

Ezekiel 31:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Analysis

To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden?—Rhetorical question to Pharaoh: which Eden tree compares to you? The answer: none, yet all fell. **Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth**—Despite glory and greatness, Egypt will descend אֶל-אֶרֶץ תַּחְתִּית ('el-'ereṣ taḥtîṭ, 'to the lowest earth').

Thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword—Among עֲרֵלִים ('ărēlîm, 'uncircumcised')—for Egypt, ritually contemptible (Egyptians practiced circumcision, viewing uncircumcised as barbarous). **This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD**—The identification הוּא פַרְעֹה (hû' phar'ôh, 'this is Pharaoh') personalizes the judgment. All the metaphors—great cedar, mighty tree, glory of Eden—describe Egypt's king and nation. Their fate is sealed: Sheol, among the uncircumcised, slain by the sword. The oracle against Egypt (chapters 29-32) concludes with this grim certainty.

Historical Context

This concluding verse of chapter 31 (given 587 BC) proved accurate. Egypt fell to Babylon (568/567 BC), declined under Persia (525 BC), and lost independence permanently. 'Lying among the uncircumcised'—Egypt's proud civilization reduced to ignominy—fulfilled exactly. Ezekiel's extended metaphor (cedar, Eden trees, Sheol descent) proved prophetically accurate in historical reality.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What is the rhetorical force of asking 'to whom art thou like?' before declaring shared doom?
2. How does lying 'among the uncircumcised' add insult to injury for Egypt?
3. What do extended metaphors (tree, arm, etc.) accomplish that plain prophecy cannot?

Interlinear Text

אֶל H413	מִי H4310	דָּמָה יְתָ H1819	כְּכֹה H3602	בְּכָבוֹד H3519	וּבְגָדָל H1433
		To whom art thou thus like		in glory	and in greatness
	עֲצֵי H6086	עֵדֶן H5731	וְהוֹרַדְתָּ H3381	אֶת H854	עֲצֵי H6086
	among the trees	of Eden	yet shalt thou be brought down		among the trees
עֵדֶן H5731	אֶל H413	אֶרֶץ H776	תַּחַת יָם H8482	בֵּת וָוֶן H8432	עֲרֵל יָם H6189
of Eden		of the earth	unto the nether parts	in the midst	of the uncircumcised
	תִּשְׁכַּב H7901	אֶת H854	חַלְלֵי H2491	בְּחֶרֶב H2719	הוּא H1931
thou shalt lie		with them that be slain	by the sword		This is Pharaoh
וְכָל H3605	הַמִּוֹנִה H1995	נֹא H5002	אֲדָנִי H136	יְהוָה H3069	
	and all his multitude	saith	the Lord	GOD	

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 32:19 (Parallel theme): Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised.

Ezekiel 32:21 (Word): The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.

Ezekiel 28:10 (References God): Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

Psalms 52:7 (References God): Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

Matthew 13:19 (Word): When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Ezekiel 31:16 (Parallel theme): I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.

Ezekiel 31:2 (Parallel theme): Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness?