

Introduction: We began last weeks sermon with this thought. People are _____. If that was true last week then this week we should begin this weeks sermon with this thought: people are _____. Currently there are 156,533 confirmed cases and 5835 deaths world wide. In the United States there are 2836 total cases identified so far. There have been 57 deaths. 48 have fully recovered. 10 are considered serious or critical.

- Every part of our _____ - entertainment, the courts, the economy have all been impacted by this disease. I certainly makes some of the chapters in Revelation more believable especially for those who insist on a strictly figurative level. Even Walmart is shortening its hours.
- In last weeks sermon we focused on the oracles against Tyre Edom, Moab, and Philistia- we learned three truths that apply to this passage as well.
 - God is _____ of all the earth
 - God is LORD of _____.
 - God is King of _____.
- Do we believe these truth are true of God? How we answer that question will influence how we face the _____ crisis. In many ways the Cornavirus has helped us place ourselves in the shoes of the exiled Israelites.

Overview of these chapters: The focus is on a single nation Egypt and it breaks down into 7 sections all but one dated.

- 29:1–16 Pharaoh, crocodile of the Nile, will be slain and his country reduced to nothing. The date (1) was 7 January 587 bc, when the siege of Jerusalem had been going on for about one year already. Hophra had been Pharaoh in Egypt since 589 bc, and had expansionist plans in Palestine. The goal is to _____ any idea of placing hope in Egypt for deliverance.
 - Ezekiel uses two pictures for Egypt. 1) Pharaoh is portrayed as a grand crocodile basking in the Nile, imagining that the river itself is owned and indeed created by him himself. 2) the famous reeds from which papyrus was (and is still) made. They were useless as a staff or crutch So
- Nebuchadnezzar will plunder Egypt in compensation for Tyre (29:17–21). This short section is actually the last recorded prophecy of Ezekiel. Its date, 26 April 571 bc, places it two years after the great visions of chapters 40–48. It was also about sixteen years after siege of Jerusalem, The siege had lasted 13 years and left the Babylonians exhausted and empty- no plunder
- Egypt will experience God’s judgment on ‘the day of the Lord’ (30:1–19). Egypt was now facing the same destiny as Israel herself: namely, *the day of the Lord* (3). This expression goes a long way back in Israel’s history. Originally it seems to have been a term that summarized Israel’s expectations that Yahweh would defeat their enemies and raise Israel herself up in victory and salvation.
- Nebuchadnezzar will break the arms of the Pharaoh (30:20–26) 29 April 587 Pharaoh is like a soldier with a broken arm and no sling. Soon he will be as useless as a soldier with two broken arms—easy prey for the mighty sword of Babylon.
- The felling of Egypt’s cosmic tree (31:1–18). This one likens Pharaoh and all his majestic pomp and arrogance to the great cosmic tree which, is like a ‘the tree of life’
- The destruction of the Egyptian monster (32:1–16) Dated 3 March 585 bc, this oracle comes some time after the news of the final fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar had already reached the exiles. There was no longer any hope of deliverance coming from Egypt. Egypt will fall as other great empires before it.
- Pharaoh and his army descend to the underworld (32:17–32) Two weeks later, on 17 March 585, Ezekiel conducted the funeral rites of Egypt and brought his remarkable series of oracles against that one state to a climactic ending. Basically, God instructs Ezekiel to bury Egypt (18)

Key thought: As LORD of history God is moving history to a _____. He will _____ - every person and nation will recognize “then they (the Egyptians) will know I am Yahweh.” *“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,” (Philippians 2:9–10)* How does God do this.

- I. The sovereignty of God in the midst of _____. “At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting

dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" (Daniel 4:34-35)

- A. It is universal. Ezekiel, along with all the other prophets, affirms that Yahweh is universally sovereign over the affairs of the nations of the world *in general*. This goes back to the earliest part of Israel's history-(Deuteronomy 2:5, 9-12)
 - 1. God's sovereignty includes human freedom. Human beings make their own plans and act out of the evil of their own hearts, and we know from Scripture that God is as grieved and angry as we are—more so, rather—at the depths and extent of human evil on the international stage.
 - 2. His purposes will not ultimately be defeated, and even the evil that people do can be turned to good ends by his sovereign power.
- B. The focal point of God's sovereignty is Israel. Yahweh will defend Israel from the hatred and attacks of her enemies (esp. chs. 25 and 35).
 - 1. The paradox of these chapters is that it is the God of one of the tiny captured peoples who proclaims that he is in complete charge of the seismic shifts of the great empires which appeared to control the destiny of the little peoples. Is 40:22-24
 - 2. Israel only existed at all because of God's ultimate purpose, declared to Abraham, to bring blessing to all nations.
- C. The consistency of God sovereignty. If Israel behaved like an enemy of Yahweh, in her rebelliousness, unfaithfulness and covenant disloyalty, then she would find herself spoken to and treated as such.

II. The _____ of empires as the pattern of human history

- A. No human empire lasts for ever. In biblical history the sequence of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome is well known.. Walter Brueggemann again helpfully analyses the prophetic interpretation of the rise and fall of the nations, especially the great superpowers.
 - 1. *Yahweh's mandate*. Yahweh intends that there should be world powers, and that these world powers should indeed govern, but govern within the bounds of Yahweh's mandate
 - 2. *Temptation to absolutize power*. The seduction to autonomy, which is assigned in this testimony to the first three superpowers [Egypt, Assyria, Babylon], is the temptation to absolutize power that appears to be absolute but is not.
 - 3. *Decisive break in power*. In world history great kingdoms rise and fall. What is noteworthy in this testimony ... is that no explanation for the fall of great powers is credited except the governance of Yahweh.
 - 4. *Hope for recovery*. The recovery of lost power is characteristically an act of hope, not accomplished yet in reportable history.

III. The knowledge of God as the goal of _____

- A. We must have a passion, like Ezekiel for the glory of God among the nations. 'O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel.
- B. We must have a passion, like Ezekiel for the glory of God in the church. (1 Kings 18:36)
- C. We must not separate the Great Commission with God's movements among the nations.

Conclusion: How would God humble the United States? By demonstrating His Sovereignty over our idols? A revival cannot happen unless a nation realizes God is _____. The US has three idols that God must address.

- He will challenge our concept of _____. The world's concept of freedom is doing what we want. The Biblical concept of freedom is the ability to do what you ought. At the heart of freedom is self-control. The founders believed that freedom is only possible for a people capable of self-restraint.
- He will challenge our _____. Tyre's ship of state was not a warship, but a merchant ship. She did not need to conquer other nations and subdue them by military might. She ruled the waves through economic imperialism.
- He will reveal the limitations of our _____. As I've pointed out in other sermons the NT portrayal of Roman soldiers is a positive one. At no point did Jesus or John the Baptist ever tell a Roman soldier that he had to leave the military to be faithful. But as I have been teaching the children and idol is a good thing that has become too important. If the last few years has taught us anything it is that with all of our technological might we are limited in what we can do militarily.