

# **Ezekiel – Study 12**

## **Would Ezekiel have stood a better chance of success in our churches today?**

### **Ezekiel 29 verse 2**

*Son of man set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophecy against him and against all Egypt.*

*3. Speak and say, Thus says the Lord God behold I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt the great dragon who lies in the midst of his rivers who said My river is mine and I have made it for myself.*

Pharaoh is a common name in Egypt and means “the sun” and also means “Crocodile” The crocodile was worshipped as a god and was found on wall paintings cave paintings and on the coins of the day. The Pharaoh God was referring to was Hophra. He like the king of Tyre (see study11) was also full of pride, his reign began prosperously he made Gaza and Zidon his own and promoted himself to be master of Phoenicia and Palestine taking back much that had been lost to king Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (2 Kings 24.7). He became so boastful he claimed *the river is mine* referring to the river Nile and taking the place of The Creator God. This river is about 6,670 km or 4,160 miles long and is the longest river in the world. It originates in Burundi south of the equator flowing northward through northeast Africa and through Egypt and finally into the Mediterranean Sea. Ancient Egypt could not have existed without the Nile. Rainfall was very scarce so when the Nile flooded between June and September it brought down thick rich mud which made excellent soil to plant seeds for food. The Nile also provided reeds along its banks from which the Egyptians made paper, boats, crude furniture, spears and a whole lot more. The Nile was very important for trade being some 6,670 km long the boats stopped at the villages and towns to buy and sell. All this was what Pharaoh boasted about that it was all his. His success over twenty five years was such that he said that not even a god could take away his kingdom.

*The Great Dragon who lies in the mist of his rivers*

Egypt’s prosperity was vast and Hophra made full use of the Great River Nile that ran through the plains south of the city. He made canals and irrigation channels to make the dry

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land fertile. God calls him a great dragon who lies proudly secure in the middle of all he had made...**BUT**

*But I will put hooks in your jaws and I will cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales and I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers and all the fish of your rivers shall stick unto your scales.*

Here and in Isaiah 37. 29 the Lord uses the term hook, and in Isaiah, bridle to show that He has control of the destiny of disobedient, wayward and rebellious man. On the wall paintings and sculptures found in Egyptian prisoners are shown with hooks in their lower lip with a cord held by the king depicting slavery and control. In the case of a bridle that is the only way to turn, halt or control a horse.

He says he will cause the fish of your rivers; that is all Egyptians and peoples who rely on the king's prosperity and all those from Judah who had made their home in Egypt to stick to **your** scales that is Pharaoh Hophra. In the Nile the scavenger fish stuck to the scales of the crocodile and when the crocodile was caught or came out of the water the scavenger fish did not have the sense to swim away and so were caught along with the crocodile.

Ezekiel was warning them of the coming wrath of God upon Egypt and its king and any Jew who had made their home in Egypt under Pharaoh would suffer the same fate as Pharaoh unless they repented and fled.

Shouldn't we be very careful who we associate with? When we mix with ungodly folk its not long before smutty jokes are told, the "let's go for a drink" and all sorts of uncleanness becomes apparent. That is the way of the world they know no better because they have given themselves over to Satan. If you have given your heart to the Lord, accepted Him as your personal Saviour, you have given yourself over to Almighty God and He expects a better standard from you but He also gives you the ability to maintain that standard through the power of the Holy Spirit. Yes I know it's hard to be different and Godlike, I know you could find yourself alone sometimes but surely as you read these studies, read the Bible and take note of your Pastors teaching you know it is not safe to ignore what you are being shown.

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God will without fail destroy wickedness and evildoers and if you are found to be enjoying their company you will suffer the same fate.

Jeremiah 44. 25 puts it very strongly when Judah was worshiping the Queen of Heaven. They said;

*We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and to pour our drink offerings unto her.*

Israel had taken the heathen gods into their homes to worship them. The Queen of Heaven was a name given to the moon goddess by the rebels of Judah but the proper name was Ashtoreth the wife of Baal. Molech was called the King of Heaven by the Phoenicians and this male and female pair symbolized the generative powers of nature thereby introducing prostitution as a part of worship. It was to the idol of Molech the Children of Israel sacrificed their Children. They were bound on the arms of Molech and a fire was built under the arms, as the arms got hotter and became red hot the priest of this order would beat drums louder and louder to drown out the screams of the dying child, this is how bad Judah had become. It was Josiah who instigated one of the greatest spiritual reforms ever known to Judah and started by reading the Book of the Covenant which he had ‘found’ in the House of the Lord. He then started to repair and clean up the Temple of God. Check it out in 2 Kings 21/22

The Lord says through Jeremiah *you will surely accomplish your vows and surely perform your vows*. God acknowledged that no one could accuse them of not being steadfast in their loyalty to idolatry. If however they had given as much loyalty to their God they would have the power to overcome such temptation, a lesson here for us today I think.

