

Timber!!!
Felling the Pharaonic Cedar
Ezekiel 31:1–18
Veritas Adult Community
January 16, 2021

^{31:1} In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first [day] of the month, the following message of YHWH came to me: ² Human, say to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and to his pomp:

To whom do you compare in your greatness?

³ Look, Assyria!

A cedar in Lebanon, with beautiful branches, giving protective shade,
towering high, with its crown among the clouds.

⁴ Waters nourished it; the deep caused it to grow tall,
sending its streams around its bed
and causing its channels to flow to all the trees of the field.

⁵ So it towered over all the trees of the field.

Its branches multiplied,
And its boughs grew long,

⁶ In its branches all the birds of the sky made their nests;
And under its boughs all the wild animals bore their young,
While in its shadow lived all the great nations.

⁷ It was beautiful with its height—
with the length of its branches,
Because its roots were beside abundant waters.

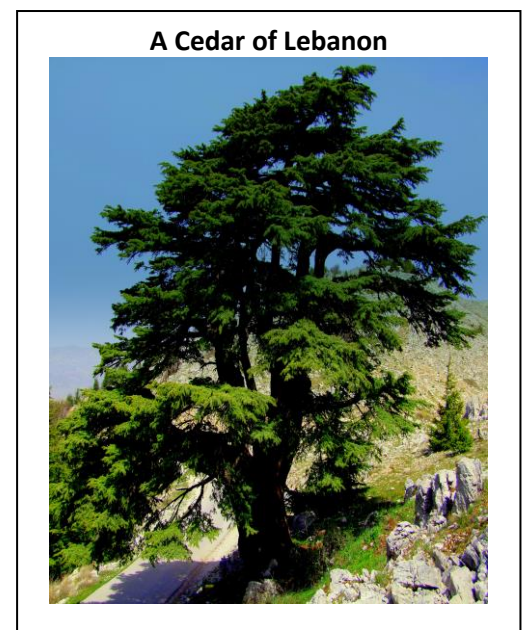
⁸ Cedars in the garden of God cannot compare with it;
Cypresses cannot match its branches,
Nor can plane trees rival its boughs.

No tree in the garden of God was its equal in beauty.

⁹ I made it a beautiful thing in the profusion of its branches.

All the trees of Eden were envious, those that were in the garden of God.
because of the abundant waters in its conduits.

¹⁰ **Therefore, thus has the Lord YHWH declared:** Because you towered high—It sent its shoots up to the clouds, and its heart became proud because of its height. ¹¹ Therefore, I will deliver it into the hand of a chief of nations. He will certainly act toward it according to its wickedness. I have banished it! ¹² Foreigners, the most barbaric of nations, have cut it down; they left it lying on the mountains. In all the valleys its branches have fallen; its boughs were broken off in every ravine of the earth. All the peoples of the earth went down from its shade, and left it lying. ¹³ On its fallen trunk all the birds of the sky lodge, and on its branches dwell all the wild animals— ¹⁴ that no well-watered trees might grow tall in stature, nor send their tops up into the clouds. Nor shall any watered tree stand next to them in height. Indeed all of them



have been consigned to death, to the netherworld, in the company of humans, who descend to the pit.

¹⁵ **Thus has the Lord YHWH declared:** On the day it went down to Sheol, I shut off [the water supply], and I covered it with the deep. I dammed up its streams, and the mighty waters were held in check. I made Lebanon mourn on account of it, and all the wild trees wilted on its account. ¹⁶ At the sound of its fall I made nations quake. When I sent it down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit, then all the trees of Eden, all the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, found relief in the netherworld. ¹⁷ They also descended to Sheol with it, to the victims of the sword, that is its arm, those who had dwelt in its shade in the midst of the nations. ¹⁸ To whom do you compare like this in glory and magnificence among the trees of Eden? Still you will be brought down to the netherworld with the trees of Eden. In the midst of the uncircumcised you will lie along with the victims of the sword. This applies to Pharaoh and all his pomp. The declaration of the Lord YHWH.

Exposition

Introduction

A. Preamble (vv. 1–2a)

Context and Time: 1.3.11 (= June 21, 587)

B. An Ode to the Pharaonic Cedar (vv. 2b–9)

1. The Opening Question: “Who is like you in greatness?” (v. 2b)
2. The Theme Statement (v.3)
3. The Height of the Assyrian [Pharaonic] Cedar (vv. 4–5a)
4. The Protection Offered by the Assyrian [Pharaonic] Cedar (vv. 5b–6)
5. The Beauty of the Assyrian [Pharaonic] Cedar (vv. 7–9)

C. The Felling of the Pharaonic Cedar (vv. 10–14)

1. The Announcement of Divine Judgment (vv. 10–11)
2. The Agents of Divine Judgment (v. 12a–b)
3. The Effects of the Divine Judgment (vv. 12c–14)

D. The Destiny of the Pharaonic Cedar and Its Beneficiaries (vv. 15–18)

1. The Fate of the Cedar’s Beneficiaries (v. 15)
2. The Fate of the Cedar (vv. 16–17)
3. The Company of the Cedar (v. 18)

E. Lessons from the Pharaonic Cedar

1. YHWH is the sovereign Lord of the cosmos and history.
2. We who claim the name of Jesus need to remember that our primary citizenship is in the kingdom of God, and that in our speech and actions we need to reflect the values of that kingdom.
3. Pride in human accomplishments draws the fury of God.