

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Egypt's Broken Arm (April 29, 587 BC)

Ezekiel 30:20–26

20 In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:

21 “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Look, it has not been bandaged for healing or set with a dressing so that it might become strong enough to grasp a sword.

22 Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Look, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and I will break his arms, the strong arm and the broken one, and I will make the sword drop from his hand.

23 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among foreign countries.

24 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and I will place my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan like the fatally wounded before the king of Babylon.

25 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall limp. Then they will know that I am the LORD when I place my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon and he extends it against the land of Egypt.

26 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among foreign countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Fall of the Great Tree (June 21, 587 BC)

Ezekiel 31

Description of the Great Tree

1 In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:

2 “Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and his hordes:

“Who are you like in your greatness?

3 [Behold a cypress], a cedar in Lebanon,
with beautiful branches, like a forest giving shade,
and extremely tall;
its top reached into the clouds.

4 The water made it grow;
underground springs made it grow tall.
Rivers flowed all around the place it was planted,
while smaller channels watered all the trees of the field.

5 Therefore it grew taller than all the trees of the field;
its boughs grew large and its branches grew long,
because of the plentiful water in its shoots.

6 All the birds of the sky nested in its boughs;
under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth,
in its shade all the great nations lived.

7 It was beautiful in its loftiness, in the length of its branches;
for its roots went down deep to plentiful waters.

8 The cedars in the garden of God could not eclipse it,
nor could the fir trees match its boughs;
the plane trees were as nothing compared to its branches;
no tree in the garden of God could rival its beauty.

9 I made it beautiful with its many branches;
all the trees of Eden, in the garden of God, envied it.

Fall of the Great Tree

10 “Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because it was tall in stature, and its top reached into the clouds, and it was proud of its height,

11 I gave it over to the leader of the nations. He has judged it thoroughly, as its sinfulness deserves. I have thrown it out.

12 Foreigners from the most terrifying nations have cut it down and left it to lie there on the mountains. In all the valleys its branches have fallen, and its boughs lie broken in the ravines of the land. All the peoples of the land have departed from its shade and left it.

13 On its ruins all the birds of the sky will live, and all the wild animals will walk on its branches.

14 For this reason no watered trees will grow so tall; their tops will not reach into the clouds, nor will the well-watered ones grow that high. For all of them have been appointed to die in the lower parts of the earth; they will be among mere mortals, with those who descend to the pit.

15 “This is what the sovereign LORD says: On the day it went down to Sheol I caused observers to lament. I covered it with the deep

and held back its rivers; its plentiful water was restrained. I clothed Lebanon in black for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it.

16 I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I threw it down to Sheol, along with those who descend to the pit. Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and the best of Lebanon, all that were well-watered, were comforted in the earth below.

17 Those who lived in its shade, its allies among the nations, also went down with it to Sheol, to those killed by the sword.

18 Which of the trees of Eden was like you in majesty and loftiness? You will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the lower parts of the earth; you will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword! This is what will happen to Pharaoh and all his hordes, declares the sovereign LORD.”

The Fall of Jerusalem (July 29, 587 BC)

2 Kings 25:2-7	Jeremiah 38:28b; 39:2-7	Jeremiah 52:5-11	2 Chronicles 36:17b
<p>2 The city remained under siege until</p> <p>King Zedekiah’s eleventh year.</p> <p>3 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city was so severe the residents had no food.</p> <p>4 The enemy broke through the city walls,</p> <p>and all the soldiers tried to escape. They left the city during the night. They went through the gate between the two walls that is near the king’s garden.</p> <p>(The Babylonians were all around the city.) Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.</p> <p>5 But the Babylonian army chased after the king. They caught up with him in the plains of Jericho,</p>	<p>38:28b The following events occurred when Jerusalem was captured.</p> <p>39:2 It lasted until the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah’s eleventh year.</p> <p>On that day they broke through the city walls.</p> <p>3 Then Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim, who was a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer, who was a high official, and all the other officers of the king of Babylon came and set up quarters in the Middle Gate.</p> <p>4 When King Zedekiah of Judah and all his soldiers saw them, they tried to escape. They departed from the city during the night. They took a path through the king’s garden and passed out through the gate between the two walls.</p> <p>Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.</p> <p>5 But the Babylonian army chased after them. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho</p>	<p>5 The city remained under siege until</p> <p>Zedekiah’s eleventh year.</p> <p>6 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city was so severe the residents had no food.</p> <p>7 They broke through the city walls,</p> <p>and all the soldiers tried to escape. They left the city during the night. They went through the gate between the two walls that is near the king’s garden.</p> <p>(The Babylonians had the city surrounded.) Then they headed for the Jordan Valley.</p> <p>8 But the Babylonian army chased after the king. They caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho,</p>	<p>17b who slaughtered their young men in their temple. He did not spare young men or women, or even the old and aging. God handed everyone over to him.</p>

