

Oracles Against the Nations

An Introduction and Reading

Ezekiel 25-33

If My People...

2 Chronicles 7:14. You've heard it many times, especially in an American context. "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." This is a verse I've heard invoked by American Christians upon our nation on too many occasions to count. Kim Riddlebarger wrote back in 2010,

It is common to hear Christians claim that America is a "Christian nation." Because our Lord's promise of divine protection is given to the church (**Matt 16:18**), the temptation is ever present for Christians to mistakenly assume that our Lord's promise extends beyond the church to that nation in which they live. The claim that "God is on our side" usu-

ally comes to fruition when politically active American evangelicals see themselves in a “culture war”—contending with secular-progressives for the soul of the nation. In the heat of battle, Christians invoke covenant promises made by God to Israel, thinking these promises apply to the United States *because* they believe that the United States is a Christian nation.¹

In that piece, he goes on to note how this Bible verse was found on [the National Day of Prayer website](#) with the following comment, “Our goal is to see communities transformed across America. That happens one family at a time. We know lives are being changed. We see the reports and statistics everyday (read Answered Prayer). We pray in expectation knowing that God can and will make a difference if we seek Him, turn from our ways and repent (**II Chronicles 7:14**).” The National Day of Prayer is run by the National Day of Prayer Task Force, a privately funded, non-profit evangelical Christian organization. However, setting aside a national day of prayer itself comes from [a governmental act](#) of the U.S. Congress in 1952, signed by President Truman, and presidents have voluntarily attended and even spoken at the Washington DC gathering.

¹ [Kim Riddlebarger](#), “[If My People](#),” *Modern Reformation: Rightly Dividing the Word* (Sept/Oct [Sept 1] 2010).

To Reformed Christians like Riddlebarger, Michael Horton, and others of the so-called Reformed Two-Kingdoms (R2K) view of the church and state (I mentioned this in the sermon on Ezekiel 24), such a national, state-endorsed day of prayer and especially one that invokes a passage like **2Chron 7:14** is a profoundly dangerous confusion of the two kingdoms, so much so that to the point Evangelicals identify themselves as “**Christian Nationalists**” (of course, very few call themselves that, this is what they get called by others), they are actually committing **heresy**. Horton says,

Christian nationalism is a Christian heresy ... Civil religion being a corruption of the biblical faith is a heresy, it confuses the law with the gospel, a conditional covenant with the unconditional covenant of grace, and it confuses the promise that was made to Abraham of a worldwide family in one person Jesus with a conditional covenant with America as long as she is obedient and unrepentant and she can always come back, 2 Chronicles 7:14 and do it all over again and sort of rededicate herself and get back in God’s good graces.²

Now, I could take what I’ve just written one of several ways. I could start talking about what Christian Nationalism

² Michael Horton, with Collin Hansen and Justin Bigoney, “[Christian Nationalism: Heresy or Hype?](#)” *The Gospel Coalition* (May 11, 2021).

is or isn't; whether America is a Christian nation, thinking especially about our earliest colonial and later founding national and state documents; what the exact relationship between a church and its state should be, biblically speaking; etc. None of those are why I bring this up today, however.³

³ **Going Deeper.** I may write on this sometime as I've been thinking about it this week. My answer to whether America is a "Christian nation" depends wholly on what you mean. It is indisputable fact that documents such as the Mayflower Compact (Nov 11, 1620), the New Haven Colony Fundamental Agreement (June 4, 1639), the Connecticut Colony Fundamental Orders (Jan 14, 1639), the Dedham Covenant (1636), the Watertown Covenant (1630), were all **explicitly Christian covenants** and/or constitutions that invoked the Christian Faith and, sometimes, Jesus himself. They apparently saw this as a covenant renewal of the "covenant of grace" applied to their new civic politic, which was pretty much indistinguishable (especially in settings like a small boat going to a new world) from the church—they did not live in a post-U.S. Constitutional world. That said, from this point of view, it is difficult to argue that America was not viewed as a Christian nation.

However, when it comes to the founding documents of the United States, along with those of pretty much all the 50 states, we move very explicitly from Trinitarian language to, at best, God the Father language ("Natures' God," "Creator," "Supreme Judge of the world," "Supreme Ruler of the Universe," "Divine Providence," etc.). It is probably better to call it Unitarian or Deistic language, but still, in that historical context this would have pointed to what orthodoxy would call God the Father. This allowed them to appease Deists, Unitarians, Liberals, and even some orthodox under one umbrella. In this way, because they have self-consciously eliminated Jesus from the documents, by definition this could not be thought of as forming a *Christian* nation. Obviously, that isn't to say that they weren't trying to make it easy for Christianity to flourish and to create a moral people—they were. But that itself goes into their thinking of the First Amendment.

