

## Ezekiel 31 – Lamentation for Egypt continued, A Parable

By Holly Effiom

In re-visiting Eze 30:1-3 and its lesson, we reacquaint ourselves with the context being set by these verses:

1. The day of the Lord is the topic under discussion, from this chapter forward.
2. The society at the time of the day of the Lord will be enlightened (that is, educated), but filled with darkness, despite their great knowledge about the word of God – the day will be “cloudy”.
3. The day of the Lord will take place during and will encompass the time of the end of Gentile world rule. And hence, it is understood that during that time of the end, there is a rise in ethnic hatred in all the places Gentiles rule.

VV1-3

How is this verse related to Eze 30:20 and 26:1?

What is significant about the dates of these messages?

To whom is God speaking?

What is God asking?

What exactly is God comparing? How is this related to “beauty” as discussed in Eze 27:3?

What two nations are being compared then?

To better understand what is being compared, let’s look at Isa 10:5-27:

Isa 10:5-6

What is the Assyria to God?

What does it mean to be a staff in the hand of God?

Is it God’s intent in this section to make the Assyria the recipient of His anger and indignation?

How does God intend to use the Assyria? How is this related to Eze 9:6-11? Rev 11:2?

**LESSON:** What message is God conveying in these first few verses of Eze 31 and Isa 10?

1. In stating the date of when this message is being given, we are reminded that the word to Egypt is being written out of order (Eze 29:1). God wants us to keep in mind the *order* of events.
2. In speaking to Egypt and discussing its greatness, we are reminded of the place Egypt held among nations (Eze 29:2-3). God wants us to understand that Egypt was the *great dragon* (Rev 12:3), and first among world powers (Rev 17:9-11).
3. In comparing Egypt to the Assyrian, we are reminded that the topic under discussion is the end-time, the time of the Gentiles (Eze 30:3), the Assyrian. God wants us to liken the end-time world power to Egypt, its power, position, and great authority in the world, in its day.
4. Isa 10:5-6 informs us that God raised up the Assyrian (giving him great wealth through the conquest and enslavement of people) to be His instrument of judgment against a hypocritical nation and people, worldwide.

So, what exactly is being compared between the two nations in the two time periods?

**Power:** Egypt wielded a great deal of power among the nations (Eze 29:4), so, too, will the Assyrian.

**Position:** Egypt was a first of its kind among the nations (Eze 29:3), so, too, is the Assyrian.

**Authority:** Egypt had been given great wealth and influence over people among nations as is the case with the Assyrian. Isaiah 10:5-6 provides the reason for that authority being placed in the hands of the Assyrian.

**Order of events:** And just as God didn’t hold back from striking in judgment at the heart of Jerusalem – the sanctuary (Eze 9:6) – because of its idolatry; He will also strike in judgment at the heart of the

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Assyrian. Eze 7:20, 22, the heart of Assyria is called “...his ornament...”, comparing it to God’s own “...secret place...” (See Eze 24:21).

[ASIDE: This makes me wonder if the terrible earthquake in Syria and Turkey, on February 6, 2023; is the start of the judgment specifically upon the Assyrian throughout the world?]

VV4-6

What accounts for the cedar’s greatness?

In our studies, what do we suppose the mention of “water” to mean prophetically? Dan 7:2

What is the message of V4, if we similarly interpret the meaning of “waters”?

Is it only the cedar that benefits from the waters?

Who else benefits from the cedar’s greatness?

VV7-9

Was the cedar ugly and wild?

What noted characteristic does the cedar have?

How did other trees compare to the cedar?

Who made the cedar look as it did?

Did other trees envy the cedar?

Isa 10:7-11

Is Assyria’s intent in alignment with God’s intent?

How are Assyria’s intentions different? How do you know?

LESSON: We learn many things in just these few verses of Isaiah 10; the first being that those God uses to accomplish His own purposes are not necessarily “men of God”.

God euphemistically uses the family name “Asshur” or Assyrian when discussing a people as a nation. While Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian, might have been “God-fearing” (as we learn from the book of Daniel), the “Assyrian” is as pagan as all the surrounding nations. [ASIDE: who knows if the “Assyrian” was selected to be used as an instrument of God *because* of Nebuchadnezzar’s faith? Consider how the children of Israel were chosen for their task, as a result of Abraham’s faith.]

We learn that God is using this “foolish” nation, i.e., a nation just as steeped in idolatry as all the rest, against a *hypocritical* nation, i.e., a nation that *says* one thing and *does* another, and *hypocritical* people – a nation and people who *say* hifalutin words about truth and justice and whose *actions* are anything *but* true and just! This is the character of the people against whom God sends His wrath (Eze 9:6; Isa 10:6).

We learn that God intends for the “Assyrian” to steal the wealth of this hypocritical nation and make a prey of its hypocritical people, treading them down into the mud. This reminds me of something written in John, when the woman with the alabaster box wanted to minister to Jesus (John 12:3-6). Judas Iscariot criticized this woman’s offering, as the scripture says, *because he was a thief*.

God had already raised up this nation, for whatever reason, and had given it wealth and power over others, and yet it still coveted God’s own portion – His own *precious* children, His nations! Look at this story and understand, it is told over and over again:

## Ezekiel 31 – Lamentation for Egypt continued, A Parable

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On the individual level: the parable told by Nathan the prophet to David, when he had stolen Uriah's wife, Bath-Sheba (2 Sam 12:1-12).

On a heavenly level: the story of the beloved woman with the crown of 12 stars and the red dragon, with his *own* crown, trying to steal what belonged to the woman, her own potential, her own *salvation* (Rev 12:1-4)!

