

Ezekiel 29 is a sobering word against Egypt—a nation God’s people were tempted to trust instead of trusting Him. It exposes the pride of Pharaoh, the emptiness of leaning on human power, and the way God humbles nations that exalt themselves. It also reminds us that God rules over history, raises up and brings down kings, and always works toward His larger purpose of saving and restoring people to Himself.

And as we read it through the lens of the cross and the empty tomb, we are reminded that the same God who judges pride also sent His Son to shed His blood for us, and that the resurrection declares that Jesus is God, Savior, and Lord.

1. Pharaoh’s Pride and God’s Opposition (Ezekiel 29:1–6, 9–10)

“In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt. Speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster who lies in the midst of his rivers, who has said, “My River is my own; I have made it for myself.”’” (Ezekiel 29:1–3, NKJV)

The Lord singles out Pharaoh Haaibre (Hophra), the king of Egypt in Ezekiel’s day. Pharaoh is portrayed like a great sea monster lying in the Nile, boasting, *“My river is my own, I have made it for myself.”*

That is not just political arrogance; it is spiritual arrogance. The Nile was the lifeline of Egypt—its agriculture, economy, and identity. Pharaoh is acting as if he owns what only God can give.

God responds:

“Behold, I am against you... I will put hooks in your jaws, and cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales; I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers... I have given you to the beasts of the field and to the birds of the heavens as food.” (Ezekiel 29:3–5, NKJV)

Pharaoh thought he was secure and untouchable, but God would drag him out of his “river” and leave him exposed, humiliated, and judged.

Practical application

We may not rule a nation, but we can echo Pharaoh’s pride in subtler ways:

- “My career is mine. I built this.”
- “My money is mine. I earned this.”
- “My life is mine. I’ll do what I want.”

Scripture reminds us:

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...” (James 1:17, NKJV)

If we start talking as if we are self-made, we are already drifting into Pharaoh's error. The antidote is **gratitude and humility**—acknowledging that every resource, every breath, every opportunity is a gift from God.

2. Egypt: The Broken Reed (Ezekiel 29:6–7)

Israel had a bad habit: when they felt threatened, instead of crying out to the Lord, they ran to Egypt for help. It looked smart politically, but spiritually it was unbelief.

“Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their backs quiver.”

(Ezekiel 29:6–7, NKJV)

A reed may look sturdy, but it is hollow. Lean on it, and it breaks and pierces your hand. Egypt was like that to God's people. Judah leaned on them in crisis, and Egypt seemed promising for a moment—Pharaoh briefly pressured Babylon—but in the end, Egypt pulled back, and Judah was left to fall under Babylon's siege.

God wanted His people to learn: Do not lean on what cannot truly hold you.

Practical application

What is your “Egypt”?

- A government or political movement you think will “save” the nation?
- A job or bank account you think will secure your future?
- A relationship you are leaning on in place of leaning on the Lord?

We are meant to work, vote, plan, and relate—but not to *worship* or *trust* those things as our deepest security.

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.” (Psalm 118:8, NKJV)

When we lean too heavily on people, systems, or institutions, we are setting ourselves up for disappointment. Only the Lord can bear the full weight of our trust.

3. Forty Years of Desolation and a Humbled Egypt (Ezekiel 29:8–16)

God continues:

“Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Surely I will bring a sword upon you and cut off from you man and beast. And the land of Egypt shall become desolate and waste... No foot of man shall pass through it nor foot of beast pass through it, and it shall be uninhabited forty years.’”

(Ezekiel 29:8–11, NKJV)

The Lord promises a specific, measured judgment: forty years of scattering and desolation. Egypt would be struck, its people dispersed among the nations.

But notice: God's judgment is not only destructive; it is corrective and limited.

"Yet, thus says the Lord God: 'At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros... and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms... so that it will never again exalt itself above the nations... It shall never again be the confidence of the house of Israel.'"

(Ezekiel 29:13–16, NKJV)

Egypt would survive, but as a humbled kingdom. No longer the mighty empire it once was. No longer a "superpower" Israel could lean on. God would make sure His people would not keep running back to that broken reed.

Practical application

God sometimes allows the things we trust in to be shaken or reduced, not because He hates us, but because He loves us enough to expose our misplaced confidence.

- A career that seemed unstoppable suddenly hits a wall.
- A political ideology we thought would "fix everything" collapses.
- A relationship we idolized cracks under pressure.

