



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 7

*Theme: Prophecy of the final
destruction of Jerusalem*

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Theme: Prophecy of the final destruction of Jerusalem

Clarke Introduction: This chapter, which also forms a distinct prophecy, foretells the dreadful destruction of the land of Israel, or Judah, (for after the captivity of the ten tribes these terms are often used indiscriminately for the Jews in general), on account of the heinous sins of its inhabitants, vv. 1-15; and the great distress of the small remnant that should escape, vv. 16-19. The temple itself, which they had polluted with idolatry, is devoted to destruction, vv. 20-22; and the prophet is directed to make a chain, as a type of that captivity, in which both king and people should be led in bonds to Babylon, vv. 23-27. The whole chapter abounds in bold and beautiful figures, flowing in an easy and forcible language.¹

The third discourse is organized in two unequal divisions. First Ezekiel briefly announced the coming calamity at Jerusalem; then he described at length the various components of that calamity. Again the overriding theme is that men would come to have a correct assessment of Yahweh. The recognition formula (“you/they shall know that I am the Lord”) occurs in this discourse three times (vv. 4, 9, 27).²

ESV: 1–27 Against the Land of Israel. The address to the “land [soil] of Israel” (v. 2) links this chapter to the previous one against the “mountains of Israel” (6:2). Two features of this chapter pull in different directions: the Hebrew is at points quite obscure and translation is difficult (see the “uncertain” readings in esv footnotes); yet the imagery is striking and the overall sense plain. Although laid out as prose, many see Ezekiel’s diction here inclining to poetry, as short staccato lines echo content. As in ch. 6, the “recognition formula” (7:4, 9, 27; cf. Introduction: Style) gives internal shape to the oracle, which falls into two main parts (vv. 1–9, 10–27). Together they form a “sermon” whose text is Amos 8. The resonance of language and overlap of themes and sequence between these chapters is impressive, and it seems likely that Ezekiel’s oracle develops Amos’s earlier prophecy.

Constable: "There are six parts to this summary message. First, God's determination to bring judgment is announced (7:1-4). Second is the repeated call for judgment to come (7:5-9). Third, the imminence and certainty of judgment is announced (7:10-13). Fourth, the total destruction of the nation is announced (7:14-18). Fifth, the uselessness of all physical resources is declared (7:19-22). Sixth, the fall of Jerusalem is announced (7:23-27)."³

¹ Adam Cleake’s Commentary on the Old Testament

² Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 7:1–27). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

³ Constable Notes on Ezekiel, 2010 Edition, Cooper, p. 110.

Ezekiel 7:1

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

This is the 7th prophecy in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 7:1-22, and is fulfilled). The next prophecy is in Ezekiel 7:23.⁴

McGee: Ezekiel is passing on to the people of Israel what *God* has to say. The first message, given in chapter 6, opened with the same words.⁵

BKC: 1-4. This message began in the same way as the first one (cf. 6:1): The word of the LORD came to me. This time the focus was not on idolatry (as in chap. 6), but on the land, which meant the people living in the land.

Ezekiel's message was that the end had come upon the four corners of the land. The word "end" is used five times at the beginning of this sermon (7:2 [twice], 3, 6 [twice]). The Prophet Amos used that word in a similar way to describe the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. (Amos 8:2, "the end has come," NASB). Ezekiel repeated the same message for the Southern Kingdom. "The four corners of the land" indicate that no portion would escape God's judgment.

The events about to unfold on Israel would bring a new revelation of God's character; the people would realize that God, being righteous, punishes sin. God vowed to unleash His anger against Israel (Ezek. 7:3) without pity (v. 4). He would judge her according to her conduct (cf. vv. 4, 8-9, 27) and repay her for her detestable practices (cf. vv. 8-9). These judgments were repeated (vv. 3-4) for emphasis. Then she would know that God is the LORD. This clause appears again at the end of the sermon (v. 27).⁶

OTS: The messenger formula "thus says the Lord God" marks two announcements of the coming calamity. For the land of Israel "the end" has come! The destruction would extend to "the four corners of the land," i.e., it would be complete. The word "now" indicates that the destruction was close at hand. "The end" to which Ezekiel refers is the judgment of God, a righteous retribution for all their abominations, i.e., idols. Even when the judgment unfolded they would still cling to their "abominations," i.e., idols. Therefore, God would show no mercy on the sinners in that day. This judgment would correct their faulty notions about the nature of God (7:1-4).

The second announcement emphasized the uniqueness of the coming disaster. This disaster was described as "an end, the end, doom, the time" and "the day." The prophet used the expressions "is coming," "has come" and "has awakened" to announce the nearness of the time of reckoning. The clamor and confusion of military invasion would replace the "joyful shouting" associated with the religious shrines in the mountains (7:5-7).

The disaster faced by Israel would be no accident of history. God announced his intention to pour out his "wrath" on Judah. They would experience the full extent of God's "anger." This, however, would be no capricious unleashing of divine hostility. God

⁴ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁵ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 7:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 7:1-4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

declared that he would judge according to their ways. He would bring on them all their abominations. In this day of retribution God threatened to show no pity nor mercy. He could not, for even as the judgment unfolded, the “abominations,” i.e., idols, still would be in their midst. When these predictions come to pass, God’s people would realize that Yahweh actually executed this “smiting” (7:8f.).⁷

ESV: 1–9 The end has come (v. 2). This first section itself further divides in two, with introductory and concluding formulas framing vv. 1–4 and 5–9, with strong parallels between them: cf. vv. 2 and 5–6; 3 and 8; 4 and 9. Is this a first and second “edition,” both of which were preserved? The “odd man out,” v. 7, finds its echo in the second section at v. 12. These verses are mostly framed in the first person, as God announces the imminent outpouring of his wrath.

