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## Ezekiel 31

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Ezekiel 31.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

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### Topics.

- The LORD is against Pharaoh King of Egypt.
- The greatness of Assyria.
- All Assyria is given over to death, to the world below.
- Eden and best of Lebanon were comforted in the world below.
- The nations quake when the LORD cast Assyria's down to sheol.

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

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Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the "likeness" of the LORD". Ezekiel was keenly aware of God's presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem. After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God's covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (chpt. 37) is a classic picture of God's ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead. Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem. Ezekiel's message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins. For a greater overview of the entire book, visit the introduction to the book of Ezekiel in chapter one.

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**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EZEKIEL AND JERUSALEMS HISTORY

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The following is a brief overview of the history of Ezekiel and Jerusalem.

- Ezekiel and all the people of influence have been in Babylonian captivity for about eleven years (Ezek. 30:20) (Ezek. 31:1).
- Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's armies about a year ago (Ezekiel 24).
- Those who were at Jerusalem when it was brought to ruin have been in captivity for about one year.

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### EZEKIEL 31:1-2

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**The LORD is against Pharaoh King of Egypt.**

- **Ezekiel 31:1-2:** In *the eleventh year*, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>"Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: "Whom are you like in your greatness?"

Egypt is a great nation, but Pharaoh the king is puffed up in pride, self-exaltation and self-glory; he thinks he is invincible so the LORD in the following verses shows him how mighty a kingdom Assyria was before it came to ruin.

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## EZEKIEL 31:3-14

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### The Greatness of Assyria.

- **Ezekiel 31:3-14:** Behold, Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with beautiful branches and forest shade, and of towering height, its top among the clouds. <sup>4</sup>The waters nourished it; the deep made it grow tall, making its rivers flow around the place of its planting, sending forth its streams to all the trees of the field. <sup>5</sup>So it towered high above all the trees of the field; its boughs grew large and its branches long from abundant water in its shoots. <sup>6</sup>All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth to their young, and under its shadow lived all great nations. <sup>7</sup>It was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its roots went down to abundant waters. <sup>8</sup>The cedars in the garden of God could not rival it, nor the fir trees equal its boughs; neither were the plane trees like its branches; no tree in the garden of God was its equal in beauty. <sup>9</sup>I made it beautiful in the mass of its branches, and all the trees of Eden envied it, that were in the garden of God. <sup>10</sup>"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Because it towered high and set its top among the clouds, and its heart was proud of its height, <sup>11</sup>I will give it into the hand of a mighty one of the nations. He shall surely deal with it as its wickedness deserves. I have cast it out. <sup>12</sup>Foreigners, the most ruthless of nations, have cut it down and left it. On the mountains and in all the valleys its branches have fallen, and its boughs have been broken in all the ravines of the land, and all the peoples of the earth have gone away from its shadow and left it. <sup>13</sup>On its fallen trunk dwell all the birds of the heavens, and on its branches are all the beasts of the field. <sup>14</sup>All this is in order that no trees by the waters may grow to towering height or set their tops among the clouds, and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height. For they are all given over to death, *to the world below*, among the children of man, with those *who go down to the pit*.

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### Assyria was:

- A great and majestic nation, that towered above all nations and gave multitudes of people shelter (v3).
- A financially successful and prosperous nation that caused the land and people of the surrounding nations to flourish (v4).
- A mighty nation whose kingdom grew and spread out across the land of many nations (v5).
- A nation so mighty that all other great nations lived under its dominion and kingship (v6).
- A strong and glorious nation with an abundance of wealth and power (v7).

**NOTICE:** the LORD says God made Assyria so glorious that even His own Kingdom envied it and could not rival it in power and glory (v8-9). But Assyria in its strength and beauty became proud, and puffed up in pride and self-glory so God cast it off and brought it to ruin (v10-11).

