

Ezekiel 29-30
Psalm 137
Matthew 2

“Egypt, the Dragon, and the Church”

December 19, 2010

We have heard in Ezekiel about how the nations mocked Jerusalem.

Our Psalm of response, Psalm 137 also speaks of these nations mocking Jerusalem
because of what Babylon has done –
especially focusing on Edom – perhaps because Edom was most closely related
(Esau was Jacob’s brother).

Psalm 137 is probably one of the hardest Psalms to sing

because of that closing line:

“blessed is the one who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rocks.”

As we sing this Psalm, think about the context:

Israel is in Exile – wondering how they can retain their identity:

“how shall we sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land?”

How can we sing the songs of Zion in Babylon?

This is very much the question that we face as the people of God in exile today!

How do we maintain our Christian identity in a foreign land?

This kept coming up over and over again during our trip.

How do we live as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem in China,
France, Scotland, or America?

Psalm 137 expresses the heart of a people in exile who long for their home.

And even that last call for retribution –

that prayer for vengeance –

“blessed is the one who repays you for what you have done to us”
should be the prayer of every regenerate heart!

Why do I say this?

Because while our Lord forbids *us* from taking revenge,

the reason is *not* because vengeance is *wrong* –

but because “vengeance is *mine*, I will repay” says the LORD.

Vengeance is God’s work.

And in the incarnation, God has demonstrated what this looks like.

After all, as we’ll hear in Matthew 2,

there was another king – Herod the Idumean (Edomite) –

who acted like Pharaoh in slaughtering the children of Israel.

Did Mary ever tell Jesus that story?

Surely he heard it as he grew up –

how Herod had slaughtered all the male children of Bethlehem
around the time he was born.

And as Jesus learned Psalm 137,
he would have come to see that he was the blessed man.
He was the one who would make right all the injustice in all of history.

Sing Psalm 137
Read Matthew 2:1-23

Ezekiel speaks seven oracles against Egypt.
We'll deal with the first four today – and the last three next week.

Throughout the Bible, Egypt has always been a tempting place.
The Nile River guarantees that Egypt will always have water.
The Nile Valley is a fertile place –
whether or not it rains!
Canaan, on the other hand, needs rain in order to be fertile.

In Genesis, whenever there is a famine in the Promised land,
there is always food in Egypt!
When Sarah, Abraham's wife, is barren,
her Egyptian maidservant Hagar is fertile!
After the Exodus, when Israel wanders in the desert,
they remember the spicy food of Egypt and want to return to slavery.
Salvation tastes bland compared to the leeks and onions and garlic of Egypt!

Even in Ezekiel's day Egypt was an attractive place.
A century before, in the face of the Assyrian army,
Hezekiah had been tempted to trust in Egypt.
And as the Babylonians approached,
the lesser kings of Judah had yielded to temptation.

Egypt was the one power in the ancient world
that could stand up to the likes of Assyria and Babylon.
And yet they were weak enough that they could not demand too much afterwards!
So if you ally with Egypt, you might fight off the monsters of the middle east,
and then Egypt will pretty much leave you alone.

I've entitled this sermon, "Egypt, the Dragon, and the Church"
because I want you to see that Ezekiel's words
are not just relevant for understanding ancient history.

Ezekiel's words are relevant for understanding *where you live*.
How?

If we are to think of ourselves – in some sense – as Jerusalem in Babylon,
then Egypt represents that which we once hoped would rescue us.
Pharaoh represents our idols that tempt us with promises of power and pleasure and peace.

Because it has always been tempting to trust in Egypt –
to trust in the wealth, the power, the wisdom of this age.
As you listen to the description of Egypt and Pharaoh,
I want you to see that this is describing what *you* have trusted.

Just look at verse 3 of chapter 29:

1. “I Am Against Pharaoh, the Great Dragon” (29:1-16)

a. The Coming Judgment against the Dragon (v1-6)

29:1 In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt; 3 speak, and say, Thus says the Lord God:

*“Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt,
the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams,
that says, ‘My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.’*

On January 7, 587 (almost one year after the siege of Jerusalem had begun),
God says that he is against Pharaoh –

We know from ancient historians that Pharaoh Hophra
attacked Nebuchadnezzar,
temporarily lifting the siege of Jerusalem.
Ezekiel’s point to the exiles is simple:
Don’t trust in Pharaoh!

God describes Pharaoh as
“the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams.”