Ezekiel 7:2

Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land.

Clarke: An end, the end is come The end cometh, come is the end.” This reading is supported by all the ancient Versions, and is undoubtedly genuine. The end COMETH: the termination of the Jewish state is coming, and while I am speaking, it is come. The destruction is at the door.

This is not a partial calamity; it shall cover and sweep the whole land. The cup of your iniquity is full, and my forbearing is at an end. This whole chapter is poetical.⁸

The three uses of the key word **end** stresses that the fulfillment of the prophecy was at hand. The word **has come** denotes certitude. **The four corners of the land** suggests that all the people of Judah would be affected, not just those in Jerusalem.

McGee: Judgment was to come upon that land, and of course it would include the people of the land. The land of Israel and the nation Israel are always considered together in the Word of God.

A new element is added to Ezekiel’s prophecy in this message—this is now the prophecy of the *final* destruction of the land and of Jerusalem. The final deportation will take place, and the city will be destroyed.

ESV: The address to the land (lit., “soil”) of Israel uses a phrase unique to Ezekiel (found 17 times in the book, always referring to the people Israel). Similar to 6:2, it is evocative language on the lips of an exile. The announcement of an end (also 7:3, 6) picks up the language of Amos 8:2.

Now, the other was to the mountains, now to the land.

⁷ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 7:1–9). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.

⁸ Adam Cleake’s Commentary on the Old Testament

This is actually written in a poetic form in the Hebrew. It doesn't come through. If you have some modern translations, sometimes they put it out in the poetic form.

Constable: Yahweh announced that He was bringing an end on the whole land of Israel and that it was coming soon. This judgment would come because the Lord was angry with His people for their abominable sins. He would not restrain His punishment but would bring the consequences of their sins on them. They would go into a land where the abominations they had lusted after would make them sick. Then they would know that Yahweh was the true God (cf. vv. 9, 27; 6:7, 10, 13, 14). The recurrence of several identical words emphasizes the certainty of this coming judgment as well as its extent and basis.

"The fact that the message needed so much reiteration can only be understood against the background of popular belief in the inviolability of Jerusalem. Its destruction was inconceivable to the Israelite mind. As long as God was God, God's Temple and God's city would stand. This had been the message of Isaiah when kings of Judah had feared for the city's safety and were toying with the idea of turning to heathen armies for assistance. But now the situation was different. Isaiah's confidence could no longer be justified after 150 years of increasing apostasy. The people were living in the past, but God was judging the present. His verdict was that the end was imminent."⁹

Ezekiel 7:3

Now is the end *come* upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.

McGee: This message is in the form of marvelous Hebrew poetry, and throughout this chapter I would like to quote to you a translation by the late Dr. A. C. Gaebelein (*The Prophet Ezekiel*, p. 48). He has translated this quite literally in poetic form. This then is his translation of verses 1–3.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou Son of Man, thus saith
Jehovah unto the land of Israel:

An end cometh! The end
Upon the four corners of the land.
Now cometh the end upon thee
And I will send mine anger upon thee,
And I will judge thee according to thy ways,
And I will bring upon thee all thine abominations.

God says to Israel, "I am going to judge you according to your ways." The judgment or the punishment will fit the crime.

We need to ask ourselves: How serious is it to be a professed witness for God and yet really be a phony? How serious is it to be a church member and not be saved? That brings the issue right down to where the rubber meets the road for us in this day. I have said many times that I would rather be a Hottentot in the darkest corner of Africa, bowing down to an idol, than to be a church member sitting in the pew, professing to be a

⁹ Taylor, p. 92.

Christian, yet not knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior! I will not argue with you about what God will do with the Hottentot—the Lord has His plan for him. I will talk about church members who are not truly saved. That is the issue in our day which corresponds to what Ezekiel is talking about. Ezekiel says that such a man's responsibility is great, because he has heard the Word of God, and he has turned his back upon it. The more he hears, the greater his responsibility grows, I can assure you of that.¹⁰

ESV: abominations (also vv. 4, 8, 9; plural of Hb. *to 'ebah*). These are offenses repugnant to God that defile and that demand elimination. This is very frequent language in Ezekiel (mentioned 41 times), and is rooted more in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut. 18:12) than Leviticus.

Chuck Smith: No mercy here, no grace here, but judgment according to their deeds. Recompensing them according to their ways. We thank God for His mercy and for His grace. David prayed, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1). And God is merciful, but if people reject His mercy, then there remains only that certain fearful looking forward to of judgment. So they have rejected the mercies of God. They had done despite to the spirit of grace, and now God pronounces His judgment that is coming upon them according to their abominations.¹¹

Ezekiel 7:4

And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Clarke: **Thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee**—They shall ever stare thee in the face, upbraid thee with thy ingratitude and disobedience, and be witnesses against thee.

McGee: Again, let me give you Dr. Gaebelien's translation (*The Prophet Ezekiel*, p. 48) of these verses:

And mine eyes shall not spare thee,
Neither will I have pity:
Because I will bring thy ways upon thee
And thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee:
And ye shall know that I am Jehovah.
Thus saith the Lord Jehovah!
An evil—an only evil!—behold it cometh.
An end is come—the end is come!
It awaketh against thee. Behold it cometh!
O inhabitant of the land, thy doom is come unto thee

¹⁰ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 7:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹ Chuck Smith, Pastor and founder of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

The set time is come, the day is near,
The day of tumult.
And not the joyous shouting upon the mountains;
Now will I soon pour out my fury upon thee
And accomplish mine anger against thee.
I will judge thee according to thy ways,
And I will bring upon thee all thine abominations.
Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity.
According to thy ways will I render unto thee,
And thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee,
And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, who smiteth.