What's so interesting about all this to me is that because, biblically speaking, Jesus *is* nature's God, its Creator, and its Judge. Therefore, while they tried to get out from under Christian language, in evoking this God, they ironically did not. Because they very clearly did not follow the paths of ancient nations, who were all receiving their founding and moral codes from *the sons of God* (Hammurabi → Marduk via Shamash; Ur-Nammu → Nanna; Arnuwanda → Hatti; Sennacherib → Ashur; Mesha of Moab → Chemosh; etc.), this means our nation refused to set itself (or better, be set) under the covenantal authority of any of the sons of God, including Christ. Therefore, because the God of Creation is Triune, by both inescapable theology and default, they ironically acknowledged Jesus' supreme authority over them, thereby ironically, continuing on as a Christian nation in some respect.

One last thought is that what was clearly an extension of the covenant of grace for the Puritans, in claiming the Creator of the Universe to be the one who is directing our steps, it is likely that our Founding Fathers were invoking a different covenant—the *covenant of works* (or perhaps *Noah*), under which all nations are in fact subordinate to and accountable under. And it makes me wonder, what's so heretical about that?

Instead, we are entering into the third great section of Ezekiel’s prophecy. It concerns the so-called [Oracles Against the Nations](#) (OAN). I bring up [2Chron 7:14](#) and this particular response to America’s invoking it over our own nation for one reason. I absolutely agree with their basic premise. This particular verse comes in the context of *Israel’s* theocratic covenantal relationship between them and Yahweh. That covenant was initiated by him, not them. They—and no one else—were given specific covenant blessings and curses. Those blessings and curses applied to no one but them. The only ones who could even remotely claim those blessings is the church, and even we are under a “new covenant.” In this sense it is [misguided for a nation today](#) to apply *this* verse one-to-one to themselves.

However, this response, when simply left there, has a fatal flaw. When it is used to demonize those who appeal to this verse—especially the American context—it can go too far. The American context is historically complicated. It involves our nation’s real and complex relationship to the biblical God. Simply stopping at the critique creates a vacuum. That vacuum [cannot explain how God can and *does* hold nations accountable to him.](#)

While their own covenant theology systems—as systems—do seem to have a place for what I’m about to say, their rhetoric remain virtually silent on this issue. They never raise it. It’s as if it simply doesn’t exist. And this in my mind has profound implications for how Christians in a country like America are supposed to think about being involved in our own nation politically not just as Americans, but as Christians. But I’ll let the implications of that question be something you ruminate on in your own mind, in light of I’m going to take this.

You see, while it is true that the nations *as nations* are not in a theocratic covenant of grace relationship with Yahweh, that **does not mean they are not in a covenantal relationship with God at all**. In fact, it’s just the opposite. **Isaiah 24:5** says, “The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.” This comes as the culminating oracle in a series of oracles, oracles just like those we are entering into in Ezekiel ... against *the nations* (**Isa 13-27**). In other words, this statement about breaking the everlasting covenant isn’t spoken to Israel. It is spoken to all the inhabitants of the earth. In other words, **all the nations are in fact in covenant with God**.

The two words **laws** (*torot*; plural of *torah*) and **statutes** (*choq*), refer to the instructions, teaching, and direction from God that encompass God's revealed ways, moral principles, and guidance for life (the former), and the fixed, appointed, and decreed moral boundaries that men are not to cross (the latter). We might align the former with the specific instructions God gave to Adam or Cain or Lamech or Noah (ala James in **Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25**) to pass down to their posterity and the latter to the laws of nature which bleed over into eternal moral laws that all people have the requirements of written on their hearts in **Romans 1:18-2:16**.

Together they make up what God very clearly calls a **covenant**. You can talk about this as the **covenant of works**, which very much is *not* identical to the covenant God gave to Israel. You could also talk about it as the **covenant with Noah**, which is deeply related to the covenant of works, but with a gracious promise attached that God would never drown the world in a flood again like he did. In either or both ways, the point is that all the nations are in fact in a covenant with God—though it is not the Israelite covenant.

How else can you possibly explain **God rightly judging the nations** for the evil they have done in both general evil and, in many cases in Ezekiel, especially in how they did

harm to Israel, causing *it* to break *its* covenant with *their* God? They have to be accountable to him somehow. The only way this works logically or legally is if they are in fact in covenant with God.⁴ And if they are in covenant with God, then **it simply isn't the full story** to tell us that you can't apply something like **2Chron 7:14** to America. Because the fact of the matter is, nearly all of the moral universals in that verse which God directed Israel follow was later ironically followed, not by Israel, but *by Ninveh*, when they called upon God's name, humbled themselves, sought his face, and turned from their wicked ways when Jonah preached doom to them. God in fact heard from heaven and forgave their sin and healed their land, i.e. the city was not overthrown in 40 days as was promised by Jonah.