Now, quite frankly, Pharaoh would have appreciated this description of himself!
After all, in Egyptian records, their god Amon-Re said to Pharaoh Thutmose III
“I cause them to see thy majesty as a crocodile, the lord of fear in the water,
who cannot be approached.”

This word “dragon” is the Hebrew “tannim” –
which refers to the great monsters – or “dragons” of the ancient world.

In Genesis 1 God created the tannim in the seas – the sea monsters.
In the Exodus, Moses throws his staff on the ground in Pharaoh’s court,
and it became a *tannim*.

The *tannim* appear in the Psalms and in Job’s Leviathan
as the great sea monsters that God subdues without the slightest difficulty.
Now Pharaoh is portrayed as a *tannim* – a dragon in the midst of the Nile.
And Pharaoh claims “My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.”

But God opposes all claims to self-sufficiency.

Tyre was portrayed as a glorious ship – about to be wrecked –
so now Pharaoh is portrayed as the mighty dragon – the mighty crocodile of the Nile –
who is about to be ensnared.

*4 I will put hooks in your jaws, and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales;
and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams,
with all the fish of your streams that stick to your scales.
5 And I will cast you out into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams;
you shall fall on the open field, and not be brought together or gathered.
To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens I give you as food.*

Remember how Goliath said that he would give David as food to the beasts and the birds?
Well, now Pharaoh – the mighty crocodile –
will be drawn with hooks and cast into the wilderness,
together with all his people (all the little fish),
as food for all the scavengers of the heavens and the earth.

6 Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord.

b. Because Egypt Was a Broken Reed for Israel (v6-9) (See Isaiah 36:6)

And why does God do this?

For two reasons (the “because” – the word “ki”) in verses 6 and 9:

*“Because you have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel, 7 when they grasped you with the
hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; and when they leaned on you, you broke and made
all their loins to shake. [cf. Ps 69:23 – “stand”]*

The image is of a reed used as a crutch.

Just think about trying to use a reed as a crutch!

You put all your weight on it – and it shatters – driving right through your shoulder!

If you try to replace God in someone else’s life,
then this will be you!

Fathers, if you try to be God to your children – you will break in pieces,
and they will be shattered!

Wives, if you trust in your husband – he won’t bear your weight!

You can put all your weight on God –

he alone can bear it –

and *has* borne it in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!

But Egypt is condemned because they sought to rescue Jerusalem from Babylon.

*8 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will bring a sword upon you, and will cut off from
you man and beast, 9 and the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste. Then they will
know that I am the Lord.*

Ironic, eh?

All the other nations in Ezekiel's list are condemned
because they rejoiced over Jerusalem's fall!
But Egypt is condemned because they tried to help!

If you can't help Jerusalem, and you can't laugh at Jerusalem,
what were the nations supposed to do?

Only one thing:
lament with Jerusalem.

If you *know* that the LORD is God,
then you *know* that his purposes for history are oriented around Zion
(which in the OT focused on the earthly city of Jerusalem,
and since the resurrection of Christ is focused on the heavenly Jerusalem).

Sometimes, there is nothing that you can do to help someone.
Sometimes, there is nothing that you can say.
Sometimes – and you men especially need to hear this –
all you can do is give them a hug,
and weep with them!

I know that all of you problem-solvers out there want a more satisfying answer!
But God is a problem that you can't solve!
And when his hand lies heavy on someone,
you certainly shouldn't mock them!
but you may not be able to "rescue them" either.

Egypt should not have tried to rescue Jerusalem.
And because they did, now they too will fall under the curse of Jerusalem.

c. Because Egypt Claimed "The Nile Is Mine" (v9-12)

The second reason begins in the middle of verse 9,
with the pride and hubris of Pharaoh:

"Because you said, 'The Nile is mine, and I made it,' 10 therefore, behold, I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Cush. 11 No foot of man shall pass through it, and no foot of beast shall pass through it; it shall be uninhabited forty years. 12 And I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated countries, and her cities shall be a desolation forty years among cities that are laid waste. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries.

The forty years of Egypt's desolation should be seen in parallel with the forty years of exile that Ezekiel had proclaimed against Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4).

Forty years refers to a generation (and should not be pressed unduly).
After all, there are 48 years between the destruction of Jerusalem in 587,
and Cyrus's proclamation allowing the Jews to return in 538,
but we know of no time in human history where Egypt was uninhabited for 40 years!

But as we've seen consistently throughout Ezekiel's oracles against the nations,
his words should not be taken strictly literally.