In verse 27 God says He will watch over them not for good but for evil, He knew their hearts determination and said He would consume them by the sword and by famine.

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God told the Israelites way back in Deuteronomy 30: 15 to 19 that they had the freedom to choose good or evil. He said:

*See, I have set before you this day Life and Good, and Death and Evil.*

*In that I command you this day to love the Lord, to walk in His ways, and to keep His Commandments and His Statutes and His Judgments that you may live and multiply: and the Lord will bless you in the land where you go to possess it.*

*But if your heart turns away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them: I denounce to you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land.*

*I call Heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life that both you and your seed may live.*

That same choice is ours today; many of the curses God allows He said would result from disobedience of God's word are the same curses that plague our nations the world over. Someone once said "if a man wants to go to Hell God can't stop him" what we are studying here seems to support that comment.

Ezekiel 29 v 6

*And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel.*

The banks of the Nile were lined with reeds. These were tall, strong and used in house building and fence making and God used these as an object lesson. Some were used as a staff or walking aide but once dried out could split and splinter cutting and causing bodily damage sometimes letting the user fall. Israel's dependence on Egypt proved hurtful instead of beneficial.

Isaiah 36 v 6 supports this

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*Lo you trust in the staff of this broken reed on Egypt whereon if a man lean it will go into his hand and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.*

Israel was relying on Pharaoh instead of their God who had proved Himself to them over and over again but they were to find out that misplaced trust would soon land them in trouble. We too when in trouble rely too heavily on the world's resources. Where do we seek help first from, our God or do we try a secular solution.

Ezekiel chapter 29 v 7

*When they took hold of you by your hand you did break and rend all their shoulder and when they leaned upon you, you broke and made all their loins to be at a stand.*

Here God was telling Pharaoh that His people were relying on him to uphold and support the people in and around Egypt but Hophra became so proud only thinking of himself that when the time came for him to meet his death (by strangulation by revoltors and a chap called Amasis) he left the Egyptian citizens and Israel in Egypt broken and helpless.

Surely all those in charge of God's people should take serious note of the behaviour of Pharaoh and note the effect on the multitude that a careless, selfish attitude has. A tremendous responsibility rests on the shoulders of the congregations too who are answerable only to God for their Spiritual condition at all times, remember the scavenger fish God talked about a few paragraphs earlier?

Of course we can say it serves them right they should not rely on one man, put all their eggs in one basket, and a whole lot of other "I told you so's" but to him who thinks he does not do the same thing at any time let him watch out Satan may well be on your shoulder!

Verse 8 and 9 tells us that God would make the land of Egypt desolate and waste which would be a vast contrast to what it had been, but still the king took no notice of the Prophet and soon the Babylonians fulfilled God's words totally.

Verse 10 and 11.

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*...therefore I am against you and your rivers and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate from the tower of Syene even to the border of Ethiopia.*

Migdol was the northern most part of Egypt and Syene was the southern most part. From Top to bottom Egypt was to become a waste land under God's almighty hand.

### Verse 11

*No foot of man shall pass through it nor foot of beast shall pass through it neither shall it be inhabited forty years.*

We find here that the sin of Pride was enough to ruin a whole nation. Pride has ruined many a church or ministry along with the people in it. I know as I have suffered myself many times, and my wife and I have had to pray with and help restore the faith of those who have been hurt! What a responsibility to be answerable to God Himself for the eternal destiny of a church full of people. I am amazed that in some churches my wife and I have been to many of the congregation have been hurt and bruised in other churches and just like the Egyptian people in our story were dispersed and scattered among other churches and some have even lost their way completely. No this is not nice reading but this happens all too often and it is not the kind of church that God wants to build with us.

The Egyptian people once had power, respectability, and influence and were now to become a contemptible people. Didn't we say in another study that pride runs before a fall?