With that said, in what we are about to read together, there is virtually nothing the prophet says that signals that God is offering **a reprieve of doom** to the nations. They read very much like **absolute judgments** that are coming down, and in fact, they did come down every bit as certainly as the

⁴ Picking up from the last note, it is important to say that while the nations are all in a general covenant with the Creator God, in the ancient world they each in fact were in covenant to their respective patron deity from the divine council. This is made clear in their own covenant codes. In this way, Israel's covenant of grace with Yahweh, in mirroring these peculiar covenants with the sons of God must be viewed as Israel's covenant with the Son of God—Yahweh. See Code of Hammurabi; Law of Ur-Nammu; Hittite Laws / Instructions for Temple Personnel (CTH 264); Sennacherib's Prism Inscription; Moabite Mesha Stele; etc.

judgment upon Jerusalem did. However, I want to point out that even many of the oracles against Jerusalem, read by themselves, seem to indicate that there is no room for repentance and turning back to God. Yet, that was precisely the point of reading them all as a literary unit with Ezekiel 18, “I do not take pleasure in the death of anyone ... but would that they turn and repent” center. In fact, though individually many of them read as if repentance doesn't matter, repentance in fact was the heart of the oracles. And that thought takes us now to a brief introduction of **Ezekiel 25-33**, for I want to help you see that at the heart of these oracles is virtually the same heart of God being revealed to the nations.

Ezekiel 24-33 in Context

Ezekiel 25-33 is the Oracles Against the Nations. It parallels others lists such as we find in **Isaiah 13-27**, **Amos 1-2**, **Jeremiah 46-51**; etc. Taken in order, we find oracles against (1) **Ammon** (Ezek 25:1-7), (2) **Moab** (8-11), (3) **Edom** (12-14), (4) **Philistia** (15-17), (5) **Tyre** (26:1-28:19), (6), **Sidon** (28:20-26), (7) **Egypt** (chs. 29-32). Seven nations.



If you look on a map, this becomes a [clockwise list](#) up through the first six, taking us entirely around Judah. The seventh, Egypt, itself consists of [seven independent oracles](#) (29:1-16; 17-21; 20:1-19; 20-26; 31:1-18; 32:1-16, 17-32). This reminds us of the patterns of seals, trumpets, and bowls in Revelation that are all series of sevens. The clockwise mo-

tion signifies total encirclement of Israel. These are the nations that surround Judah on all sides, thus creating a visual “ring of judgment.” In other words, no enemy of Israel is going to escape Yahweh’s scrutiny. In tracing these nations, it also shows that Yahweh is reclaiming the territory that surrounds his Holy Center in Jerusalem. The enemies who thought Judah was defenseless are shown to be fully encompassed by the same sovereign God who once protected Israel. And this sequence would have been deeply reassuring to the exiles in Babylon. Yes, he has judged us, but no one else is going to get away with murder either.

Egypt breaks this pattern though and the reason why is that **Egypt was always the most dangerous enemy**. It is also the climactic judgment and it reminds us of the days when Israel lived as a slave in their country. The **seven** oracles against them, like the seven nations themselves, show complete, perfect, final judgment is coming upon all the peoples. In standing outside the circle, they stand for something transcendent, the cosmic rebellion of all nations against Yahweh. They are no longer local enemies, but stand for the global, archetypal power, much like Babylon, which Ezekiel does not judge (unlike Isaiah and Jeremiah).

Now, a couple of ideas to keep in mind when reading are first, there is [a substantial amount of poetry here](#). Along with pure judgment oracles (70-80%), these are the two main genres. These poems are generally laments, several of which follow that 3-2, longer-shorter pattern we saw in ch. 19 and that makes Lamentations famous. These poems in turn were likely inspired from earlier Israelite [liturgical](#) settings, especially around the temple worship, where they would call upon the Lord to judge their enemies or lament their treatment by them.⁵

As poetry, it is not only liturgical in nature, but [mythological](#). By myth, I do not mean fake or fiction. I mean an origin story. In particular, especially with Tyre and Egypt, we are dealing with the so-called [Chaoskampf](#), where the hero battles the chaos monster to defeat it.⁶ In our oracles, the hero is Yahweh and he is battling the chaos monsters who rule over these nations, be they dragons or guardian cherubim or trees in Eden. The point of this is to help Israel see that even though they are being judged and no longer have a nation or king, that God—whom they rejected as king long

⁵ See John B. Geyer, *Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles about the Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2004), esp. chs. 4-5, 11.