At every level – the individual, the national, the heavens... – the story has been the *same!* Those blessed exceedingly with much *still* covet that which belongs to those with little.

VV10-14

What is God telling us about the cedar in V10?

Did the cedar seek to set himself above his brothers?

How does V9 compare or contrast with V10?

Did God make the cedar how he was or did the Assyrian elevate himself?

So, what does God do to the cedar, and why?

Who is the "...mighty one of the heathen"?

LESSON: When interpreting the parable of the great cedar tree, understand, a distinction is being made within the group of the Assyrian. When comparing the group of the Assyrian to the group of the Egyptian, you are comparing two different family groups.

We have discussed how the term "Assyrian" is being used to describe the Gentiles – sons of Japheth. The term "Egyptian" is being used to describe the sons of Ham. Notice, God does not use the description of Black and White to describe people. Why do you think this is [remember the history of Babel and Asshur]?

So, when the phrase "...mighty one of the heathen..." is being used in V12, we understand that those within and among the group of the Assyrian is under discussion – among the Gentile nations, one will distinguish itself from the others in greatness; just as Egypt distinguished itself as the greatest among the children of Ham.

What is accomplished is the scattering of people? Consider the children of Israel: what was accomplished in their being scattered throughout the earth?

Isa 10:12-14

Will God leave the Assyrian unpunished for his covetousness?

When will God deal with the Assyrian?

Why will God judge the Assyrian?

What in V12 says that the Assyrian is prideful?

How do VV13-14 compare to words spoken by Tyre in Eze 27:3, and Egypt in 29:3?

What does the attitude displayed in VV13-14 portend for the Assyrian, considering the track record of Tyre and Egypt?

LESSON: When examining this section of Isaiah, we know that we are looking at the family group of the Assyrian. God has raised it up to be used against a hypocritical nation and "...the people of my wrath"; however, the plan and intent of the Assyrian was not in alignment with God's plan and intent, as stated in Isa 10:7; but also, the Assyrian's intent was to use power to subjugate all other nations.

## Ezekiel 31 – Lamentation for Egypt continued, A Parable

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The Assyrian goes the route of all the other nations in his attitude toward and words spoken about other nations, as described in VV13-14. And, as we have learned in Eze 27:3 and 29:3, God is against that attitude and those words, and has brought about the fall of all other great nations that espoused them.

VV15-18

Who is God speaking about, the Egyptian and his multitude or the Assyrian and his multitude?

What will God cause to happen at his fall? What is significant about this?

Where will the fallen go?

What is the difference between grieving and mourning?

Who will be mourning at his fall?

How do we know that it is the Assyrian under discussion?

What does it mean that "...the trees of the field fainted for him"?

Who of the "trees of Eden" will be rejoicing at the fall of the Assyrian?

Will all the "trees of Eden" be rejoicing?

Who will be joining the Assyrian at his fall?

Will those who were innocent and died be in this grave?

Who will be in this grave?

Is God arguing that the Assyrian was not "glorious and great" like the "trees of Eden"?

What is the point God is making in V18?

LESSON: God describes a great mourning for the destruction of this final nation that will be so great that the deep will be covered for him. The death of this nation will seal up the sum of the dead. The "...great waters and floods will be stayed." Continuing with the symbolism that *waters* represent *people*, I interpret this as people no longer needing to be on the move; no longer forced to run from terrors and even everyday pressures *just to live*. This makes me think about all *commerce* coming to a halted.

The other "...trees of the field..." or nations within the group, or sphere of influence, of this great nation will faint for its destruction – they, too, will suffer at its this loss. All nations will shake with fear at the destruction of this great nation, along with those who are determined for the pit. Those organizations that accounted themselves righteous before God, and were envious of this nation, will feel vindicated in its destruction; however, they, too, will be cast into the pit, along with all those who benefitted and supported and grew fat in the shadow of this nation wickedness. We read about these one in Ezekiel 13 who "whitewashed" or "...daubed with untempered mortar..." the wall being built by this nation.

This nation aspired to exceed the trees of Eden, and so it shall when they all are cast into the pit, alongside all those whom they considered themselves better than. Thus is the end of this nation and its multitude... *hell*.

Isa 10:15-19

What questions are being asked regarding an axe, saw, or rod and staff?

To what do the rod and staff allude? V5

So, what is the point being made in the questions being asked in V15? How is it related to V7?

What will God do to those that exhibit such gross misbehavior, i.e., dare to think above themselves?

In what way is the Holy One compared to Israel? How do they contrast?

- The light of Israel will be a fire.

## Ezekiel 31 – Lamentation for Egypt continued, A Parable

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- His Holy One a flame.

What will be consumed by the fire? a hypocritical nation.

Whom will be consumed by the flame? "...the people of my wrath"

What does it mean that both the body and soul will be consumed?

Will there be any trees left?

LESSON: What a powerful word! In its day, Israel, or Jerusalem, had the sanctuary of God residing among them – they were a light to the world – with the ability to approach God and seek His knowledge and wisdom for everyone in the world. That access to the presence of God's righteousness would prove their undoing because of their own wickedness. That same Righteousness that was the light would be responsible for that sanctuary being destroyed.

In the day of the Assyrian, the final Gentile power, who abides under the season of God's grace and enjoys the blessings of His freedom and favor, is a light to which many around the world are drawn *because* of that ability to approach and dwell safely in the blessings of God; to have access to God's knowledge and wisdom and experience His righteousness – which is truth and justice. That same *Righteousness* will prove the Assyrian's undoing because of his own *wickedness*. Righteousness will be responsible for that enlightened nation being destroyed.

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