EZEKIEL 30

The Day of the LORD: Pharaoh's Broken Arm

> *"For I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; and I will break the arms of Pharaoh, so that he will groan before him with the groanings of a wounded man."*
> EZEKIEL 30:24

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Chapter 30 continues the Egypt series that began in 29:1.

2. The second oracle (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).

The Day of the LORD Is Near

Wail, "Alas for the day!" — a day of clouds for the nations.

EZEKIEL 30:2

"Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Wail, 'Alas for the day!'

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik does not treat v3 as an end-times prophecy; he reads it as Egypt's judgment and quotes Wright that such past judgments become 'patterns of the final Day.'

WHAT IT MEANS

God tells Ezekiel to wail, "Alas for the day!" (v2). Judgment is not entertainment, and the prophet is meant to feel its weight.

yom (יוֹם)

YOM · "DAY"

Yom means day or time. It sounds through this oracle: "Alas for the day!" (v2), the day of the LORD near (v3), "On that day" (v9), and the dark day at Tehaphnehes (v18).

Her Helpers Are Broken

Egypt's supporters fall, and even far-off Ethiopia trembles.

EZEKIEL 30:9

"On that day messengers will go forth from Me in ships to frighten secure Ethiopia; and anguish will be on them as on the day of Egypt; for behold, it comes!"

DAVID GUZIK

Feinberg, in Guzik, suggests that some of the peoples listed in v5 were probably foreign mercenaries in Egypt's army — soldiers for hire who fall with the nation that paid them.

WHAT IT MEANS

"The pride of her power will come down" (v6), and it comes down "From Migdol to Syene" — the whole length of the land. Then comes a striking picture: "messengers will go forth from Me in ships to frighten secure Ethiopia" (v9).

azar (עָזַר)

AZAR · "HELPERS"

Azar means to help, to support. Egypt's helpers were her allies and hired soldiers — the very people who were supposed to make her strong.

Nebuchadnezzar, God's Instrument

The most ruthless of the nations comes — because the LORD has spoken.

EZEKIEL 30:10

'Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will also make the hordes of Egypt cease By the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

DAVID GUZIK

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

WHAT IT MEANS

God names the instrument: Nebuchadnezzar and his people, "The most ruthless of the nations" (v11).

hamon (הָמוֹן)

HAMON · "HORDES"

Hamon means a multitude, a crowd — even wealth. God says, "I will also make the hordes of Egypt cease By the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon" (v10).

City by City

From Memphis to Tehaphnehes, God judges idols, cities and pride.

EZEKIEL 30:13

'Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will also destroy the idols And make the images cease from Memphis. And there will no longer be a prince in the land of Egypt; And I will put fear in the land of Egypt.

DAVID GUZIK

Ezekiel walks the map of Egypt city by city, and Guzik's sources give the standard identifications: Memphis, the old capital; Pathros, Upper Egypt; Zoan, Tanis in the Delta; Thebes, the great southern…