⁶ C. L. Crouch, "[Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations in Light of a Royal Ideology of Warfare](#)," *JBL* 130.3 (2011): 473-92.

ago is still on his throne. He will defeat all enemies that threaten not only his sovereign order, but his chosen people—even if they themselves have sinned against him.

The structure of these chapters follow an ABA pattern of oracles against the neighbor nations vs. oracles against Egypt with the Judgment on the fallen cherub and Tyre being the center. That center clearly reflects God’s heart of sadness over the rebellion of the devil, even as he cries out in the center of Jerusalem (18), lamenting their lack of repentance. It’s a very similar idea.

- A. Yahweh Comes to His Temple (Ezek 1-11)
- B. Oracles of Judgment (12-23)
- C. Jerusalem Besieged (24)
- D. Oracles Against the Neighbor Nations (25:-28:10)**
- E. Judgment on the Fallen Cherub (28:11-19)**
- D’. Oracles Against the Far Nation (29-32)**
- C’. Jerusalem Falls (33)
- B’. Oracles of Restoration (34-39)
- A’. Yahweh Comes to His Temple (40-48)⁷

Meanwhile, first four nations are each their own ABA mini-chiasms,⁸ while the last seven oracles against Egypt are also chiastic:

⁷ Summary of Jiří Moskala, “[Notes on the Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel](#),” *Andrews University* (2016): 102-110.

⁸ See various structures at “[Ezekiel](#),” *Biblical Chiasm Exchange*.

A. Oracle 1 – Ezek 29:1–16. Date: 7th year, 10th month, 12th day (Jan 5–6, 587 BC).
Theme: Pharaoh as great dragon in the Nile; hooked, cast into wilderness; 40 years of desolation
Key: Judgment on Egypt's pride and false security

B. Oracle 2 – Ezek 29:17–21 Date: 27th year, 1st month, 1st day (Apr 26, 571 BC)
Theme: Nebuchadnezzar's wages; Egypt as payment after Tyre siege
Key: Babylon as God's agent of judgment

C. Oracle 3 – Ezek 30:1–19 Date: Undated (contextually near 587 BC)
Theme: Day of the Lord lament; Egypt and allies desolate (Pathros, Cush, Put, etc.)
Key: Cosmic mourning and widespread destruction

X. Oracle 4 – Ezek 30:20–26 (CENTER) Date: 11th year, 1st month, 7th day (Apr 29, 587 BC) Theme:
Pharaoh's arms broken (twice); strength given to Nebuchadnezzar
Key: Decisive weakening of Egypt's power — the turning point of the oracles

C'. Oracle 5 – Ezek 31:1–18 Date: 11th year, 3rd month, 1st day (Jun 21, 587 BC)
Theme: Parable of the great cedar (Assyria as warning); proud tree cut down and cast down
Key: Warning of fall for arrogant empires (parallel lament/desolation)

B'. Oracle 6 – Ezek 32:1–16 Date: 12th year, 12th month, 1st day (Mar 3, 585 BC)
Theme: Lament over Pharaoh as lion/dragon cast into pit; nations mourn
Key: Babylon again as agent; Pharaoh's downfall sung as dirge

A'. Oracle 7 – Ezek 32:17–32 Date: 12th year, 12th month, 15th day (Mar 17, 585 BC)
Theme: Lament; Egypt's descent to Sheol with other nations (uncircumcised, slain)
Key: Final gathering in the underworld; total humiliation and end

While it does not say God is in **covenant** with the nations explicitly like Isaiah does, the idea is certainly present, for the point of these judgments is the same as with Israel: That they might know that the LORD is God (nearly 20x: **25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23, 24, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15**). That is covenantal language! They are also judged according to covenantal standards of justice (gloating, vengeance, pride, injustice).

Finally, this section of Ezekiel appears to continue weaving the units of thought together in two and three columns. We will be noticing those in coming weeks. Now, off to the Oracles against the Nations.