This is a tremendous passage of Scripture which, I dare say, few deal with today—it is totally unknown to multitudes of church members. Someone will argue, “Well, it belongs way back in the Old Testament, and that makes it different.” My friend, Ezekiel’s language is tame compared to the Book of Revelation and to the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 25. Ezekiel’s words here are those of a sissy compared to many passages in the New Testament. The God of the New Testament is the same Person as the God of the Old Testament, and He will punish sin in any age.

I mentioned in the previous chapter a young Jewish rabbi who wants to dismiss God altogether because he cannot reconcile what happened to the six million Jews in Hitler’s Germany. All I want to say is that ought to be a warning to the church of God today. Will God judge? Yes, He will! It is no wonder that Paul said, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men . . .” (2 Cor. 5:11).

Many are playing church today, making it a cheap sort of thing. They speak of their “allegiance,” their “dedication,” but do not have a full commitment to Jesus Christ. That is the tragedy of this moment. Our problem is not that we do not have enough church members—the problem is we have too many who are not genuine Christians. There was a great preacher in New York City many years ago who made this statement: “One cold church member hurts the cause of Christ more than twenty blatant, blaspheming atheists.” Ezekiel’s message was not popular in his day, nor is it today.¹²

Ezekiel 7:5

Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come.

This is a lamentation. In the English it will sound strange, it will sound repetitive, almost like a song or poem. It is the first extended message, and all through there are puns of sound (homonyms) in the Hebrew, as well as ironies of thought. This is an emotional closing to this section of the book. The English translation loses much, but you will get the sense of an emotional lyric going on.

Clarke: An evil, an only evil—The great, the sovereign, the last exterminating evil, is come: the sword, the pestilence, the famine, and the captivity.

¹²McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 7:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

An evil, an only evil—a peculiar calamity such as was never before; unparalleled. The abruptness of the style and the repetitions express the agitation of the prophet's mind in foreseeing these calamities.¹³

BKC: 5-6. The LORD was like a herald who had raced to the city to shout breathlessly the warning of approaching calamity (vv. 5-9). In Hebrew the phrases are short and choppy, and the words “coming” or “came” occur six times in verses 5-7. The watchman first proclaimed, Disaster! An unheard-of disaster is coming. What was about to come on Jerusalem had no historical parallel.

The exact nature of Jerusalem's disaster was implied by the repetition of the words the end has come (v. 6). In Hebrew the two words translated in the first clause, the end has come are reversed in the second clause. In a wordplay Ezekiel announced that the end had roused itself against you. The words “end” and “roused” in verse 6 sounded so much alike that they drew attention to themselves. Disaster had been predicted for Jerusalem by Micah (Micah 3:12), but that prophecy had remained unfulfilled for over 100 years. Now Jerusalem's end was about to come.¹⁴

Chuck Smith: Now we find repetition here, and again, as I told you, it is written in Hebrew poetry and Hebrew poetry involves repetition. And that's why in English it gets a little repetitious to us, but in Hebrew it's really very poetic, and in reading it in the Hebrew you get the rhyme of it and you feel the poetry of the thing. You get not the rhyme, but the rhythm of it, and you feel the poetry. There is no rhyme.

Constable 5-9: The Lord again revealed that a unique disaster was coming. It would be an end for the Israelites, and it was near. Their doom would soon arrive as a tumult on the mountains, not as a joyful sound. The Lord was about to judge His people for all their abominations. He would show no pity. They would then know that He was the Lord. This oracle stresses the horror and surprise of the coming judgment as well as the person judging. The last phrase is a new name for God: *Yahweh makkeh*, "the Lord who strikes."

"To hearers and readers who were used to names of God like 'Jehovah-jireh' and 'Jehovah-nissi' (Gn. 22:14; Ex. 17:15), it must have come home with tremendous force to have Him described as 'Jehovah-makkeh'. The Lord who had provided and protected was about to strike."

Ezekiel 7:6

An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.

13 Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Eze 7:5). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

14 Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 7:5–6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Ezekiel 7:7

The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains.

Clarke: The morning is come unto thee—Every note of time is used in order to show the certainty of the thing. The morning that the executioner has watched for is come; the time of that morning, in which it should take place, and the day to which that time, precise hour of that morning, belongs in which judgment shall be executed. All, all is come.

BKC: 7-9. Ezekiel described Jerusalem's coming destruction as a time of doom (*haššpîrâh*; cf. v. 10). This word can mean "crown" or "diadem" (cf. Isa. 28:5), but not in this context. A similar word in Aramaic means "morning" which was the meaning adopted by the KJV translators. But neither does this fit because "morning" would imply blessing while the context speaks of disaster. Probably the word is related to the Akkadian *šabāru*, "destruction."

As the day of judgment would approach there would be panic, not joy, upon the mountains. Those who had been at ease in their idolatry on the high places (cf. comments on Ezek. 6:3) would be thrown into a state of apprehension when overtaken in judgment. Ezekiel repeated the theme of the impending calamity (7:8-9 is about the same as vv. 3-4). The destruction would come as predicted, so those affected would know that ... the LORD had struck the blow. This is a variation of the other statements on knowing the Lord (6:7, 10, 14; 7:4, 27). Those who professed to know Him by other names (cf. Gen. 22:14; 33:20; Ex. 17:15) would now know Him by the name *Yahweh-makkeh*, "the LORD who strikes the blow."¹⁵

ESV: The time and day point forward to the second part of the chapter, and indicate a moment of reversal.