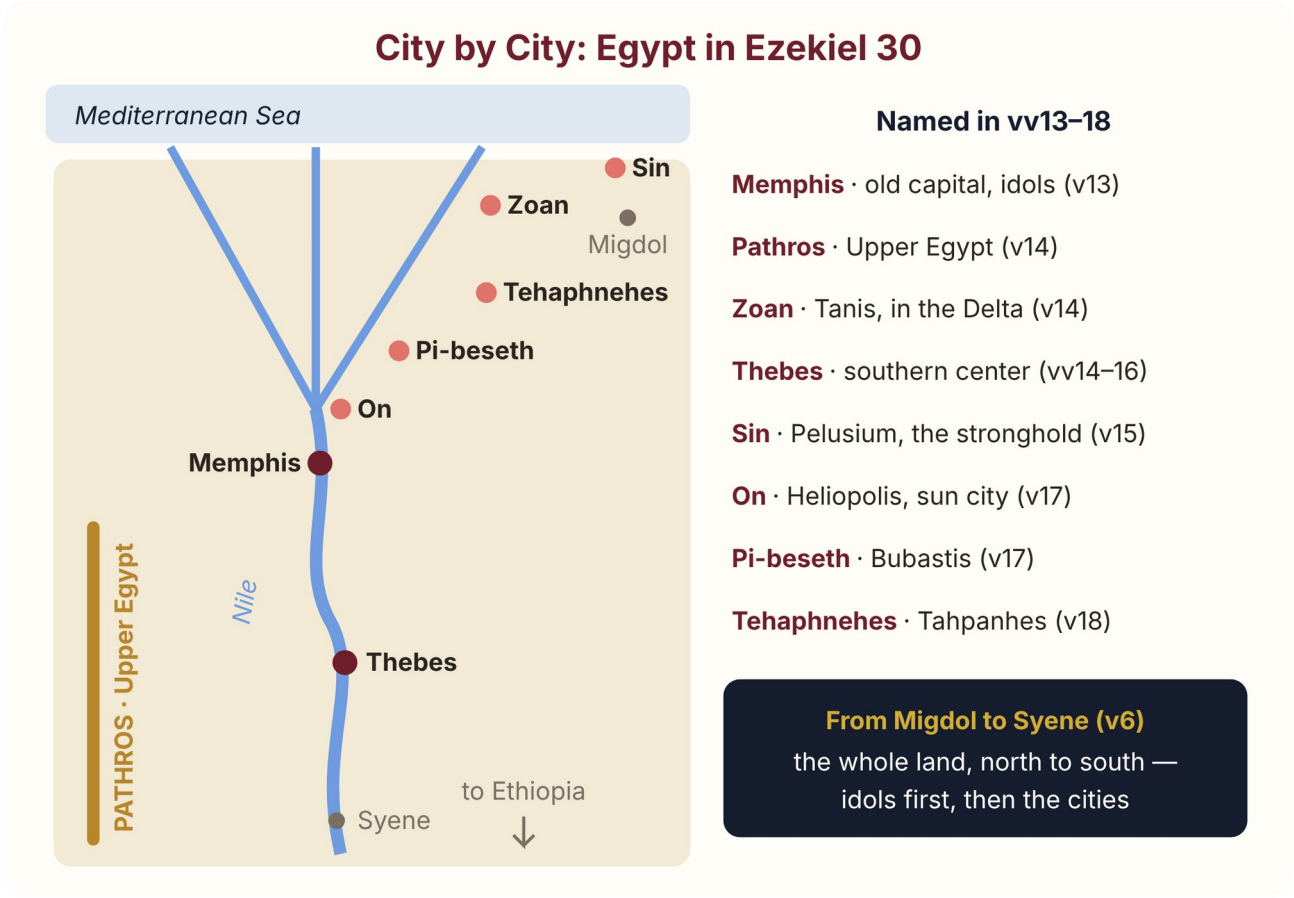
WHAT IT MEANS

God's judgment is personal and precise. He names the cities one by one, and the judgment falls first on the idols (v13).

gillulim (גִּלּוּלִים)
GILLULIM · "IDOLS"

Gillulim is one of Ezekiel's favorite words for idols, and the notes give its literal force: 'dung things.' It is a word of contempt.

City by City: The Map of Ezekiel 30



The places God names in vv6 and 13–18, from the Delta fortresses in the north to Thebes and Syene in the south.

Pharaoh’s Broken Arms

God breaks one king’s arms and puts His sword in another’s hand.

EZEKIEL 30:21

“Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and, behold, it has not been bound up for healing or wrapped with a bandage, that it may be strong to hold the sword.

DAVID GUZIK

God says He has already broken Pharaoh’s arm — most likely Hophra’s failed attempt to relieve Jerusalem (Jer 37:5–11) — and no one will splint it (v21).