### All Assyria is Given over to Death, to the World Below.

The words, "All Assyria is given over to death, to the world below, among the children of man, with those who go down to the pit" (v14) are used in some circles of Christianity to support the horrific theory that those who are judged unworthy of eternal life go to a place of fiery flames called hell

where they are not only cruelly and brutally tortured by evil eternal creatures called demons, but their bodies are also burned by fiery flames so that they suffer the worst of all agonies for all eternity. This doctrine is not only a gross misunderstanding of Scripture but is also a gross misrepresentation of God's character, since it portrays Him as an extremely sadistic God since not even the secular world would inflict such brutal and cruel torture on a human for their entire life let alone for all eternity. Added to this John tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8) (1 John 4:16). This horrific doctrine of hell was no-doubt perpetuated in the early years of the church by religious leaders to scare the naïve into the church and has been adopted and perpetuated by their followers from generation to generation through tradition and religious institutions and organisations. The words "The world below" do not refer to a place called hell it is a personification of the dead and the grave. For further information see the titles:

- Hell or the Grave (Final destination of Humans).
- The Lake of Fire.
- Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Lesson for today:** no matter how poor or lowly your circumstances if you do right by God your eternal end will be exalted far above the most noble, the most glorious, the most rich and wealthy and the most powerful king who died without God in this world.

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### EZEKIEL 31:15-17

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#### **Eden and Best of Lebanon were Comforted in the World Below.**

- **Ezekiel 31:15-17:** Thus, says the Lord GOD: On the day the cedar went down to Sheol (the grave) I caused mourning; I closed the deep over it, and restrained its rivers, and many waters were stopped. I clothed Lebanon in gloom for it, and all the trees of the field fainted because of it. <sup>16</sup>I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit. And all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the world below. <sup>17</sup>They also went down to Sheol with it, to those who are slain by the sword; yes, those who were its arm, who lived under its shadow among the nations.

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**The cedar:** (v15) is Assyria.

**The pit:** is a mass grave (i.e. a massive hole in the ground in which multitudes of dead bodies are buried), they are used on a battlefield to stop disease spreading and because there is not enough men to dig single graves for the multitudes who are killed in battle.

**Closed the deep over it:** (v15) means the LORD covered the land of Assyria with multitudes of dead bodies in graves (or in the pit). The pit is like a mass grave (i.e. a large hole in the ground where multitudes of dead bodies are buried together). Today they are used on a battle field (to stop disease spreading) and because there is not enough men to dig single graves for the hundreds who die in battle. Even though the bodies are buried in one mass grave they are still sometimes referred to as a grave. This is because wherever a person's dead body lies whether it is on the surface of earth, in the depth of the oceans or in a grave or pit in biblical language it can be referred to as their grave.

**All the trees of the field:** (v16) refer to nations.

**Trees Comforted in the world below:** the words, "All the trees of Eden, the best of Lebanon, all that drink water, were comforted in the world below" (v16) refers to all the greatest of nations that fed and prospered off Assyria also came to ruin, they were comforted in a figurative sense by the fact that the nation they looked up to and trusted in also was brought to ruin.

**Following is a modern day example of this type of language:** it is similar to, when people trust the counsel of a financial advisor and invest their wealth into the companies that the advisor convinced them were solid and secure investments, and then those companies go belly up and the investors lose everything, but their financial advisor continues to live the rich life in his multimillion dollar mansions, and driving around in top of the range cars. The investors, who lost everything because of their financial advisors advice are of course filled with anger, it is not until they see him suffer as they have suffered that they feel at least to some degree justice has been done, it is in this same sense that the nations who trusted in Assyria are comforted when they see that Assyria has also been bought to ruin, destruction and the grave as they have.

**The world below:** this is not teaching that there are dead people who have a world of their own below the surface of the earth; it is biblical symbolic and poetic language to depict the end of the nations who trusted in Assyria and Assyria itself. For further information see the title:

- Death (What happens when we Die).
- Pit Old and New Testament.

Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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### **EZEKIEL 31:18**

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#### **The Focus is now Back to Pharaoh King of Egypt.**

- **Ezekiel 31:18:** Whom are you (Pharaoh of Egypt) thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? You (Pharaoh) shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the world below. You shall lie among the uncircumcised, with those who are slain by the sword. "This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, declares the Lord GOD.

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**SUMMARY:** God has blessed the nation of Egypt, but Pharaoh the King is full of pride, self-exaltation and self-glory thinking he is invincible, so God brings to his attention how glorious and powerful the kingdom of Assyria was and reminds him that God brought it to ruin. Then God basically asks Pharaoh what makes him think he is so invincible when God can so easily bring to ruin such a mighty, powerful and glorious nation as Assyria.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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