Ezekiel 7:8

Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations.

Ezekiel 7:9

And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth.

The flowering of the **rod** and **pride** indicates that the time to bring judgment was ripe. These words describe one whose time had come, a person marked by arrogance. In this

¹⁵ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 7:7-9). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

case, it pictures the chosen instrument of God (Num. 17:5) with whom He would discipline Jerusalem and Judah—namely, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and the characteristic representative of the arrogant and evil Babylonians (see v. 21). **Rod of wickedness** refers to a stick or club (see Ex. 4:20; Isa. 10:5) used for punishing wickedness.¹⁶

Ezekiel 7:10

Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded.

Dake: [rod hath blossomed] The word "rod" here is used of Judah; it had blossomed into proud luxuriance. The rod of Ezekiel 7:11 is one of punishment for wickedness. God found it necessary to raise up a rod of an oppressor to punish the people for pride and rebellion. The furious Chaldeans became the instrument of His wrath, and the destruction was so complete that few were left to make lamentation over the destroyed ones (Ezekiel 7:10-11).¹⁷

Clarke: Behold the day—The same words are repeated, sometimes varied, and pressed on the attention with new figures and new circumstances, in order to alarm this infatuated people. Look at the day! It is come!

The morning is gone forth—It will wait no longer. The rod that is to chastise you hath blossomed; it is quite ready.

Pride hath budded—Your insolence, obstinacy, and daring opposition to God have brought forth their proper fruits.

LAN: 10-11 In Ezekiel 7, Ezekiel predicts the complete destruction of Judah. The wicked and proud will finally get what they deserve. If it seems as though God ignores the evil and proud people of our day, be assured that a day of judgment will come, just as it came for the people of Judah. God is waiting patiently for sinners to repent (see 2 Peter 3:9), but when his judgment comes, “none of the people will be left.” What you decide about God now will determine your fate then.¹⁸

McGee: Here is Dr. Gaebelein’s rendering of this passage (*The Prophet Ezekiel*, pp. 49–50):

Behold the Day! Behold it cometh!
Thy doom advanceth:
The rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded.
Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness;
None of them shall remain; yea none of their multitude
Nor their wealth; neither shall there be eminency among them.
The time is come, the day draweth near;

¹⁶ The Nelson Study Bible

¹⁷ Dake Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

¹⁸ Life Application Notes

Let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn,
 For wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.
 For the seller shall not return to that which is sold,
 Even though he were yet amongst the living.
 In the vision touching the whole multitude thereof
 It shall not be revoked;
 And none shall through his iniquity assure his life.
 They have blown the trumpet and made all ready,
 But none goeth to the battle;
 For my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.

The thing that characterized these people was that they were a bunch of protesters—they were pacifists and wouldn't go to war. They refused to stand for that which was right, my friend. The judgment came, and when the enemy came in, he didn't have any silly notions about pacifism. I mentioned before G. K. Chesterson's comment, "This is the age of pacifism, but it is not the age of peace." It is true that men today are weary of war, but as long as there is iniquity in the human heart God has said, "There is no peace ... to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21). Isaiah repeated that truth three times in his prophecy.¹⁹

BKC: The nearness of the day of judgment was compared to a budding rod. Doom has burst forth, the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed! Ezekiel's imagery could be drawn from Aaron's rod that budded (Num. 17), or he could have been familiar with Jeremiah's picture of an almond tree in blossom (Jer. 1:11-12). If the allusion was to Aaron's rod, the point was that just as its budding indicated God had selected him for service, so the budding of Israel's rod of arrogance indicated God had selected Jerusalem for doom. If the prophet alluded to Jeremiah's almond tree in blossom, the point was that just as the budding of the almond tree indicated God's judgment was sure to follow so the budding of violence in Israel indicated God's judgment would follow.²⁰

ESV: 10–27 Behold, the day! (v. 10). The "day of the Lord" is a prominent theme in the Hebrew prophets, with origins in Amos 5:18–20 (see notes on Isa. 13:5–6; Amos 5:18–20). Ezekiel's development relates most closely to Amos 8:9–10. It was a time of great expectation but was turned to bitter anguish at the hands of God, who was wrongly assumed to be coming in blessing. Among the many motifs shared between Ezekiel 7 and Amos 8 are the "day" itself, violence and wealth, agricultural metaphors, foiled commerce, desecration of holy things, and withholding of divine direction. In contrast to the first-person oracle of Ezek. 7:1–9, the action of vv. 10–27 is mostly carried by third-person descriptions of the coming disaster.

Chuck Smith: Now, in those days quite often the seller had to sell because of financial problems, and so there was always that, "Oh, you know, this is the family's and it's the family inheritance." And they would hate to sell that because when you inherited from your parents the land, it was sort of a holy trust. Your whole goal of life was to pass on to your children that which you received as the inheritance from your family. And so you

19 McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 7:14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
 20 Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Eze 7:10). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

would devote your whole life to the maintaining of that inheritance so that you could pass it on. Sometimes a person would get strapped, they would have to sell it, but in the deed there was always the reversionary clause--you could always buy it back in a specified period of time by adhering to the covenant that was drawn up at the time that it was sold. Or, if you could not redeem it, then a close relative could redeem it so it remained in the family. So there was usually sorrow involved in the selling of property. It was a holy trust. It was a sacred thing. This is the family's and now I'm selling it. And the buyer, of course, if you could ever buy property, with it was a very happy time, you would rejoice. So he is saying, "Hey, look, the time is at an end. You that are going around buying, you don't need to rejoice in it because you're not going to really have it long. And you that are selling don't really mourn, because you're not going to buy it back again. You won't be able to use your option to repurchase because you're all going to be taken out of the land. So the seller shall not return to that which is sold, you're not going to come back to it."