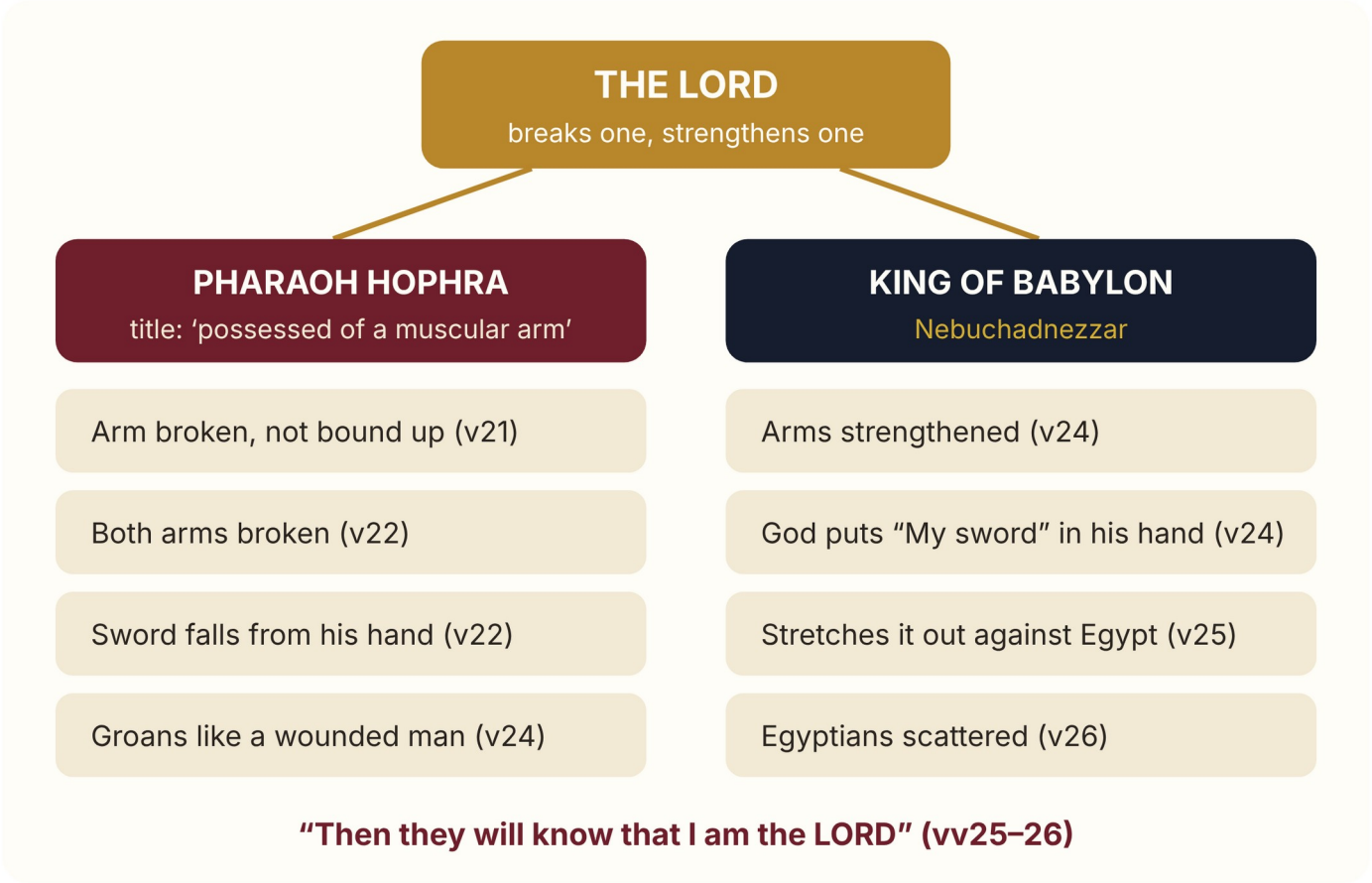
WHAT IT MEANS

Two kings, one God. The Lord breaks Pharaoh’s arms, “both the strong and the broken” (v22), and strengthens the arms of the king of Babylon, putting His own sword in his hand (v24).

zeroa (זְרוֹעַ)
ZEROA · “ARM”

Zeroa means arm — and by extension strength and power. The flexed arm was a well-known Egyptian symbol of royal might, and Alexander, in Guzik, notes that Hophra took the title ‘possessed of a muscular arm.’

Two Kings, One God



The LORD breaks Pharaoh's arms and strengthens Babylon's, putting His own sword in Nebuchadnezzar's hand (vv20–26).

What to carry from this chapter

1

The day is near.

In the prophets, the day of the LORD is any time God steps in to judge — each one a preview of the final Day (v3).

2

A dark cloud over Egypt.

Wiersbe, in Guzik: Israel left Egypt under God's bright cloud; now Egypt sits under a dark one (v3).

3

Helpers are reeds too.

Azar names Egypt's supporters, and when God sets a fire, "all her helpers are broken" (v8).

4

Distance is not safety.

God sends ships to frighten "secure Ethiopia" — people who thought they were too far away to be touched (v9).

More to carry

5

God's word sets it in motion.

Taylor, in Guzik: the foreign armies are God's agents, because "I the LORD have spoken" (v12).

6

Idols are judged first.

Gillulim — literally 'dung things' — are the first target in God's tour of Egypt's cities (v13).

7

Hophra's muscular arm.

Alexander, in Guzik: Hophra called himself 'possessed of a muscular arm,' and God says it is already broken (v21).

8

Babylon holds God's sword.

God strengthens one king and breaks another; the sword in Babylon's hand is "My sword" (vv24–25).

Talk it through

1. God tells Ezekiel to wail, “Alas for the day!” Why should coming judgment move us to grief rather than satisfaction?

2. Ethiopia felt secure because it was far away. Where are you counting on distance or time to keep consequences from reaching you?

3. Why does God strike Egypt’s idols before its cities? What ‘protectors’ have you trusted that God may need to topple first?

4. Pharaoh’s arm was broken and no one could bind it up. What strong arm — a person, a paycheck, a connection — have you trusted in place of God’s?

CLOSING

Egypt's idols fell, her cities burned, and Pharaoh's muscular arm hung broken with no one to bind it. The same God who broke it stretches out His own arm to every man who will stop trusting his own — and that arm never breaks.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.