

Ezekiel 32:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I am the LORD.

Analysis

When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I am the LORD. God states the purpose of judgment: **then shall they know that I am the LORD** (ve-yadu ki-ani YHWH). This signature phrase appears over 70 times in Ezekiel. Judgment isn't vindictive but revelatory—designed to strip away false confidences and force recognition of Yahweh's unique deity and sovereign authority.

The land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full emphasizes total reversal. Egypt's famous fertility ("breadbasket of the ancient world"), teeming population, bustling commerce, magnificent cities—all reduced to emptiness. The Hebrew shamem (שָׁמֵם, "desolate") and neshamah (נֶשֶׁמֶת, "destitute") convey utter devastation. **When I shall smite all them that dwell therein** makes clear this is comprehensive, not selective judgment.

This reveals God's missionary purpose even in wrath: forcing acknowledgment of His lordship from those who refused voluntary worship. Romans 1:18-20 teaches that God's eternal power and deity are evident in creation, leaving humans without excuse. When people suppress this truth, God sometimes uses catastrophic judgment to shatter illusions and demand recognition. **Better to know God**

through grace than through wrath, but knowing Him is the ultimate human obligation and destiny.

Historical Context

Egypt's wealth and fertility were legendary throughout the ancient world. Genesis describes Egypt as well-watered like the garden of the Lord (Genesis 13:10). During famines, surrounding nations looked to Egypt for grain (Genesis 41-42). Egypt's agricultural surplus, strategic location controlling trade routes, and monumental architecture made it seem invincible.

Nebuchadnezzar's invasion (568-567 BC) shattered this image. While not permanently depopulated, Egypt suffered significant devastation and never regained superpower status. The prophecy's fulfillment demonstrated that even mighty Egypt answered to Yahweh. For Jewish exiles, this vindicated Ezekiel's message: their God wasn't a weak tribal deity defeated by Babylon but the sovereign Lord of all nations who used Babylon to judge both His people (Judah) and His enemies (Egypt).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that judgment's purpose is revealing God's lordship (not mere punishment) affect your view of trials and discipline in your own life?
2. What false securities or 'fullnesses' might God need to strip away from your life so you truly know Him as LORD?

Interlinear Text

וְנִשְׁתַּפְתִּי בְּתָהָרִי	אַתָּה אַתָּה רֹאשׁ מִצְרַיִם	שְׁמַמְתִּי הַמִּזְרָחִים	וְנִשְׁתַּפְתִּי הַמִּזְרָחִים
When I shall make	and the country	of Egypt	desolate
H5414	H853	H4714	H8077
אַתָּה אַתָּה רֹאשׁ מִצְרַיִם	וְנִשְׁתַּפְתִּי הַמִּזְרָחִים	שְׁמַמְתִּי הַמִּזְרָחִים	desolate
and the country	of that whereof it was full	when I shall smite	shall be destitute
H776	H4393	H5221	H8074
כָּל אֶת בְּהִכּוֹת מִתְּלָא אֶת וְשָׁבֵי בְּהִכּוֹת	when I shall smite	they know	will then know
all them that dwell	H0	H3588	H589
H3427	H3045		
אֶת גַּם אֶת וְשָׁבֵי בְּהִכּוֹת			
that I am the LORD			
H3068			

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 7:5 (References Lord): And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

Ezekiel 6:7 (References Lord): And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Exodus 14:18 (References Lord): And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.

Exodus 14:4 (References Lord): And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

Psalms 9:16 (References Lord): The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.

Ezekiel 29:12 (References Egypt): And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years: and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

Ezekiel 30:26 (References Lord): And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

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