<p>and his entire army deserted him. 6 They captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where he passed sentence on him. 7 Zedekiah’s sons were executed while Zedekiah was forced to watch. The king of Babylon then had Zedekiah’s eyes put out, bound him in bronze chains, and carried him off to Babylon.</p>	<p>and captured him. They took him to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon at Riblah in the territory of Hamath and Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence on him there. 6 There at Riblah the king of Babylon had Zedekiah’s sons put to death while Zedekiah was forced to watch. The king of Babylon also had all the nobles of Judah put to death. 7 Then he had Zedekiah’s eyes put out and had him bound in chains to be led off to Babylon.</p>	<p>and his entire army deserted him. 9 They captured him and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the territory of Hamath and he passed sentence on him there. 10 The king of Babylon had Zedekiah’s sons put to death while Zedekiah was forced to watch. He also had all the nobles of Judah put to death there at Riblah. 11 He had Zedekiah’s eyes put out and had him bound in chains. Then the king of Babylon had him led off to Babylon and he was imprisoned there until the day he died.</p>	
---	---	---	--

<p>Nebuzaradan Oversees the Pillaging and Destruction of Jerusalem (August 25–28, 587 BC)</p>			
<p>2 Kings 25:8–10, 13–17</p>	<p>Jeremiah 39:8</p>	<p>Jeremiah 52:12–14, 17–23</p>	<p>2 Chronicles 36:18–19</p>
<p>8 On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard who served the king of Babylon, arrived in Jerusalem. 13 The Babylonians broke the two bronze pillars in the LORD’s temple, as well as the movable stands and the big bronze basin called the “The Sea.” They took the bronze to Babylon. 14 They also took the pots, shovels, trimming shears, pans, and all the bronze utensils used by the priests. 15 The captain of the royal guard took the golden and silver censers and basins.</p>		<p>12 On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard who served the king of Babylon, arrived in Jerusalem. 17 The Babylonians broke the two bronze pillars in the temple of the LORD, as well as the movable stands and the large bronze basin called the “The Sea.” They took all the bronze to Babylon. 18 They also took the pots, shovels, trimming shears, basins, pans, and all the bronze utensils used by the priests. 19 The captain of the royal guard took the gold and silver bowls, censers, basins,</p>	<p>18 He carried away to Babylon all the items in God’s temple, whether large or small, as well as what was in the treasuries of the LORD’s temple and in the treasuries of the king and his officials.</p>

<p>16 The bronze of the items that King Solomon made for the LORD’s temple (including the two pillars, the big bronze basin called “The Sea,” the twelve bronze bulls under “The Sea,” and the movable stands) was too heavy to be weighed. 17 Each of the pillars was about 27 feet high.</p> <p>The bronze top of one pillar was about four and a half feet high and had bronze latticework and pomegranate-shaped ornaments all around it. The second pillar with its latticework was like it.</p> <p>9 He burned down the LORD’s temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem, including every large house. 10 The whole Babylonian army that came with the captain of the royal guard tore down the walls that surrounded Jerusalem.</p>	<p>8 The Babylonians burned down the royal palace, the temple of the LORD, and the people’s homes,</p> <p>and they tore down the wall of Jerusalem.</p>	<p>pots, lampstands, pans, and vessels. 20 The bronze of the items that King Solomon made for the LORD’s temple (including the two pillars, the large bronze basin called “The Sea,” the twelve bronze bulls under “The Sea,” and the movable stands) was too heavy to be weighed. 21 Each of the pillars was about 27 feet high, about 18 feet in circumference, three inches thick, and hollow. 22 The bronze top of one pillar was about seven and one-half feet high and had bronze latticework and pomegranate-shaped ornaments all around it. The second pillar with its pomegranate-shaped ornaments was like it. 23 There were ninety-six pomegranate-shaped ornaments on the sides; in all there were one hundred pomegranate-shaped ornaments over the latticework that went around it.</p> <p>13 He burned down the LORD’s temple, the royal palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem, including every large house. 14 The whole Babylonian army that came with the captain of the royal guard tore down the walls that surrounded Jerusalem.</p>	<p>19a They burned down the LORD’s temple</p> <p>19c They burned all its fortified buildings and destroyed all its valuable items.</p> <p>19b and tore down the wall of Jerusalem.</p>
--	---	---	--