Not only that they were to be this way for forty years. This is a great lesson to all of us; we are God's chosen people we are bought with the shedding of the blood of Jesus God's only Son. He went to the cross to redeem us and bring us back to God, if it was not for the cross we would be laid waste and desolate and in the hands and control of Satan, what makes us think we have got it made and our work for Christ is *our* work for Christ?

Without Him we cannot do anything that will last, all the work we do will fall and take hundreds if not thousands of people with it if we have pride in our hearts.

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If God has to deal with any of us concerning pride you can be sure that things may never be the same again or maybe take a very long time to restore.

Egypt was dispersed, laid waste for forty years and yes God said in verse 14 that He would bring them again into the land of their habitation but they shall be **a base kingdom**. One of little wealth, of little influence, it shall not exalt itself above other nations, nor rule over them as it once had done. Those who abuse power will justly be stripped of it.

Egypt today in the main is nothing more than a giant barren burial ground for the kings of the past and even that has been ransacked and the treasures and gold have been stolen.

### Chapter Verse 17 to 21

Nebuchadnezzar was God's instrument in dealing with Tyre and Egypt at this time. Verse 18 tells us the armies of Nebuchadnezzar were used to carry bricks and rubble so that their backs were rubbed raw but they had no wages for their efforts. God gave Egypt to king Nebuchadnezzar as his reward for some 13 years siege against Tyre. As we have already studied the new city of Tyre was rebuilt on an island of rock with stones and rubble from the mainland with the sea between filled in from the ruins of the old city. This became a stronghold for Tyre and king Neb and his men worked very hard to conquer Tyre and when they did the treasure had been removed by ship to other strongholds and no spoil was to be found.

#### Verse 19 says:

*Therefore says the Lord God, behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil and take her prey and it shall be the wages for his army.*

Of course Nebuchadnezzar had no idea of God's intention and was unaware he was carrying out the will of God.

#### Verse 20:

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*I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it because they wrought for Me says the Lord God.*

Whoever may doubt that in spite of the wars, fights, sin and wickedness going on in our world that God is no longer in control let him take note of these verses. For 13 years Tyre was under siege from king Nebuchadnezzar but God was dealing not only with the king of Tyre but also Egypt as well and the king of Babylon was used by God to bring about His own will. No matter what your circumstances, no matter what “war” you are in, no matter how black it looks out there GOD IS IN CONTRL. Remember the tide always turns when it is at its lowest and the high tide is on its way.

“The natural heart quickly wearies of these repeated threatenings of judgment hence the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are by and large unpopular in Christian circles. But these repetitions reveal God’s heart and man’s heart, one so loving the other so evil. Love sought continually to save, rebellion refused continually to listen.”

(Williams)

### **Chapter 30**

The Word of the Lord came again unto me saying:

Verse 2

*Son of man prophesy and say thus says the Lord God;*

*Howl ye Woe worth the day.*

*For the day is near even the DAY OF THE LORD is near, a cloudy day it shall be a time of the heathen.*



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There are two sections in this chapter. Verses 1 to 9 have to do with the coming Great Tribulation and verses 10 to 26 have to do with the judgment that Egypt was facing from Babylon in Ezekiel's day.

### **Verse 1 to 9 The Great Tribulation.**

God's words to all of us His people concerning the Great Tribulation to come is a severe warning of "Howl ye and woe worth the day". We cannot imagine the terror, destruction, devastation, murder, and utter carnage that will overtake the world during the Great Tribulation. Even the God of the universe says you will "Howl and Woe worth the day" which in the original says "Woe be to the day". It will be a time when the whole world will "HOWL". I am sure we all seen pictures of an earthquake, the torn up roads, houses just a heap of rubble, Government buildings made a shell of brick and cement and unable to give direction to the people of the town. We have seen on Television the people who have survived but are totally lost and walking about in a daze looking for their few possessions or digging with their bare hands in the rubble trying to find their loved ones. Imagine that scene EVERYWHERE you look, in EVERY town and city and Nation of the world there will be volcanoes, floods, earthquakes, looting, stealing, and murder and if there are any people left standing they will be absolutely lost with no food or water and no homes!

The judgement on Egypt at the end time will be the beginning of a world wide judgment on all the heathen enemies of God.

#### Obadiah 15.

*For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen as you have done it shall be done unto you your reward shall return upon your own head.*

#### Verse 3.

*For the day is near even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day and it shall be the time of the heathen.*

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The phrase “The day of the Lord” is used a lot in Scripture and refers to the second coming of Christ and continues right through the Millennium and the Holy Spirit says through Ezekiel that the Day of the Lord is near. If the Bible teaches the Day of the Lord is near, the Born Again believer must remember that before that day comes the Rapture will occur so that event must be even nearer.