Ezekiel 25-33

25 The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, set your face toward the Ammonites and prophesy against them. Say to the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord God: Thus says the Lord God, Because you said, ‘Aha!’ over my sanctuary when it was profaned, and over the land of Israel when it was made desolate, and over the house of Judah when they went into exile, therefore behold, I am handing you over to the people of the East for a possession, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings in your midst. They shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and Ammon a fold for flocks. Then you will know that I am the Lord. For thus says the Lord God: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the malice within your soul against the land of Israel, therefore, behold, I have stretched out my hand against you, and will hand you over as plunder to the nations. And I will cut you off from the peoples and will make you perish out of the countries; I will destroy you. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

“Thus says the Lord God: Because Moab and Seir said, ‘Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations,’ therefore I will lay open the flank of Moab from the cities, from its cities on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. I will give it along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession, that the Ammonites may be remembered no more among the nations, and I will execute judgments upon Moab. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

“Thus says the Lord God: Because Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah and has grievously offended in taking vengeance on them, therefore thus says the Lord God, I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast. And I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel, and they shall do in Edom according to my anger and according to my wrath, and they shall know my vengeance, declares the Lord God.

“Thus says the Lord God: Because the Philistines acted revengefully and took vengeance with malice of soul to destroy in never-ending enmity, therefore thus says the Lord

God, Behold, I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the rest of the seacoast. I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I lay my vengeance upon them.”

26 In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, because Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, ‘Aha, the gate of the peoples is broken; it has swung open to me. I shall be replenished, now that she is laid waste,’ therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers, and I will scrape her soil from her and make her a bare rock. She shall be in the midst of the sea a place for the spreading of nets, for I have spoken, declares the Lord God. And she shall become plunder for the nations, and her daughters on the mainland shall be killed by the sword. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

“For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a

host of many soldiers. He will kill with the sword your daughters on the mainland. He will set up a siege wall against you and throw up a mound against you, and raise a roof of shields against you. He will direct the shock of his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. His horses will be so many that their dust will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen and wagons and chariots, when he enters your gates as men enter a city that has been breached. With the hoofs of his horses he will trample all your streets. He will kill your people with the sword, and your mighty pillars will fall to the ground. They will plunder your riches and loot your merchandise. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. Your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters. And I will stop the music of your songs, and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more. I will make you a bare rock. You shall be a place for the spreading of nets. You shall never be rebuilt, for I am the Lord; I have spoken, declares the Lord God.

“Thus says the Lord God to Tyre: Will not the coastlands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan, when slaughter is made in your midst?

Then all the princes of the sea will step down from their thrones and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments. They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground and tremble every moment and be appalled at you. And they will raise a lamentation over you and say to you,

“ ‘How you have perished,
you who were inhabited from the seas,
O city renowned,
who was mighty on the sea;
she and her inhabitants imposed their terror
on all her inhabitants!
Now the coastlands tremble
on the day of your fall,
and the coastlands that are on the sea
are dismayed at your passing.’

“For thus says the Lord God: When I make you a city laid waste, like the cities that are not inhabited, when I bring up the deep over you, and the great waters cover you, then I will make you go down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the world below, among ruins from of old, with those who go

down to the pit, so that you will not be inhabited; but I will set beauty in the land of the living. I will bring you to a dreadful end, and you shall be no more. Though you be sought for, you will never be found again, declares the Lord God.”

27 The word of the Lord came to me: “Now you, son of man, raise a lamentation over Tyre, and say to Tyre, who dwells at the entrances to the sea, merchant of the peoples to many coastlands, thus says the Lord God:

“O Tyre, you have said,
‘I am perfect in beauty.’

Your borders are in the heart of the seas;
your builders made perfect your beauty.

They made all your planks
of fir trees from Senir;
they took a cedar from Lebanon
to make a mast for you.

Of oaks of Bashan
they made your oars;
they made your deck of pines
from the coasts of Cyprus,
inlaid with ivory.

Of fine embroidered linen from Egypt
was your sail,
serving as your banner;
blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah
was your awning.
The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad
were your rowers;
your skilled men, O Tyre, were in you;
they were your pilots.
The elders of Gebal and her skilled men were in you,
caulking your seams;
all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in you
to barter for your wares.

“Persia and Lud and Put were in your army as your men of war. They hung the shield and helmet in you; they gave you splendor. Men of Arvad and Helech were on your walls all around, and men of Gamad were in your towers. They hung their shields on your walls all around; they made perfect your beauty.

“Tarshish did business with you because of your great wealth of every kind; silver, iron, tin, and lead they exchanged for your wares. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech traded

with you; they exchanged human beings and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. From Beth-togarmah they exchanged horses, war horses, and mules for your wares. The men of Dedan traded with you. Many coastlands were your own special markets; they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony. Syria did business with you because of your abundant goods; they exchanged for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral, and ruby. Judah and the land of Israel traded with you; they exchanged for your merchandise wheat of Minnith, meal, honey, oil, and balm. Damascus did business with you for your abundant goods, because of your great wealth of every kind; wine of Helbon and wool of Sahar and casks of wine from Uzal they exchanged for your wares; wrought iron, cassia, and calamus were bartered for your merchandise. Dedan traded with you in saddlecloths for riding. Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams, and goats; in these they did business with you. The traders of Sheba and Raamah traded with you; they exchanged for your wares the best of all kinds of spices and all precious stones and gold. Haran, Canneh, Eden, traders of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad traded with you. In your market these traded with you in choice garments, in clothes of

blue and embroidered work, and in carpets of colored material, bound with cords and made secure. The ships of Tarshish traveled for you with your merchandise. So you were filled and heavily laden in the heart of the seas.