Constable 10-13: The Lord announced that the day of Israel's doom was coming. Judgment was about to break forth as buds on a branch (cf. Num. 17:8; Jer. 1:11-12). The people's violence had grown from a small shoot into a stout branch of wickedness. Nebuchadnezzar would prove to be the rod of God's judgment. No eminent individuals and nothing of much value would remain. The time of judgment was so near that both buyers and sellers should refrain from their usual pursuits.

"The buyer who normally rejoiced over a good business deal should not be happy because he would not be able to possess the land he had purchased. And one forced to sell his land should not grieve because he would have lost it anyway."

It would be impossible for sellers to regain (by redemption or in a sabbatical or jubilee year) what they sold because everything would be swept away before a change could be made (cf. 1 Cor. 7:29-31). Even iniquity would not change the prospect of coming judgment.

"Hardening oneself in sin would not accomplish immunity from punishment."¹⁵⁰ This pericope may be one or two oracles (vv. 10-11, 12-13). The first two verses stress the imminence, comprehensiveness, and readiness of the judgment, and the last two its permanence and suddenness.

"It is amazing how easily messages of judgment are forgotten. These messages constantly must be reinforced."

Ezekiel 7:11

Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them *shall remain*, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither *shall there be wailing* for them.

Clarke: Violence is risen, up into a rod of wickedness—The prophet continues his metaphor: "Pride has budded."—And what has it brought forth? Violence and iniquity. To meet these, the rod of God cometh. There is such a vast rapidity of succession in the ideas of the prophet that he cannot wait to find language to clothe each. Hence we have broken sentences; and, consequently, obscurity. Something must be supplied to get the sense, and most critics alter words in the text. Houbigant, who rarely acknowledges himself to be puzzled, appears here completely nonplussed. He has given a meaning; it is

this: “Violence hath burst forth from the rod; salvation shall not proceed from them, nor from their riches, nor from their turbulence: there shall be no respite for them.” Calmet has given no less than five interpretations to this verse. The simple meaning seems to be, that such and so great is their wickedness that it must be punished; and from this punishment, neither their multitude nor struggles shall set them free. They may strive to evade the threatened stroke; but they shall not succeed, nor shall they have any respite. Our Version is to be understood as saying,—None of the people shall be left; all shall be slain, or carried into captivity: nor shall any of theirs, their princes, priests, wives, or children, escape. And so deserved shall their desolation appear, that none shall lament them. This may be as good a sense as any, and it is nearest to the letter.

BKC: 11-14. In verse 10 the “rod” pictured the budding of Israel’s wickedness, compared to the budding of a tree. But in verse 11 the rod became a rod of judgment used to flog the disobedient people: a rod to punish wickedness.

God’s judgment would have economic consequences. When it struck, none of the people would be left, none of that crowd (“crowd,” probably used derisively, occurs four times in vv. 11-14). Nothing of value would remain. Because of the Captivity, property and material possessions were worthless. Possessions would be confiscated and property owners torn from their land and carried to Babylon. Ezekiel exhorted, Let not the buyer rejoice nor the seller grieve. The buyer who normally rejoiced over a good business deal should not be happy because he would not be able to possess the land he had purchased. And one forced to sell his land should not grieve because he would have lost it anyway.

When land was sold in Israel, the transaction was always temporary. Every 50 years, during the Year of Jubilee, the property reverted to its original owners (Lev. 25:10, 13-17). However, God’s coming judgment would prevent original owners from reclaiming their properties; they would be in exile along with the buyers.

No human effort could hinder God from accomplishing His plan. Though they would call soldiers to battle by the trumpet, no one would go into battle. Jerusalem would try to defend herself, but she would fall with little resistance.

Ezekiel 7:12

The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.

Clarke: Let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn—Such is now the state of public affairs, that he who through want has been obliged to sell his inheritance, need not mourn on the account; as of this the enemy would soon have deprived him. And he who has bought it need not rejoice in his bargain, as he shall soon be stripped of his purchase, and either fall by the sword, or be glad to flee for his life.

LAN: 12-13 The nation of Judah trusted in its prosperity and possessions instead of in God. So God planned to destroy the basis of its prosperity. Whenever we begin to trust in

jobs, the economy, a political system, or military might for our security, we put God in the back seat.²¹

Let not the buyer rejoice: The fact of coming judgment was so certain, and its effects would be so lasting and devastating, that transactions of buying and selling would be concluded improperly or not at all.

Because the Exile is imminent, a purchaser of property need not rejoice over getting a bargain, nor the seller be sad at having to sell.

ESV: 12–13 The transactions described here connect with the laws of Lev. 25:26–27. There is no opportunity to redeem property because death will come first.

Ezekiel 7:13

For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life.

Clarke: For the seller shall not return—In the sale of all heritages among the Jews, it was always understood that the heritage must return to the family on the year of jubilee, which was every fiftieth year; but in this case the seller should not return to possess it, as it was not likely that he should be alive when the next jubilee should come, and if he were even to live till that time, he could not possess it, as he would then be in captivity. And the reason is particularly given; for the vision—the prophetic declaration of a seventy years' captivity, regards the whole multitude of the people; and it shall not return, i.e., it will be found to be strictly true, without any abatement.