### Verse 7, 8

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

The desolation the Lord refers to here not only will fall upon Egypt at the time of Ezekiel at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, but it is also refers to the third seal in Revelation 6. It is believed that the Antichrist will target Egypt first in his bid for world domination about half way through his 7 year reign “Daniels seventieth week”

Daniel 9: 27 and the reference to desolation in the above verses speaks of a great famine that always follows war.

### Revelation 6 verse 5.

*And when He had opened the third seal I (John) heard the third beast say “Come and see” and I beheld and lo a black horse and he who sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.*

The black horse represents famine and food in very short supply. Food in the day of the Antichrist will be weighed out a ‘measure’ at a time, a measure being about enough for one day only per person or an English pint, but also costing a days wage in the time of Ezekiel, you can work out what a days wage is today and that is assuming you can find work to get a wage at all. Some folks can remember the tales of the depression of the early 1900’s; there are archive films of people with a wheelbarrow full of money queuing for a loaf of bread. There were fights in the streets over a few potatoes. Shops broken into and total lawlessness was everywhere.

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In the end of days it will be far worse. The more we dissect this verse the more we find how very difficult it will be in the days of the Antichrist. But I have some very good news; you can avoid all this devastation, this frightful and terrible time by confessing your sins, accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and believe on His name. If like me and my family you have come to the cross of Christ and become a Christian, on the authority of God's Word I can tell you you will miss these awful days and join the church in the Rapture, that is when Jesus will come from His throne in Heaven and meet us in the sky... don't believe it, enjoying your sinful life to much, rebelling against the Word of God, it's all a lot of nonsense! You don't believe what Ezekiel the Prophet told all Israel and all Egypt the wrath of God was on its way, and it came! You *will* believe the Gospel one day when you see with your own eyes all the Bible is telling us and you will want to know about Jesus after all and try and find me but I and my family will be nowhere to be found...on earth that is!

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### **The Rapture**

**I am aware that some scholars have different views to those in these pages, as I have said before I respect their views if they respect mine.**

Revelation chapter 1 explains how John saw a vision of Christ walking in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks which are the seven churches in Asia. (Rev: 1. v 20). Chapter 2; is about the church in Ephesus representing the Apostolic time period which closed around AD 100. In verse 8 John was told to write to the church in Smyrna the Martyr Church from about AD 100 to AD 300. The next church was Pergamos referred to as the State Church laying the foundation of the Catholic system up to about 500 AD. Thyatira was called the Papal Church the beginning of Catholicism beginning about 500 AD to this day. The Sardis Church is referred to as the Reformation Church which began about AD 1500 and also continues to today. The next church was the Philadelphia Church which had its beginning about the year 1800 and also continues to today. The Laodicea Church is the Apostate church and very much like the church of today. It was the last Church that Christ addressed through John so we can conclude that the Rapture will take place shortly, after these things of the Churches!

Revelation 1 verse 19 says three things:

- Write the things which you *have* seen
- Write the things which *are*
- Write the things which shall be *hereafter*.

Write about the things which you *have* seen, that is; Christ in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks in chapter 1.

Write about the things which *are*, concerns the Churches of Chapters 2 and 3.

Write about the things which *shall be* hereafter concerns the Rapture of the church and the things after the Churches including the Great Tribulation and eternity with Christ.

In chapter 4:1 John writes *after this* I looked. After what, after writing about the churches in chapters 2 and 3. The verse continues behold a door was opened and a voice said “Come up

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hither and I will show you things which must be *hereafter*”, after what, after the churches of chapters 2 and 3. No man knows the hour when the Son of God shall come and I am not proposing to give dates or time but we are told to watch and pray and there are enough scriptures given by God to give us signs and indications of His return so we can make ourselves ready.

From chapter 4 though to chapter 22 we do not read about the church, straight after the door opened in heaven for John to go up he saw all sorts of events in heaven and on earth, the people involved, the Antichrist, Satan, angels etc but nothing about the churches he had written about earlier, this was all “after these things”- the things of the churches. This shows that the Rapture has taken place and has happened after the churches of chapter 2 and 3 and before chapter 4: verse 1

The word church or churches is found 19 times up to the last verse of chapter 3 and not one time are the churches mentioned in the section of events “which must be” after the churches from Rev: 3 verse 22 up to Rev: 22: verse 16. If the church was on earth during the events John saw after the churches while in Heaven it would be mentioned. In Rev: 22: verse 16 Jesus Himself speaks and says;

**I, Jesus have sent my Angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.**

Note Jesus uses the singular Angel and not Angels referring to His messenger John.