“Your rowers have brought you out
into the high seas.

The east wind has wrecked you
in the heart of the seas.

Your riches, your wares, your merchandise,
your mariners and your pilots,
your caulkers, your dealers in merchandise,
and all your men of war who are in you,
with all your crew
that is in your midst,
sink into the heart of the seas
on the day of your fall.

At the sound of the cry of your pilots
the countryside shakes,
and down from their ships
come all who handle the oar.

The mariners and all the pilots of the sea
stand on the land

and shout aloud over you
and cry out bitterly.
They cast dust on their heads
and wallow in ashes;
they make themselves bald for you
and put sackcloth on their waist,
and they weep over you in bitterness of soul,
with bitter mourning.
In their wailing they raise a lamentation for you
and lament over you:
‘Who is like Tyre,
like one destroyed in the midst of the sea?
When your wares came from the seas,
you satisfied many peoples;
with your abundant wealth and merchandise
you enriched the kings of the earth.
Now you are wrecked by the seas,
in the depths of the waters;
your merchandise and all your crew in your midst
have sunk with you.
All the inhabitants of the coastlands
are appalled at you,
and the hair of their kings bristles with horror;

their faces are convulsed.
The merchants among the peoples hiss at you;
you have come to a dreadful end
and shall be no more forever.’ ”

28 The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God:

“Because your heart is proud,
and you have said, ‘I am a god,
I sit in the seat of the gods,
in the heart of the seas,’
yet you are but a man, and no god,
though you make your heart like the heart of a god—
you are indeed wiser than Daniel;
no secret is hidden from you;
by your wisdom and your understanding
you have made wealth for yourself,
and have gathered gold and silver
into your treasuries;
by your great wisdom in your trade
you have increased your wealth,
and your heart has become proud in your wealth—

therefore thus says the Lord God:
Because you make your heart
like the heart of a god,
therefore, behold, I will bring foreigners upon you,
the most ruthless of the nations;
and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your
wisdom
and defile your splendor.
They shall thrust you down into the pit,
and you shall die the death of the slain
in the heart of the seas.
Will you still say, 'I am a god,'
in the presence of those who kill you,
though you are but a man, and no god,
in the hands of those who slay you?
You shall die the death of the uncircumcised
by the hand of foreigners;
for I have spoken, declares the Lord God."

Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God:

“You were the signet of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
every precious stone was your covering,
sardius, topaz, and diamond,
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle;
and crafted in gold were your settings
and your engravings.

On the day that you were created
they were prepared.

You were an anointed guardian cherub.
I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God;
in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.

You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created,
till unrighteousness was found in you.

In the abundance of your trade
you were filled with violence in your midst, and you
sinned;
so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God,
and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub,
from the midst of the stones of fire.

Your heart was proud because of your beauty;
you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

I cast you to the ground;
I exposed you before kings,
to feast their eyes on you.

By the multitude of your iniquities,
in the unrighteousness of your trade
you profaned your sanctuaries;
so I brought fire out from your midst;
it consumed you,
and I turned you to ashes on the earth
in the sight of all who saw you.
All who know you among the peoples
are appalled at you;
you have come to a dreadful end
and shall be no more forever.”

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, set your face toward Sidon, and prophesy against her and say, Thus says the Lord God:

“Behold, I am against you, O Sidon,
and I will manifest my glory in your midst.

And they shall know that I am the Lord
when I execute judgments in her
and manifest my holiness in her;
for I will send pestilence into her,
and blood into her streets;
and the slain shall fall in her midst,
by the sword that is against her on every side.
Then they will know that I am the Lord.

“And for the house of Israel there shall be no more a brier to prick or a thorn to hurt them among all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Then they will know that I am the Lord God.

“Thus says the Lord God: When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and manifest my holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they shall dwell in their own land that I gave to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell securely in it, and they shall build houses and plant vineyards. They shall dwell securely, when I execute judgments upon all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Then they will know that I am the Lord their God.”

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt; speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God:

“Behold, I am against you,
Pharaoh king of Egypt,
the great dragon that lies
in the midst of his streams,
that says, ‘My Nile is my own;
I made it for myself.’