Jerusalem’s Leaders Executed and the City Exiled to Babylon (August 25–28, 587 BC)

2 Kings 25:11–12, 18–21	Jeremiah 39:9–10	Jer 52:15–16, 24–28a, 29	2 Chronicles 36:20a
<p>18 The captain of the royal guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah, the priest who was second in rank, and the three doorkeepers. 19 From the city he took a eunuch who was in charge of the soldiers, five of the king’s advisers who were discovered in the city, an official army secretary who</p>		<p>24 The captain of the royal guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest who was second in rank, and the three doorkeepers. 25 From the city he took an official who was in charge of the soldiers, seven of the king’s advisers who were discovered in the city, an official army secretary who</p>	

<p>drafted citizens for military service, and sixty citizens from the people of the land who were discovered in the city.</p> <p>20 Nebuzaradan, captain of the royal guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.</p> <p>21a The king of Babylon ordered them to be executed at Riblah in the territory of Hamath.</p> <p>11 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, deported</p> <p>the rest of the people who were left in the city, those who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen.</p> <p>12 But he left behind</p> <p>some of the poor of the land and gave them fields and vineyards.</p> <p>21b So Judah was deported from its land.</p>	<p>9 Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took captive</p> <p>the rest of the people who were left in the city.</p> <p>He carried them off to Babylon along with the people who had deserted to him.</p> <p>10 But he left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing. He gave them fields and vineyards at that time.</p>	<p>drafted citizens for military service, and sixty citizens</p> <p>who were discovered in the middle of the city.</p> <p>26 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.</p> <p>27a The king of Babylon ordered them to be executed at Riblah in the territory of Hamath.</p> <p>15 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the royal guard, took into exile some of the poor, the rest of the people who remained in the city, those who had deserted to him, and the rest of the craftsmen.</p> <p>16 But he left behind</p> <p>some of the poor</p> <p>and gave them fields and vineyards.</p> <p>27b So Judah was taken into exile away from its land.</p> <p>28a Here is the official record of the number of people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile:</p> <p>29 in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year, 832 people from Jerusalem;</p>	<p>20a He deported to Babylon all who escaped the sword.</p>
--	--	--	--

Scripture quoted by permission. All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://bible.org> All rights reserved. This material is available in its entirety as a free download or online web use at <http://netbible.org/>.

Chronological Notes

- 1) For the calculation of the date of the fall of Jerusalem, see the following definitive paper: Rodger C. Young, "When Did Jerusalem Fall?" *JETS* 47.1 (Mar 2004): 21–38.
- 2) From that article, the following paragraphs are important to understand today's reading: "The writings of Jeremiah end with chapter 51 (Jer 51:64), so his methods of dating are not automatically applicable to the contents of chapter 52. The contents of that chapter, except for verses 28 through 30, are all parallel to passages in the last two chapters of 2 Kings, so the methods already determined for these chapters in 2 Kings (Tishri, non-accession reckoning) can be applied to the corresponding verses in Jeremiah 52. Verses 28 through 30 are independent of the Book of Kings and are interesting enough to require special consideration. Jer 52:28–30 gives the number of captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar in his seventh, eighteenth, and twenty-third

years. There is one thing certain about the counting of captives—the captives themselves are in no position to do it. Every king and pharaoh must have had an official assigned to this task, so that the number of those vanquished could be recorded on a stela or in the annals glorifying the king's exploits. Thus the list of captives in Jer 52:28–30 could not have originated in a Judean record—it came from the official records of Nebuchadnezzar. The years of the monarch would therefore be the Nisan, accession years used in Babylon. This is an independent verification of the use of non-accession years when Jeremiah and the author of the last two chapters of 2 Kings referred to Nebuchadnezzar: the seventh (accession) year of Jer 52:28 corresponds to the eighth (non-accession) year of 2 Kgs 24:12, and the eighteenth (accession) year of Jer 52:29 corresponds to the nineteenth (non-accession) year of 2 Kgs 25:8. These are not mistakes, as some have assumed. They are a valuable clue that the synchronisms to Nebuchadnezzar in 2 Kings were to be taken in a non-accession sense, and this conclusion could have been reached from these texts alone without going through the more thorough analysis of the present article" (p. 36).