

Ezekiel 32:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Analysis

It came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, This chronological marker dates the prophecy to April 586 BC (calculating from Ezekiel's exile in 597 BC), just months before Jerusalem's final destruction in July-August 586 BC. The precision of dating—**twelfth year, fifteenth day of the month**—authenticates the prophecy and allows historical verification. Biblical prophets carefully recorded when God's word came, distinguishing true revelation from human speculation.

The phrase **the word of the LORD came unto me** (hayah debar-YHWH elai) is Ezekiel's standard formula for divine revelation (occurring 50+ times in the book). This isn't Ezekiel's opinion or political analysis but authoritative communication from Yahweh. The prophet serves as mouthpiece, not originator. This distinction is crucial: **true prophets speak God's word, not their own ideas, even when the message is unpopular or personally costly.**

The timing is significant: while Jerusalem was under final siege, God directed Ezekiel to prophesy Egypt's fall. This encouraged the exiles: Babylon wasn't just attacking Judah randomly but executing divine judgment universally. The same power crushing Jerusalem would crush Egypt. God's sovereignty over both Israel and the nations demonstrated His unique deity. **No nation escapes His authority; all history unfolds according to His decree.**

Historical Context

The twelfth year of Jehoiachin's exile (597 BC) brings us to April 586 BC, during Jerusalem's final siege (begun January 588 BC, ending July-August 586 BC with the city's destruction). Ezekiel received this oracle while his countrymen were suffering Babylon's assault. The exiles in Babylon may have heard news of Jerusalem's desperate situation, sparking questions about God's justice and power.

God's response was to reveal Egypt's coming judgment—the nation Judah had foolishly trusted for military aid (Jeremiah 37:5-7). This oracle served multiple purposes:

1. explaining why Egyptian help failed—God had decreed Egypt's own judgment
2. demonstrating God's sovereignty over all nations, not just Israel,
3. warning against trusting human powers instead of divine promises.

The careful dating allowed later generations to verify the prophecy's fulfillment when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt circa 568-567 BC.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the precision of biblical prophecy's dating and fulfillment strengthen your confidence in Scripture's divine inspiration?
2. When facing trials, how can you cultivate confidence in God's sovereign control over all nations and circumstances, not just your immediate situation?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי	בַּשָּׁנָה י	עָשָׂר ה	שָׁנָה ה	בַּחֲמִישָׁה ה	
H1961	It came to pass also in the twelfth	H6240	year	in the fifteenth	
	H8147		H8141	H2568	
עַשְׂרָה	לַחֹדֶשׁ	הָיָה	דְּבַר	יְהוָה ה	אֵלַי י
H6240	day of the month	H1961	that the word	of the LORD	H413
	H2320		H1697	H3068	

וַיָּבֹא אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

came unto me saying

H559

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 32:1 (Word): And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,