I will put hooks in your jaws,
and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales;
and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams,
with all the fish of your streams
that stick to your scales.

And I will cast you out into the wilderness,
you and all the fish of your streams;
you shall fall on the open field,
and not be brought together or gathered.
To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens
I give you as food.

Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord.

“Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel, when they grasped you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; and when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their loins to shake. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will bring a sword upon you, and will cut off from you man and beast, and the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

“Because you said, ‘The Nile is mine, and I made it,’ therefore, behold, I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Cush. No foot of man shall pass through it, and no foot of beast shall pass through it; it shall be uninhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated countries, and her cities shall be a desolation forty years among cities that are laid waste. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries.

“For thus says the Lord God: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom

they were scattered, and I will restore the fortunes of Egypt and bring them back to the land of Pathros, the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations. And it shall never again be the reliance of the house of Israel, recalling their iniquity, when they turn to them for aid. Then they will know that I am the Lord God.”

In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre. Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against her. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt as his payment for which he labored, because they worked for me, declares the Lord God.

“On that day I will cause a horn to spring up for the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

30 The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord God:

“Wail, ‘Alas for the day!’

For the day is near,
the day of the Lord is near;
it will be a day of clouds,
a time of doom for the nations.
A sword shall come upon Egypt,
and anguish shall be in Cush,
when the slain fall in Egypt,
and her wealth is carried away,
and her foundations are torn down.

Cush, and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya, and the people of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

“Thus says the Lord:
Those who support Egypt shall fall,

and her proud might shall come down;
from Migdol to Syene
they shall fall within her by the sword,
declares the Lord God.

And they shall be desolated in the midst of desolated coun-
tries,
and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid
waste.

Then they will know that I am the Lord,
when I have set fire to Egypt,
and all her helpers are broken.

“On that day messengers shall go out from me in ships
to terrify the unsuspecting people of Cush, and anguish shall
come upon them on the day of Egypt’s doom; for, behold,
it comes!

“Thus says the Lord God:

“I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt,
by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
He and his people with him, the most ruthless of nations,
shall be brought in to destroy the land,
and they shall draw their swords against Egypt

and fill the land with the slain.

And I will dry up the Nile
and will sell the land into the hand of evildoers;
I will bring desolation upon the land and everything in it,
by the hand of foreigners;
I am the Lord; I have spoken.

“Thus says the Lord God:

“I will destroy the idols
and put an end to the images in Memphis;
there shall no longer be a prince from the land of Egypt;
so I will put fear in the land of Egypt.
I will make Pathros a desolation
and will set fire to Zoan
and will execute judgments on Thebes.
And I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium,
the stronghold of Egypt,
and cut off the multitude of Thebes.
And I will set fire to Egypt;
Pelusium shall be in great agony;
Thebes shall be breached,
and Memphis shall face enemies by day.

The young men of On and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the
sword,
and the women shall go into captivity.
At Tehaphnehes the day shall be dark,
when I break there the yoke bars of Egypt,
and her proud might shall come to an end in her;
she shall be covered by a cloud,
and her daughters shall go into captivity.
Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt.
Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

31 In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and behold, it has not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so that it may become strong to wield the sword. Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken, and I will make the sword fall from his hand. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them through the countries. And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms

of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a man mortally wounded. I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall. Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude:

“Whom are you like in your greatness?
Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon,
with beautiful branches and forest shade,
and of towering height,
its top among the clouds.
The waters nourished it;
the deep made it grow tall,
making its rivers flow
around the place of its planting,
sending forth its streams
to all the trees of the field.

So it towered high
above all the trees of the field;
its boughs grew large
and its branches long
from abundant water in its shoots.

All the birds of the heavens
made their nests in its boughs;
under its branches all the beasts of the field
gave birth to their young,
and under its shadow
lived all great nations.

It was beautiful in its greatness,
in the length of its branches;
for its roots went down
to abundant waters.

The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it,
nor the fir trees equal its boughs;
neither were the plane trees
like its branches;
no tree in the garden of God
was its equal in beauty.

I made it beautiful
in the mass of its branches,

and all the trees of Eden envied it,
that were in the garden of God.

“Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because it towered high and set its top among the clouds, and its heart was proud of its height, I will give it into the hand of a mighty one of the nations. He shall surely deal with it as its wickedness deserves. I have cast it out. Foreigners, the most ruthless of nations, have cut it down and left it. On the mountains and in all the valleys its branches have fallen, and its boughs have been broken in all the ravines of the land, and all the peoples of the earth have gone away from its shadow and left it. On its fallen trunk dwell all the birds of the heavens, and on its branches are all the beasts of the field. All this is in order that no trees by the waters may grow to towering height or set their tops among the clouds, and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height. For they are all given over to death, to the world below, among the children of man, with those who go down to the pit.