We must take note of what John saw and encourage each other to make ourselves ready for such a momentous event as the Rapture of His true Church.

### **What Paul says about the Rapture**

2 Thessalonians chapter 2 is a chapter written by Paul which explains the Rapture very well. Firstly I am aware that some tell us the word Rapture is not in the Bible. The Dictionary tells us that Rapture means: *The state of being transported from one place to another especially to Heaven.* If the world can get it right why can't we!

Chapter 2: verse 2

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That you be not shaken in mind or be troubled neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter from us, as that the Day of Christ is at hand.

Paul did not want his congregations to be troubled by false teaching, false messages in tongues and interpretation of tongues, or those who “had a word from the Lord” some letters purported to be from Paul were forgeries. It didn’t take Satan long to confuse the church in Paul’s day and he is still at it! We have greater revelation and greater understanding of God’s word, we should not be confused, just read what it says in Bible, don’t add to it and don’t take away from it.

Verse 3:

Let no man deceive you by any means for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first and that the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

Paul is talking to his churches about the Day of the Lord, which is the day He returns to earth and His feet touches the Mount of Olives this is called the Second Coming and when He comes to deal with Satan and all his followers. Before that happens there must be a falling away first. This phrase “falling away” has some people perplexed leading to confusion. The Greek word for falling away is apostasia meaning; to defect, revolt, apostasy, divorce. Putting it simply the Church, that is the true born again believers will defect, separate and be divorced from the world and be translated into the air to meet with Jesus. This event must come about before the “Day of the Lord” – the Second Coming, so the Rapture therefore comes first.

Paul says to his people “Don’t you remember when I was with you I told you these things? And then, thankfully he goes into detail again.

Verse 6:

And now you know what withholds, that he might be revealed in his time.

This speaks of the church holding back Satan’s power, with prayer, intercession, getting to know God’s word and living a good testimony, and all the Church outreaches and

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programmes and influences in the local communities and doing all that until the time comes when the Antichrist is to be revealed to the world.

**For the mystery of iniquity does already work.**

Paul was contending with false teaching in his churches so soon after the death of Christ, leading the people astray they were being taught that Christ was coming back in their lifetime

**...only he who now lets will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His Coming.**

The old English can be a bit confusing so we will go into a little more detail:

This Hinderer of Lawlessness in verse 7 what is it?

1. It is something already known. v6
2. It *now* hinders lawlessness. v 6-7
3. It is strong enough to prevent the revelation of Antichrist. v 6-8
4. It will continue to hinder lawlessness until it is removed from the earth v 7-8
5. It is called “he” v 7
6. It will not be here when Christ comes to destroy the Antichrist. v 7-8

So what could this hinderer be?

1. Could it be the Governments?
2. Could it be the Church?
3. Could it be the Holy Spirit?

This hinderer of lawlessness has to be one that will be taken out of the world before Antichrist is revealed.

What about Governments? Governments will not be taken out of the world because the Antichrist will reign over many world governments, leaders, and kings.

What about the Holy Spirit? No He will be here all through the tribulation and beyond, multitudes will be saved by the influence of the Holy Spirit during the Tribulation the same as He works today (Rev: 6: 9-11)

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What about the Church? Yes it is the church who will be Raptured before Antichrist comes on the scene and is the only one of the possible hinderer of lawlessness that will be removed from the earth.

A lot of people think that the church could not be the hinderer because of the reference “he” and the church is called the Bride of Christ with a feminine pronoun.

Actually the Church is called “a man” in Ephesians chapter 2; v 15 where the work of Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and the Gentiles to become “one new man” Ephesians 2:15 and 4: 15. Also the church is called the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-15. Ephesians 1: 22-23 it would be incorrect to call part of His body a woman or to use feminine pronouns in referring to His Church which is His body. Since the Church is called a *man* and the *body of Christ* it is correct to call the Church “he”. We must conclude then that as the Church is the only one that is taken out of the world it is the only one that “hinders lawlessness.

Blessings as you carry on hindering!!!!