Ezekiel 7:14

They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof.

Clarke: They have blown the trumpet—Vain are all the efforts you make to collect and arm the peoples and stand on your own defense; for all shall be dispirited, and none go to the battle.

Chuck Smith: Now the blowing of the trumpet really was more than just the summoning of the people to battle, but with Israel it was more or less an acknowledgment that the Lord comes forth to battle with us. But God said, "I'm not coming forth with you any more. You can blow the trumpet; it's not going to do any good. I'm not going to fight for you any longer. You're going to be turned over unto the hands of your enemies."

²¹ Life Application Notes

Constable 14-18: The Israelites had prepared to fight the Babylonians, but they would not be successful because the Lord Himself would fight against His people. The sword would devour those outside Jerusalem, and plague and famine would consume those within. Even the few survivors who escaped would mourn their desperate condition. Everyone would lose heart, and traditional signs of mourning would be everywhere. Ancient Near Easterners wore rough camel's hair clothing (sackcloth) to make themselves miserable and so keep thoughts of selfish enjoyment aside.

"The prophet is hereby [v. 17] referring to the loss of bladder control that occurs in a moment of extreme crisis [when he says, literally, "All knees will run with water"]."

Ezekiel 7:15

The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him.

Dake: [sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within] The sword, pestilence, and famine are the three methods mentioned in many of these prophecies which would destroy Judah and Jerusalem. They did destroy until very few were left (Ezekiel 7:16; 2 Kings 24-25; 2 Chron. 36) Those who escaped were to be like lonely doves mourning over the past and the great destruction upon their people and country (Ezekiel 7:17-19). They would have plenty of silver and gold but would lack food; and they would have no help from God in the day of His wrath (Ezekiel 7:19).

Clarke: **The sword is without**—War through all the country, and pestilence and famine within the city, shall destroy the whole, except a small remnant. He who endeavors to flee from the one shall fall by the other.

BKC: 15-16. Israel would find she had no defense *against* God's judgment and no escape *from* God's judgment. Outside would be the sword, inside ... plague and famine (cf. 5:12). Those who sought escape outside Jerusalem's walls were hunted down and murdered by Babylon's armies. Those who sought protection within the city walls faced the dual enemies of famine and disease. The majority of the people would die, and even those who survived would pay a price. The pitiful wail of those hiding in the mountains, who were weeping over their sins and material losses, would sound like mourning doves.

Ezekiel 7:16

But they that escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.

Sin, Responsibility—Material refuge cannot protect a people from the guilt of their sins. Material wealth cannot buy protection from the punishment our sins bring. We must accept responsibility for our sins.

Just as *doves* whose homes are in the valleys can escape by flying to the *mountains*, so some of the people would escape, all the while *mourning* over their sins.

So those that escape from the sword and pestilence, scattered throughout the mountains, weeping, mourning, wailing for that which has happened.

Ezekiel 7:17

All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water.

BKC: 17-18. Israel's response to God's onslaught is pictured in verses 17-19. Hands would go limp, and knees would become as weak as water (cf. similar words in 21:7; also cf. Jer. 6:24). The only thing the defenders could do would be to lament their state (Ezek. 7:18) and remove the obstacle of materialism that had caused them to stumble (vv. 19-22). In their lament they would put on sack cloth... and their heads would be shaved. "Sackcloth" was coarse cloth, woven from the long hair of goats or camels. Because of its dark color, sackcloth was considered appropriate for serious, somber occasions. To "put on sackcloth" was a sign of grief or mourning (Gen. 37:34; 1 Sam. 3:31; Job 16:15; Jer. 6:26) and repentance (Isa. 58:5; Dan. 9:3-4; Jonah 3:5-9; Matt. 11:21). Ezekiel was probably picturing the grief mixed with terror Israel would experience when the enemy destroyed her land. Shaving the head also pictured mourning, humiliation, and repentance (see comments on Ezek. 5:1).

ESV: all knees turn to water. The Hebrew formulation suggests a loss of bladder control with the onset of panic (lxx, "all thighs will be defiled with moisture").

Ezekiel 7:18

They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads.

Dake: [baldness upon all their heads] Causing baldness in mourning was forbidden to the Israelites, but it seems that in later years they took up some of the habits and customs of the heathen regarding this and other things (cp. Isaiah 22:12).

Those left alive would hide in the hills and be characterized by four things: (1) mourning—moaning like doves in shame, displaying their humiliation over sin by wearing sackcloth and shaving their heads (see Isa. 15:2, 3); (2) weakness; (3) horror; and (4) disgust and disillusionment over wealth.

Ezekiel 7:19

They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity.

Dake: [stumblingblock of their iniquity] The stumblingblock of their sin was the making of idols (cp. Ezekiel 3:20).

Clarke: **They shall cast their silver in the streets**—Their riches can be of no use; as in a time of famine there is no necessary of life to be purchased, and gold and silver cannot fill their bowels.

It is the stumbling-block of their iniquity—They loved riches, and placed in the possession of them their supreme happiness. Now they find a pound of gold not worth an ounce of bread.

LAN: God’s people had allowed their love of money to lead them into sin. And for this, God would destroy them. Money has a strange power to lead people into sin. Paul said that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). It is ironic that we use money—a gift of God—to buy things that separate us from him. It is tragic that we spend so much money seeking to satisfy ourselves, and so little time seeking God, the true source of satisfaction.