“Thus says the Lord God: On the day the cedar went down to Sheol I caused mourning; I closed the deep over it, and restrained its rivers, and many waters were stopped. I clothed Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field

fainted because of it. I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit. And all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the world below. They also went down to Sheol with it, to those who are slain by the sword; yes, those who were its arm, who lived under its shadow among the nations.

“Whom are you thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? You shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the world below. You shall lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword.

“This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord God.”

32 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him:

“You consider yourself a lion of the nations,
but you are like a dragon in the seas;
you burst forth in your rivers,
trouble the waters with your feet,
and foul their rivers.

Thus says the Lord God:
I will throw my net over you
with a host of many peoples,
and they will haul you up in my dragnet.
And I will cast you on the ground;
on the open field I will fling you,
and will cause all the birds of the heavens to settle on you,
and I will gorge the beasts of the whole earth with you.
I will strew your flesh upon the mountains
and fill the valleys with your carcass.
I will drench the land even to the mountains
with your flowing blood,
and the ravines will be full of you.
When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens
and make their stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon shall not give its light.
All the bright lights of heaven
will I make dark over you,
and put darkness on your land,
declares the Lord God.

“I will trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries that you have not known. I will make many peoples appalled at you, and the hair of their kings shall bristle with horror because of you, when I brandish my sword before them. They shall tremble every moment, every one for his own life, on the day of your downfall.

“For thus says the Lord God: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. I will cause your multitude to fall by the swords of mighty ones, all of them most ruthless of nations.

“They shall bring to ruin the pride of Egypt,
and all its multitude shall perish.

I will destroy all its beasts
from beside many waters;

and no foot of man shall trouble them anymore,
nor shall the hoofs of beasts trouble them.

Then I will make their waters clear,
and cause their rivers to run like oil,
declares the Lord God.

When I make the land of Egypt desolate,
and when the land is desolate of all that fills it,
when I strike down all who dwell in it,

then they will know that I am the Lord.

This is a lamentation that shall be chanted; the daughters of the nations shall chant it; over Egypt, and over all her multitude, shall they chant it, declares the Lord God.”

33 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and send them down, her and the daughters of majestic nations, to the world below, to those who have gone down to the pit:

‘Whom do you surpass in beauty?

Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.’

They shall fall amid those who are slain by the sword. Egypt is delivered to the sword; drag her away, and all her multitudes. The mighty chiefs shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of Sheol: “They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’

“Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit; and her company is all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living.

“Elam is there, and all her multitude around her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who went down uncircumcised into the world below, who spread their terror in the land of the living; and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. They have made her a bed among the slain with all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for terror of them was spread in the land of the living, and they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit; they are placed among the slain.

“Meshech-Tubal is there, and all her multitude, her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword; for they spread their terror in the land of the living. And they do not lie with the mighty, the fallen from among the uncircumcised, who went down to Sheol with their weapons of war, whose swords were laid under their heads, and whose iniquities are upon their bones; for the terror of the mighty men was in the land of the living. But as for you, you shall be broken and lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword.

“Edom is there, her kings and all her princes, who for all their might are laid with those who are killed by the sword;

they lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit.

“The princes of the north are there, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down in shame with the slain, for all the terror that they caused by their might; they lie uncircumcised with those who are slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.

“When Pharaoh sees them, he will be comforted for all his multitude, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, declares the Lord God. For I spread terror in the land of the living; and he shall be laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword, Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord God.”

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman, and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning;

his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.

“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

“And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

“And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just. When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it. And when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he shall live by this. Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways.”

In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and said, “The city has been struck down.” Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me the evening before the fugitive came; and he had opened my mouth by the time the man came to me in the morning, so my mouth was opened, and I was no longer mute.

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, the inhabitants of these waste places in the land of Israel keep saying, ‘Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess.’ Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord God: You eat flesh with the blood and lift up your eyes to your idols and shed blood; shall you then possess the land? You rely on the sword, you commit abominations, and each of you defiles his neighbor’s wife; shall you then possess the land? Say this to them, Thus says the Lord God: As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword, and whoever is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who are in strongholds and in caves shall die by pestilence. And I will make the land a desolation and a waste, and her proud might shall come to an end, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that none will pass

through. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations that they have committed.

“As for you, son of man, your people who talk together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, say to one another, each to his brother, ‘Come, and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.’ And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain. And behold, you are to them like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it. When this comes—and come it will!—then they will know that a prophet has been among them.”