army?
19. What does "pit" mean?
20. Not only have their bodies died, but they _____.
21. Lebanon became black from the _____.
22. What happened to the rivers and trees?
23. Who pitied them, when they fell?
24. What comforted those already in hell?
25. Who fell to this terrible fate?
26. Verse 18 speaks of the fall of whom?