When this happens, we can either grow bitter—or we can let it drive us to deeper trust in the Lord.

If God has allowed something you "leaned on" to be shaken, consider that He may be inviting you to a more solid, unshakable foundation: Himself.

4. Nebuchadnezzar's "Wages" and God's Sovereign Use of Nations (Ezekiel 29:17–21)

Years later, Ezekiel receives another word:

"And it came to pass in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor strenuously against Tyre... yet neither he nor his army received wages from Tyre, for the labor which they expended on it.'" (Ezekiel 29:17–18, NKJV)

Babylon had besieged Tyre for years and finally broken it, but by then much of the wealth had moved offshore. There was little spoil left. Humanly speaking, Babylon's soldiers worked for almost nothing.

God says:

"Therefore thus says the Lord God: 'Surely I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he shall take away her wealth, carry off her spoil, and remove her pillage; and that will be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor, because they worked for Me,' says the Lord God." (Ezekiel 29:19–20, NKJV)

This is remarkable. God calls Nebuchadnezzar—an idolatrous king—His instrument. He says, in effect: *“He worked for Me, and I will see that he is paid.”*

God is not endorsing Nebuchadnezzar’s morals or approving his idols. Rather, He is showing that even powerful pagan empires are under His hand, and He can use them to accomplish His purposes and then hold them accountable in His time.

The chapter closes with a brief word of hope:

“In that day I will cause the horn of the house of Israel to spring forth, and I will open your mouth to speak in their midst. Then they shall know that I am the Lord.”
(Ezekiel 29:21, NKJV)

God will not only bring down proud nations; He will lift up His people and reestablish their witness. Ezekiel, who spent years speaking judgment, will again speak hope. God’s goal is always that people might know that He is the Lord.

A Challenge for Believers

Ezekiel 29 presses several challenges into the hearts of those who follow Jesus:

1. Watch for pride.

- Do you find yourself thinking, “My success is mine; I made it”?
- Have you begun to see your gifts, talents, or resources as your own, rather than as a stewardship from God?

2. Examine what you lean on.

- Are you treating some “Egypt” as your real security—money, politics, connections, intellect?
- If any of those were stripped away, would your faith stand?

3. Respond rightly when God shakes your supports.

- If He has allowed a “broken reed” in your life to give way, let it turn you toward deeper dependence on Him, not toward bitterness or despair.

4. Remember the cross and the resurrection.

- God is not just the Judge of nations; He is the Savior who stepped into history.
- Jesus shed His blood on the cross to bear the judgment we deserve.
- His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

We are not called to live fearful, self-reliant lives. We are called to live as people purchased, forgiven, and secured by the crucified and risen Christ.

An Invitation to Those Who Have Not Yet Given Their Life to Jesus

Maybe as you read this, you realize you have been living like Pharaoh in your own way:

- You have treated your life, your body, your future as if they were entirely yours.
- You have leaned on your own wisdom, your own strength, or on “Egypt” that cannot really save you.
- You may even feel some of those supports cracking under your weight.

The Bible calls this posture sin: living independent from God, ignoring His rightful rule over your life. Left to itself, that path leads to judgment—not only in this life, but beyond.

But here is the good news:

- God did not simply abandon us to our pride.
- Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, came into this world and lived a sinless life.
- He willingly went to the cross, and when He shed His blood, He bore the judgment our sins deserve.
- On the third day, He rose from the dead. His resurrection declares beyond doubt that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

Because of Jesus, you do not have to be crushed under judgment like Egypt or exposed in pride like Pharaoh. You can be forgiven, reconciled to God, and given a new heart and a new life.

If you sense the Lord speaking to you, you can respond to Him right now. There is no magic formula, but you might pray something like this:

“Lord Jesus, I admit that I have sinned and tried to run my own life. I have leaned on my own strength and trusted in things that cannot save me. I believe that You shed Your blood on the cross for my sins and that You rose again from the dead. I confess that You are God, Savior, and Lord. I turn from my sin and my self-rule and I give my life to You. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new. Teach me to follow You for the rest of my life.”

If you truly turn to Him, He will not turn you away.

He can forgive your past, steady your present, and secure your future.

May we learn from Ezekiel 29 to stop leaning on broken reeds, to humble ourselves before the Lord, and to rest our confidence in the One who shed His blood for us and rose again in power.