In the same way that Tyre is *not* a ship,
and Pharaoh is *not* a crocodile,
so also when it says that Egypt "shall be uninhabited forty years"
we should understand this as saying
that in the same way that God has judged Jerusalem,
so he will now also judge Egypt.

d. The Restoration of Egypt: Exile and Return (v13-16)

13 "For thus says the Lord God: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered, 14 and I will restore the fortunes of Egypt and bring them back to the land of Pathros, the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. 15 It shall be the most lowly of the kingdoms, and never again exalt itself above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will never again rule over the nations. 16 And it shall never again be the reliance of the house of Israel, recalling their iniquity, when they turn to them for aid. Then they will know that I am the Lord God."

Verses 13-16 then speak of the restoration of Egypt.

After their desolation, I will restore them –
but they will never again rule over the nations.

This is certainly true.

Ancient Egypt never returned to its glory days.

After being conquered by the Persians in the 520s,
they had moments of independence,

but were successively overrun by the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans,
the Persians again, the Romans again, and finally the Muslim Arabs.

But it is worth pointing out that Egypt alone of all the nations is given hope.

Perhaps that is because Egypt alone of all the nations tried to help!

They are condemned for helping –

but God has mercy on them because at least they didn't mock Israel!

And when a king arose in Israel who pursued the Son of God –

acting like the Pharaoh who sought to destroy the people of Israel

it was *Egypt* that gave refuge to the Son of God!

This is the remarkable conclusion to Matthew 2.

After more than a thousand years where bad things happen
every time the people of God go to Egypt!

Finally, when God needs a place to send his Son for safety,
he sends him to Egypt!

And for the last 1500 years, the church has been indebted to Egypt
for Origen and Athanasius and Cyril –
and for the monastic movements of Antony and Pachomius
that were essential to the conversion of Europe!

Egypt came to know that Yahweh is God!

2. The Plunder of Egypt (Rather than Tyre) (29:17-21)

The second oracle comes from 15 years after all the others.

It appears to be the very last thing that God ever told Ezekiel.

In this oracle, Ezekiel addresses the fact that Nebuchadnezzar failed to conquer Tyre,
and so God promised to give him plunder from Egypt instead.

17 In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: 18 “Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre. Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against her.

I would suggest that Ezekiel 29:17-21 is one of *the* most important passages
for understanding biblical prophecy.

Remember that the siege of Tyre is now over.

Ezekiel 26-28 had detailed what Nebuchadnezzar was going to do to Tyre.

Now, Ezekiel has a chance to interact with what he had previously said!

(If Ezekiel was as cynical as most modern commentators,
he could have gone back and “edited” his previous prophecies
to “conform” to what “actually” happened!)

Ezekiel had said that Tyre would become a bare rock.

Nebuchadnezzar has lifted his siege –
and Tyre still stands.

But there is no indication that Ezekiel thought that his prophecy against Tyre had failed!

Nebuchadnezzar *did* destroy Tyre as a trading power
(never again does Tyre control the seas as it once had) –
but his army doesn’t get much loot –
especially for 13 years worth of labor!

God’s point to Ezekiel is not to say, “Oops, missed that one!

Let’s try again!”

Rather, the theme here is that the laborer is worthy of his hire.

God had hired Nebuchadnezzar to do his bidding
in bringing judgment against Jerusalem and the nations.

But Tyre didn’t pay very well.

And so God promises Nebuchadnezzar and his army that they will get more loot from Egypt!

19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army. 20 I have given him the land of Egypt as his payment for which he labored, because they worked for me, declares the Lord God.

What this shows us is that Ezekiel did not think that his prophecies would be fulfilled literally. The fact that Tyre was not literally a “bare rock” when Nebuchadnezzar left it did not bother him in the least!

Ezekiel teaches us how to interpret prophecy:
prophecies often use figurative language and hyperbole
which will only be fully understood after the event.

Think of Joel 2 – which says that in the day of the LORD
“I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth,
blood and fire and columns of smoke.
The sun shall be turned to darkness, and moon to blood,
before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD
shall be saved.”

In Acts 2 we are told that this is what happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
Now it is true that the sun was darkened on the cross.
There was an earthquake.
But not everything in Joel 2:30-31 happened literally when Jesus died.
And yet, the apostle Peter, in Acts 2 is quite confident that this is *precisely*
what has happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus,
because the promised Holy Spirit (of Joel 2:28-29) has come.

And we should not be surprised to find that the same Peter says in 2 Peter 1:20-21:
“no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.
For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man,
but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

Anyone who demands strictly literal fulfillments of all prophecy
is expecting something contrary to the explicit teaching of the scriptures –
and the clear example of the prophets themselves.

