

# Ezekiel 32:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.

## Analysis

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**For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.** After vivid imagery, God identifies the instrument: Babylon. The phrase **the sword of the king of Babylon** (cherev melekh-Babel) is both literal (military conquest) and theological (divine judgment). Nebuchadnezzar isn't acting independently; he's Yahweh's appointed executioner. This echoes Isaiah 10:5-6, where Assyria is called "the rod of mine anger."

The brevity and directness of this verse is striking: **no elaboration, no escape clause, no conditional "if."** The Hebrew tavo (תָּבוֹת, "shall come") is emphatic certainty, not possibility. God's word is settled; the execution awaits only timing. Egypt's elaborate defenses, military might, and political alliances are irrelevant when God decrees judgment.

This demonstrates a consistent biblical principle: **God uses pagan nations to judge covenant-breaking peoples.** Babylon conquered both Judah (God's chosen) and Egypt (God's enemy), proving Yahweh's sovereignty over all nations. The NT extends this: God uses even hostile authorities to accomplish His purposes (Romans 13:1-4). Human rulers execute divine mandates, whether they acknowledge God or not. History is not autonomous but providentially governed.

## Historical Context

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Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) was the ancient world's most powerful ruler. After conquering Jerusalem (586 BC), he turned toward Egypt. A fragmentary Babylonian text confirms Nebuchadnezzar's Egyptian campaign circa 568-567 BC, precisely as Ezekiel prophesied.

For Jewish exiles, this prophecy provided theological clarity: Babylon wasn't merely a military superpower but God's instrument. The same sword that fell on Jerusalem (judgment for covenant unfaithfulness) would fall on Egypt (judgment for arrogance and false-god worship). This validated Ezekiel's message: submit to Babylon because resistance fights against God's sovereign decree. The exiles needed to understand their captivity wasn't random tragedy but purposeful discipline under divine control.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does recognizing God's sovereignty over hostile powers (governments, systems, individuals) affect how you respond to opposition?
2. What does it mean practically to submit to God's providence even when His instruments are ungodly people or institutions?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּ לֹא מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה אָדָן יְהוָה אָמַר כִּי אָמַר כִּי  
H3588 H3541 For thus saith the Lord H136 H3068 The sword of the king H4428 H894

תִּבְאַלְתָּה

shall come

H935

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