McGee: Dr. Gaebelein’s translation is (*The Prophet Ezekiel*, p. 51):

They shall cast their silver in the streets,
And their gold shall be as an unclean thing;
Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them
In the day of Jehovah’s wrath;
They cannot satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowls,
Because it was the stumbling block of their iniquity.

Too often in America we have felt that the almighty dollar could solve every problem of life. We have spent billions of dollars throughout the world in pursuit of peace. We haven’t done a very good job, but we sure have spent a lot of money. It is very comfortable to have a few dollars on hand, but they will not solve life’s problems. This is what God is saying here to the people of Israel who felt that their accumulated wealth would protect them—it did not.²²

BKC: 19-20. In addition to lamenting their loss the people would remove the obstacles that had caused it (vv. 19-22). They would throw their silver into the streets, and their gold would be an unclean thing. Also their idols made from the metal of their jewelry would be an unclean thing, so items once deemed precious would be discarded. The word for “unclean thing” (*niddâh*) was used of the ceremonial impurity of menstruation (Lev. 15:19-33) and the touching of a corpse (Num. 19:13-21). It pictured the revulsion Israel would feel toward her wealth.

²² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 7:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Why would the people suddenly loathe their material wealth? One reason was the inability of silver and gold to buy the security for which it was originally amassed. It would not be able to save them. God could not be “bought off.” Another reason for the sudden revulsion of wealth was the inability of the silver and gold to buy food to satisfy their hunger in the famine.

During the horrible siege, with its inflated prices (2 Kin 6:25) and scarcity of goods, money would not relieve hunger and famine, nor bring deliverance from the oppression of their enemies. Thus, the trust of the people in their wealth and prosperity, instead of in God, brought their downfall.

Gold would be more plentiful than food. Cf. Isa. 13:12, in which God said it would be easier to find gold than people.

And it's talking about, of course, the sanctuary, the place of majesty and the ornament of beauty, it's is going to be destroyed, polluted.

Constable 19-22: Valuables and food would mean very little then because all that would concern the people would be remaining alive. Money cannot buy food when food is not there. The people had become proud over the glorious splendor of Jerusalem and the temple and, as the height of arrogance, had used some of the temple treasures to make idols. Therefore the Lord would make the temple an abhorrent thing to them and would turn it over to their enemies who would profane it (cf. Dan. 5:3-4).

"Since Israel had already profaned the temple of God, He saw no further purpose in keeping it from the desecration of the enemy."

The Lord would turn away from His people then.

Ezekiel 7:20

As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them.

The assumption is that God is shifting His focus specifically on the Temple. Up till now He had been talking about the land, the sin of the people broadly. Now, He is going to focus on the Temple.

Clarke: **As for the beauty of his ornament**—Their beautiful temple was their highest ornament, and God made it majestic by his presence. **But they have even taken its riches to make their idols, which they have brought into the very courts of the Lord’s house; and therefore God hath set it—the temple, from him—given it up to pillage.** Some say it means, “They took their ornaments, which were their pride, and made them into images to worship.”

LAN: God gave the people silver and gold, but they used that silver and gold to make idols. The resources God gives us should be used to do his work and carry out his will,

but too often we use them to satisfy our own desires. When we abuse God's gifts or use resources selfishly, we miss the real purpose God had in mind. This is as shortsighted as idolatry.

McGee 20-22: Dr. Gaebelin continues on page 51:

And the beauty of their ornaments, they turned it to pride,
And the images of their abominations, their detestable things made they of it.
And I shall give it to the hands of strangers for a prey,
And to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall profane it.
For I will turn my face from them,
And they shall defile my secret place,
And robbers shall enter into it and profane it.

This is an awesome description of the judgment of God, but if you want to read something even more awesome and which still lies ahead for the world, read Revelation 18 and 19, which describe the destruction of commercial Babylon. It speaks of a day in which men trust in big business and the stock market and depend on the success of Fifth Avenue. It is a day in which the boys in grey flannel suits make business successful, and the government assures that everything in life will go all right. But it wasn't all right, and it didn't save them. When they needed deliverance, it could not deliver them.²³

ESV: The beautiful ornament is an obscure reference, but imagery of the temple is probably in mind.

Ezekiel 7:21

And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it.

BKC: 19-20. In addition to lamenting their loss the people would remove the obstacles that had caused it (vv. 19-22). They would throw their silver into the streets, and their gold would be an unclean thing. Also their idols made from the metal of their jewelry would be an unclean thing, so items once deemed precious would be discarded. The word for "unclean thing" (*niddâh*) was used of the ceremonial impurity of menstruation (Lev. 15:19-33) and the touching of a corpse (Num. 19:13-21). It pictured the revulsion Israel would feel toward her wealth.

Why would the people suddenly loathe their material wealth? One reason was the inability of silver and gold to buy the security for which it was originally amassed. It would not be able to save them. God could not be "bought off." Another reason for the sudden revulsion of wealth was the inability of the silver and gold to buy food to satisfy their hunger in the famine.

²³ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 7:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ezekiel 7:22

My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret *place*: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it.

“My Secret place” - refers to the Holy of Holies.

Clarke: The robbers shall enter into it—The Chaldeans shall not only destroy the city; but they shall enter the temple, deface it, plunder it, and burn it to the ground.

This section describes the judgment that would come on the people for taking the treasures of the temple to make pagan images. Beauty of his ornaments and My secret place both refer to Jerusalem and its temple. The people had sinned horribly when they crafted idols out of the temple treasures and then worshiped what their hands had made (Rom. 1:25).²⁴

Ezekiel 7:23

Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence.