Ezekiel was not baffled in the least that Tyre was not literally a “bare rock.”
Nebuchadnezzar had done his job of bringing judgment against Tyre,
and now God would reward him by giving him the plunder of Egypt.

And verse 21 reminds us of the central point of these oracles:

21 “On that day I will cause a horn to spring up for the house of Israel, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

When Nebuchadnezzar plunders Egypt,
God will begin something new in Israel.
Israel had trusted in Egypt –
but Egypt will fall.

We saw earlier that Egypt represents the powers of this age.
Pharaoh – the great dragon – the crocodile of the Nile –
represents the greater dragon (as seen in Revelation 12).

The Book of Revelation reminds us that it is very easy for the people of God
to be lured away from their first love.

Ezekiel’s warnings to Egypt are not ultimately intended for Egypt.
They are given to Israel.
They are given to Jerusalem in Babylon.

In other words, they are given *to you*.

Everything that you have trusted in –
the hope of riches and comfort (Tyre)
the promise of wisdom and power (the king of Tyre)
the guarantee of security from danger (the staff of Egypt)

everything that you have trusted in
will fail.

You are looking for something solid – something that will last – something that will endure.
You want to be able to lean on it – to trust that it will support you!

Egypt is a reed.
Lean on it – and it will pierce your hand!

What will you turn to next?
What will you trust in next?

Have your parents failed you?
Has your friend betrayed you?

Has your staff proven to be nothing more than a reed?

Ezekiel’s message is that the powers of this age
will never prove reliable.

It is only the horn that God raises up –
 (our Lord Jesus Christ)
 and the prophetic message that comes from his lips –
 that has the substance and solidity to endure forever.

And we see this in the judgment that is proclaimed against Egypt in chapter 30.

3. The Judgment of God Against Egypt (30:1-19)

a. The Doom of the Nations Is Coming (v1-5)

30:1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the Lord God: “Wail, ‘Alas for the day!’

*3 For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near;
it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.*

*4 A sword shall come upon Egypt, and anguish shall be in Cush,
when the slain fall in Egypt, and her wealth is carried away, and her foundations are torn down.*

This is exactly the sort of language that the prophets normally use
 for the coming judgment against Jerusalem! (We’ll sing this language in Joel 2!)

But now it is applied to the nations.

 And while this is definitely bad news,
 there is a glimmer of hope!

 After all, if God treats the nations like he treats Israel,
 that suggests that he may restore the nations like he will restore Israel!

5 Cush, and Put, and Lud, and all Arabia, and Libya, and the people of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.

But the first half of chapter 30 points out that the whole Egyptian league of nations will fall.

b. Those Who Support Egypt Shall Fall (v6-9)

6 “Thus says the Lord:

*Those who support Egypt shall fall, and her proud might shall come down;
from Migdol to Syene they shall fall within her by the sword, declares the Lord God.*

*7 And they shall be desolated in the midst of desolated countries,
and their cities shall be in the midst of cities that are laid waste.*

*8 Then they will know that I am the Lord,
when I have set fire to Egypt, and all her helpers are broken.*

9 “On that day messengers shall go out from me in ships to terrify the unsuspecting people of Cush, and anguish shall come upon them on the day of Egypt's doom; for, behold, it comes!

Verse 9, in particular, emphasizes that God’s own messengers will go up the Nile to Cush,
 bearing the message of the doom of Egypt.

Cush (Ethiopia) has been secure because no one could reach her without going through Egypt –
 well, now someone will go through Egypt – and Cush will tremble!

Verses 10-12 then return to God's particular judgment against Egypt.

c. Nebuchadnezzar Will Destroy the Land, and I Will Dry Up the Nile (v10-12)

10 "Thus says the Lord God:

"I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

*11 He and his people with him, the most ruthless of nations,
shall be brought in to destroy the land,*

and they shall draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain.

12 And I will dry up the Nile and will sell the land into the hand of evildoers;

I will bring desolation upon the land and everything in it, by the hand of foreigners;

I am the Lord; I have spoken.

Pharaoh had claimed that the Nile was his.

God says, no, the Nile is mine – I made it.

And I will dry it up.

If the Nile were to dry up, then Egypt would simply blow away in the sand.

All the wealth of Egypt – all its economic and political power – depends on God.

d. I Will Destroy the Idols of Egypt and Its Cities (v13-19)

13 "Thus says the Lord God:

"I will destroy the idols and put an end to the images in Memphis;

there shall no longer be a prince from the land of Egypt;

so I will put fear in the land of Egypt.

