

# The Visions of Ezekiel

## Lesson 23

J. Vision Ten – (32:1 – 32:16) 12<sup>th</sup> Year, 1<sup>st</sup> Day, 12<sup>th</sup> Month

Ezekiel's Forty-ninth Assignment from the LORD – Pharaoh (32:1-16)

### 1. The Date (32:1)

**32:1 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,**

Twenty months to the day after vision nine, this vision was given to Ezekiel. The year was 585 BC and Nebuchadnezzar had broken through the walls of Jerusalem and taken the city and the Southern Kingdom into his full control. The Promised Land had no king. A governor was put in place to manage the area. Down in Egypt, Pharaoh Hophra was nearing his fifth year of rule and the LORD had more to say to him as the monster ruler of Egypt.

### 2. The Monster (32:2)

**32:2 "Son of man, take up a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him, 'You compared yourself to a young lion of the nations, Yet you are like the monster in the seas; And you burst forth in your rivers And muddied the waters with your feet And fouled their rivers.'"**

For the second time, the LORD had called Pharaoh Hophra a monster. Why? When Hophra's father passed away, he took the throne and continued to interfere in the events occurring in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. In 588 BC, he sent an army force to Jerusalem to attempt to protect it from Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 37:5; 34:21). The army of Nebuchadnezzar was far too vast for the fledgling Egyptian squad. It returned to Egypt. A mutiny broke out against the Pharaoh. Hophra had "*muddied the waters*." The trouble subsided and he thought the mutiny was contained but it was just silenced for a while. Hophra then tried to flex his muscles by reaching out to help protect Libya from the Greeks but the attempt backfired, and the Egyptians were severely beaten. Civil war occurred within the troops and the mutiny surged again. Again, he had "muddied the waters."<sup>56</sup>

### a) The Capture (32:3)

**32:3 Thus says the Lord GOD, "Now I will spread My net over you With a company of many peoples, And they shall lift you up in My net."**

Hophra had tried to obtain help from Nebuchadnezzar unsuccessfully. He met Amasis in battle in 570 BC and lost. Hophra was caught in the net. It would be time for "*a company of many peoples*" to take over. The Egyptians demanded that Amasis give Hophra to them. He did. They strangled Hophra.

To legitimize his power as the new Pharaoh, Amasis married the daughter of Hophra, Chedebnitjerbone II. And thus, we come to the words, "*...and they shall lift you up in My net*." This part of the prophecy was not about Hophra, but Amasis. The "company of many people" killed Hophra and put Amasis on the throne.

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<sup>56</sup> Clayton, Peter A., "Chronicle of Pharaoh," (Thames & Hudson, London, 1994), p. 196-197.

## b) The Inhabitants (32:4)

**32:4 "I will leave you on the land; I will cast you on the open field. And I will cause all the birds of the heavens to dwell on you, And I will satisfy the beasts of the whole earth with you.**

Beginning in 570 BC, with the death of Hophra, Amasis was left on the land as the new Pharaoh. He would be there until 526 BC.

According to Herodotus, Amasis was asked by Cyrus the Great to send an ophthalmologist to be sent to work in Persia. Amasis sent a physician but he did not let him take his family. The physician became a friend of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus. The physician devised a scheme to hurt Amasis – a payback for being forcefully separated from his family. He talked Cambyses into asking Amasis for one of his daughters as a wife. Cambyses asked for the daughter. Amasis would not send one of his daughters. Rather, he sent one of Hophra's daughters instead. This infuriated Cyrus and Cambyses.<sup>57</sup>

In 526 BC, Amasis died. He was embalmed with all the normal pageantry of the Pharaohs of Egypt and buried in the royal cache in Sais. His son took the throne. Cambyses was on his way from Persia. On his arrival, Egypt submitted without much restraint save for the city of Gaza. The siege took some time and the report of the coming Persians reached Egypt. Psamtik III, Amasis' son, moved back to the Red Sea to fight Cambyses. The conflict became known as the Battle of Pelusium. Psamtik lost. Cyrus became Pharaoh.<sup>58</sup>

Herodotus speaks of the desecration of Amasis' mummy when the Persian king captured Egypt.

[N]o sooner did [... Cambyses] enter the palace of Amasis that he gave orders for his [Amasis's] body to be taken from the tomb where it lay. This done, he proceeded to have it treated with every possible indignity, such as beating it with whips, sticking it with goads, and plucking its hairs. [... A]s the body had been embalmed and would not fall to pieces under the blows, Cambyses had it burned.<sup>59</sup>

Persia owned Egypt and it would move Persians to the land to live on it. Thus, "*all the birds of heaven*" would dwell on Egyptian land. The Persians would be followed by the Greeks, followed by the Romans and they would all move citizens to live on the Egyptian land.

