

**Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church
Bible Sharing Program 2025-2027
Session #12: Prophecies Against the Nations (Part II),
Egypt (29:1-32:32)**

CCSS = Cath Commentary on Sacred Scriptures
SK = See Ko Chinese Bible
NAB = New American Bible
SN = Special Notes

A	<u>Synopsis</u> - With the rise of Assyria (9th-7th BC) and Babylon (7th to 6th BC), Israel and Judah (the northern and southern kingdoms) were perennially tempted to make an alliance with Egypt against the dominant powers of Assyria and Babylon. The prophets consistently warned against this. Egypt was an unreliable ally. For Israel to turn to Egypt amounted to a rejection of the Lord and his power. - Throughout chapters 29-32, God utilizes seven oracles of judgement against Egypt.	CCSS 207
B	<u>Two Oracles of Judgement Against Egypt</u> - The first oracle took place one year into Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem (year of 587). Amidst the siege of Jerusalem, Pharaoh and his army marched towards Israel to offer support. This caused Nebuchadnezzar to lift the siege temporarily, but soon Pharaoh retreated and the siege was renewed. - Egypt is charged with two offenses: 1. Pharaoh boasts that he is a god, "My Nile is my own; I made it". 2. Egypt's failure to deliver on the promise of helping Israel, "Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel ... when they leaned upon you, you broke". - Punishment against Egypt: Egypt will suffer forty years of desolation and loss; they will be scattered among the nations. At the end of forty years, the Lord will regather Egypt and bring her back to the land. They will become "the most lowly of the kingdoms" => punishment, compassion, humility. - The second oracle was written fifteen years after the fall of Jerusalem (571). God reveals how Nebuchadnezzar fails to get "anything from Tyre to pay for the labour that he had performed against it". Therefore, the Lord is now handing over Egypt to the Babylonian king "as his recompense for which he laboured, because they worked for me". The might of God works in history without interfering with human free will, mysteriously fulfilling His plan.	29:1-21, CCSS 209-210 29:3, Ps 95:5, 29:6-7 29:12-14 29:17-21 BSP #11 C2 SN 1&2

C	<u>The Third and Fourth Oracles Against Egypt</u> “Wail, alas for the day!” because “the day of the Lord is near” (vv2-3). The third oracle against Egypt is a lamentation, lamenting the disasters that will befall Egypt and the friendly or the surrounding nations, including “Ethiopia and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya, and the people of the land that is in league” (v5). God “will put an end to the wealth of Egypt, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” (v10). “I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken” (v22). Pharaoh Hophra boasted as one “with a strong arm”, thus, God will strike his “shoulder” to rid of his power. Not only that, even the arm “that was broken” will be broken again. The injured shoulder refers to his unsuccessful attempt to break the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 588. “I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations” (v26) - There is neither historical proof nor evidence to suggest that the Egyptians have ever been exiled to foreign lands like Israel (northern and southern kingdoms). However, from Alexander the Great to present day, Egypt has, indeed, suffered many defeats, major or minor.	30:1-26 CCSS 30:1-19 CCSS 216-7 CCSS 217
D	<u>The Fifth Oracle Against Egypt: Parable of Judgement Against the Great Tree</u> “I liken you to a cedar in Lebanon” - according to the Hebrew text, it says, “Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon”. The majority of English translations and scholars follow the Hebrew text. Accordingly, verses 1-2 and verse 18 point directly to Pharaoh while the rest is a story about the rise, glory, and fall of Assyria, offered as a cautionary tale for Pharaoh: If Assyria, an empire far greater than Egypt suffered a devastating collapse, what will be the fate of Egypt when they face threats from Nebuchadnezzar? - Though the warning is about Pharaoh, the message is to caution those who were exiled in Babylon and the Israelites besieged in Jerusalem not to trust Pharaoh. “When it goes down to Sheol I will make the deep mourn for it.” (v15) - understanding the concept of “hell” (EN), “sheol” (HB), “hades” (GK) in Scriptures. How is it different from purgatory?	31:1-18 CCSS 219 SN3

E	<u>The Sixth and Seventh Oracles Against Egypt</u> • The sixth oracle is dated to “the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month”, two months after Ezekiel received news of the fall of Jerusalem (33:21). “You consider yourself a lion among 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” (v2). Pharaoh likens himself to a lion and dragon, the prophet uses the same images to foretell and lament the devastation of Egypt by Babylon: “The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you” (v11). • The message: Nations will understand that even a powerful nation such as Egypt could not escape defeat and devastation when they disregard God’s authority, “then they will know that I am the Lord” (v15). • The seventh oracle was written fifteen days after the previous oracle. In this oracle, the fate of Egypt, struck down by God, and the children of other nations is the same, “bear the shame with those who go down to the Pit” (v30). This, once again, reaffirms God’s authority over all nations and human history. • The leaders and people descended into the Pit include Assyria, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, Sidon, and the princes of the north. They all “fall by the sword” (vv 26,28,29, etc.) => they all face a terrible fate that is beyond their control. Israel is not on the list of nations. The message: Though those who besiege and persecute the nation of Israel seem to have an upper hand; however, God takes special care of His Chosen People. They will be beaten down, but Israel will be lifted up after its fall. This is the message of this book: God will restore Israel and grant them different kinds of grace.	32:1-32 CCSS 32:1-16 32:17-32 SN3 CCSS 226
---	--	--

Special Notes:

1. God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil. He permits it, however, because he respects the freedom of his creatures and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it. (CCC 311)
2. “God ‘writes’ the world like men write words, to convey truth and love.” (S. Hahn, A Father Who Keeps His Promises, p.22)
3. The concept of “hell” (EN), “sheol” (HB), “hades” (GK) according to Scriptures. How is it different from purgatory?
 - “Sheol” is the most common term in the Old Testament for the place of the dead, both the good and the wicked. (Ps 89-49, Eze 32:17-32, Lk 16:22-26)
 - There are glimmers of hope of escaping from (and even avoiding) Sheol: Ps 49:16, 16:10 (Acts 2:31 => Resurrection of the Messiah). This foretells that God will “swallow up death forever” and grant the resurrection of the flesh (Is 25:8, 26:19, Dan 12:2-3).
 - The death and resurrection of Christ liberate humans from the power of hell who, through salvific grace, will enjoy resurrection and eternal life.
 - Christ, by death, descended into the place of the dead (sheol), so that the righteous who have died for Him may be saved. (CCC 633, 1Peter 3:29, Eph 4:8-9, Rev 1:17)
 - This “prison” in the underworld is neither heaven (1Peter 3:19: “in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison”) nor hell (CCC 1034: “Jesus often speaks of “Gehenna” of “the unquenchable fire” reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe and be converted, where both soul and body can be lost”). This shows that one may not end up in heaven or hell after death; there is another place that is neither heaven nor hell.
 - Through Jesus, our only mediator between heaven and earth (1Tim 2:5), those who died in righteousness no longer need to await liberation by the Lord in the underworld with the wicked (1Pet 3:19). “Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ” (CCC 1023).
 - “All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (CCC 1030).
 - The place where purification occurs is purgatory, similar to the underworld, but not the same. It is neither heaven nor hell. (Mt 12:32, 1Cor 3:13-15, Rev 20:13)

(Resources: CCSS 221, 226-7, excerpts from CCC and related Scripture passages)