Within sixty years of this prophecy, Egyptian self-rule was a thing of the past.

Verses 13-19 then speaks of the desolation of the cities of Egypt,
starting from Memphis – the center of Egypt's religious world
and running up the river to Tehaphnehes in Upper Egypt.

*14 I will make Pathros a desolation and will set fire to Zoan
and will execute judgments on Thebes.*

*15 And I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium, the stronghold of Egypt,
and cut off the multitude of Thebes.*

*16 And I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium shall be in great agony;
Thebes shall be breached, and Memphis shall face enemies by day.*

*17 The young men of On and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword,
and the women shall go into captivity.*

*18 At Tehaphnehes the day shall be dark, when I break there the yoke bars of Egypt,
and her proud might shall come to an end in her;*

she shall be covered by a cloud, and her daughters shall go into captivity.

19 Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt.

Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Yahweh is the Lord of history.

And one day all nations will acknowledge that!

4. “I Am Against Pharaoh”: the Egyptians Shall be Dispersed (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, and behold, it has not been bound up, to heal it by binding it with a bandage, so that it may become strong to wield the sword. 22 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt and will break his arms, both the strong arm and the one that was broken, and I will make the sword fall from his hand. 23 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them through the countries. 24 And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a man mortally wounded. 25 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall. Then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. 26 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”

The fourth oracle is dated April 29, 587 BC – three months after the first oracle against Egypt.

It is likely that the exiles were hoping that Pharaoh Hophra would defeat Nebuchadnezzar and rescue Jerusalem – and perhaps they would be permitted to go home!

But Ezekiel says that God will break Pharaoh’s arms,
and strengthen the arms of Nebuchadnezzar,
and indeed, God says that he will put his own sword in the hand of the king of Babylon.

The Pharaohs of Egypt frequently depicted themselves
as smiting their enemies with their powerful arms.

One Pharonic title was “Lord of a Strong Arm.”

The irony is important:

the strong-armed king has his arms broken,
and Yahweh is giving his sword to the king of Babylon
in order to bring judgment upon him.

Back in the Exodus, God brought his people out of Egypt “with a strong arm
and an outstretched hand.”

Now, as then, as Daniel Block puts it, that
“The primary conflict in this oracle is not between Judah and Nebuchadnezzar,
or even between Egyptian and Babylonian imperial forces.

It is being waged in the heavens.

Hophra has come as Horus, the divine king of Egypt
to thwart the plans of the divine King of Israel.” (178)

But Yahweh will subdue the gods of Egypt – as he did in the days of Moses –
they will be humbled, and the strong arm of Yahweh will prevail.

Who are the Strong Arms that we see today?

Certainly there are powerful nations and cities –
but even after the economic downturn,
of the 100 largest economies in the world,
46 are corporations!

Only 21 nations have higher GDP than Walmart's revenues,
and there are six corporations whose revenues exceeds the GDP of Israel.
Toyota alone brings in more than the GDP of Egypt.

I understand concerns about North Korea –
but did you know that their GDP matches the revenues of Tyson Foods
(of course, Tyson foods is probably not trying to develop nuclear weapons!
I'm not going to get into the question of food irradiation!)

Corporations have massive economic and political clout –
but they have relatively little accountability.

Ezekiel would seem to suggest that they will have to give answer to God.
God judges Egypt because of Pharaoh.
God judges Tyre because of its King.

The CEOs of corporations wield far greater power than most political rulers on earth.
And they – and their stockholders and boards –
will have to give an account before God of how they used that power.
In the mean time,
we who live in the world that they dominate,
need to remember not to put our hope in them!

The recent financial downturn should remind us that God will judge the powers.

But don't be too quick to pray that God will smash Walmart.
Because when God judges the powers,
remember that the little guy gets squashed too!
When Pharaoh – the crocodile – gets pulled out of the Nile,
the little fish get stuck on his scales.

This is why Francis Schaeffer always warned people to pray for mercy!
Yes, judgment is coming –
and we *must* pray that God will make everything right –
that he will vindicate the oppressed and strike down those who devour them!
But understand that when God takes vengeance upon the earth,
the little fish will go down with the big fish –
and so we must pray that our Lord Jesus would make us “fishers of men”
so that we might be instruments of his mercy
to those who are attached to the powers of this age!

What does it mean to be Jerusalem in Babylon?
It means to be a place where mercy triumphs over judgment.
It means to be a people who trust in the LORD – and *act like it!*