## c) The Refuse (32:5)

**32:5 "I will lay your flesh on the mountains And fill the valleys with your refuse.**

The body of Amasis' mummified flesh was burned, and the ashes were spread on the mountains where it was cremated.

## d) The Discharge (32:6)

**32:6 "I will also make the land drink the discharge of your blood As far as the mountains, And the ravines will be full of you.**

The Battle of Pelusium was extreme. The blood of the Nubian army ran down the mountains and into the valleys until it was absorbed into the land where it settled.

## e) The Darkness (32:7-8)

**32:7 "And when I extinguish you, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud And the moon will not give its light. 32:8 "All the shining**

<sup>57</sup> Herodotus (1737). *The History of Herodotus Volume I, Book II*. (D. Midwinter). pp. 246–250.

<sup>58</sup> Briant, Pierre (2002). *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. (Eisenbrauns). p. 54.

<sup>59</sup> Herodotus (Trans.) Robin Waterfield, Carolyn Dewald (1998). *The Histories*. (Oxford University Press, US). p. 170.

**lights in the heavens I will darken over you And will set darkness on your land," Declares the Lord GOD.**

With the Battle of Pelusium, the power of Egypt was over. Not even to this day has Egypt controlled anything more than its own land. Darkness reigned over Egypt, never to shine again.

f) The People (32:9)

**32:9 "I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples when I bring your destruction among the nations, into lands which you have not known.**

People from all the nations of the world would be amazed that the great and mighty Egypt had seen its last day of rule of itself. No indigenous Pharaoh would ever control her again. The dynasties of Egypt had come to an end. This version of the Scripture uses the word "*troubled*" but Hebrew is *kaas* and it is better translated "anger." That was how the people of the world not part of the Persian Empire felt about the downfall of the Egyptian system. But, we must notice, it was part of the LORD's plan. He caused it to happen. He controlled the other nations just as He controlled Egypt and Persia.

g) The Fear (32:10)

**32:10 "I will make many peoples appalled at you, and their kings will be horribly afraid of you when I brandish My sword before them; and they will tremble every moment, every man for his own life, on the day of your fall."**

If the LORD could do such to the Egyptian Empire, what could He do to all the other empires and countries. The people of the world should be in fear. His sword cannot be conquered by any army of this world.

h) The Sword (32:11-12)

**32:11 For thus says the Lord GOD, "The sword of the king of Babylon will come upon you. 32:12 "By the swords of the mighty ones I will cause your hordes to fall; all of them are tyrants of the nations, And they will devastate the pride of Egypt, And all its hordes will be destroyed.**

This tenth vision has made a full circle to return to the beginning of the prophecy that would start with the Babylonians and be followed by the rest of the empires of the world to come. The sword of the LORD was not being brandished by the LORD or His angel. Rather, the sword was given next to the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. Egyptians were about to die; some would be taken to exile.

i) The Destruction (32:13-14)

**32:13 "I will also destroy all its cattle from beside many waters; And the foot of man will not muddy them anymore And the hoofs of beasts will not muddy them. 32:14 "Then I will make their waters settle And will cause their rivers to run like oil," Declares the Lord GOD.**

Pharaoh Hophra had muddied the waters. Amasis had reacted to those muddied waters. Nebuchadnezzar would enter the land and march south to take the land, its spoils and its people. Up, up, up the Nile River, the army of Babylon marched. The waters would not be stirred by man or beasts. They would flow as slick as oil without the turbulence made by man or beast.

j) The Desolation (32:15)

**32:15 "When I make the land of Egypt a desolation, And the land is destitute of that which filled it, When I smite all those who live in it, Then they shall know that I am the LORD.**

In the sixth vision, Nebuchadnezzar would exile most of the people of Egypt and they would be out of the country for forty years (29:13). The LORD spoke, "*When I make the land of Egypt a desolation, and the*

*land is destitute of that which filled it, ....*" All the necessities of life would be absent from the land during that forty years. No corn, wheat or barley for a loaf. No leeks, beans or other legumes for the pot. No olives for the oil. No meat for the table. No bitter herbs for the salads. A desolate and destitute land with no produce for the mouth of a man.

k) The Lamentation (32:16)

**32:16 "This is a lamentation and they shall chant it. The daughters of the nations shall chant it. Over Egypt and over all her hordes they shall chant it," declares the Lord GOD.**

The LORD would anger the hearts of the surrounding nations because of the trouble in Egypt. They would sing a dirge over Egypt. In those days, professional mourners in most of the countries were called the "*daughters of the nations*." They were simply paid to mourn at funeral events and sing dirges for the dead in front of the family in a ceremonial service of sorts.

**When I make the land of Egypt a desolation,  
And the land is destitute of that which filled it,  
When I smite all those who live in it,  
Then they shall know that I am the LORD (32:15).**