“Make a chain” - making a chain was symbolic, intended to speak of captivity.

The phrase “make a chain” describes the method used for marching away the captives, chained together, to their place of exile (cf. Judg 16:21).

²⁵**Dake: [Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence ...]** This is the 8th Prophecy in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 7:23-27, fulfilled). The next prophecy is in Ezekiel 8:18.

Fifteen Predictions—Fulfilled:

1. Make a chain (Ezekiel 7:23). This was prophetic of going into captivity.
2. I will bring the worst of the heathen and they will possess their houses (Ezekiel 7:24).
3. I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease.
4. Their holy places will be defiled.
5. Destruction will come (Ezekiel 7:25).
6. They shall seek peace, and there will be none.
7. Mischief will come upon mischief, and rumor upon rumor (Ezekiel 7:26).
8. Then they will seek a vision of the prophet.
9. The law will perish from the priest.
10. Counsel will perish from the ancients.
11. The king will mourn (Ezekiel 7:27).
12. The prince will be clothed with desolation.
13. The hands of the people of the land will be troubled.
14. I will do to them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them.
15. They will know that I am Jehovah.

²⁴ The Nelson Study Bible

²⁵ Believer’s Study Bible

Clarke: Make a chain—Point out the captivity; show them that it shall come, and show them the reason: “Because the land is full of bloody crimes,” etc.

McGee 23-24: These verses are translated on page 51 by Dr. Gaebelien for us:

Form a chain,
For the land is full of bloody crimes,
And the city full of violence.
Therefore will I bring the worst of the nations,
And they shall possess their houses;
And I will make the pride of the mighty to cease,
And their sanctuaries shall be defiled.

“The land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence”—what an accurate picture of our own day!

“Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses.” There are many today who want to believe that God will never permit Russia to destroy America. Where do we get that idea? God permitted Babylon, a pagan nation, to destroy His own people. Can America come down? People will say, “Oh, no. We are sending missionaries. We are such nice, lovely people.” My friend, it is not safe to walk the streets of America. There’s violence; there’s crime. Until a nation will become a law-abiding people, God cannot bless them.

You see, people do not like to read Ezekiel’s message; they would rather read John 14. Don’t misunderstand me—I love John 14, too. But we must remember that Ezekiel 7 is in the Bible also. I do not know where we got the idea that one chapter was a little bit more important than another to read. We need to at least give Ezekiel 7 equal time and let him present his case.²⁶

BKC: 23-24. Chains would be used to carry into captivity the people, who were known for bloodshed and violence (cf. 8:17; 12:19). God’s invasion plans were ready to be implemented: I will bring the most wicked of the nations to take possession of their houses. Babylon, a ruthless and cruel nation (cf. comments on 28:7), was selected by God to dispossess Israel (cf. Hab. 1:5-11). Israel’s haughty pride and religious prostitution would be crushed under the heavy boot of Babylon’s army.

Constable 23-27: It was time to make the chain that would bind the Israelites and carry them off to captivity because Judah and Jerusalem had become places of violent crime. Some interpreters believed God commanded Ezekiel to make a literal chain and that this was another symbolic act. The Lord would bring the worst of nations against His people, and they would take over the Judahites' homes (cf. Lev. 26:31-32; Deut. 28:49-57). The pride of the powerful Judahites would end, and their enemies would profane their holy places. They would not be able to escape anguish, and things would go from bad to worse for them. No one would be able to obtain guidance from the Lord—the prophets by receiving revelations, the priests by studying the law, or the elders by appealing to history. Everyone from king to common citizen would shake with terror. The Lord would

²⁶ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Eze 7:24). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

punish His people in keeping with how they had sinned, and they would know that He was the Lord.

This is a frightening chapter. It consists of a group of poetic oracles intended to convince Ezekiel's fellow hostages in the Babylonian heartland that their hopes of returning soon to their homes and families in far-off Judah would not materialize.

Ezekiel 7:24

Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled.

This verse pretty much characterizes the land from that period of history until General Allenby entered Jerusalem in 1917 to deliver it from the Turks. It was under Islamic rule for more than 1200 years!

So the scope of what Ezekiel talks about often shifts from a specific focusing on the Babylonians coming to execute God's fury. Sometimes you will see glimpses in the text where he goes beyond that to the End Times.²⁷

Clarke: The worst of the heathen—The Chaldeans; the most cruel and idolatrous of all nations.

LAN: The people of Jerusalem took great pride in their buildings. The temple itself was a source of pride (see Ezekiel 24:20-21). This pride would be crushed when the evil and godless Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem's houses and holy places. If you are going through a humiliating experience, God may be using that experience to weed out pride in your life.

Ezekiel 7:25

Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and *there shall be none.*

Clarke: They shall seek peace—They see now that their ceasing to pay the tribute to the king of Babylon has brought the Chaldeans against them; and now they sue for peace in vain. He will not hear: he is resolved on their destruction.

BKC: 25-26. Israel's response to the judgment portrayed the anguish, heartache, and despair that comes when sin is allowed to run its course. Israel felt she could never fall; but when she would finally realize the terror of her fate, it would be too late. Her desperate search for deliverance and peace would be in vain. God added, Calamity upon calamity will come, and rumor upon rumor. The blows of misfortune would pound relentlessly one after another without a break. The word for "calamity" (*hōwâh*), appearing only here and in Isaiah 47:11, conveys the idea of ruin or disaster. Like the catastrophes that hit Job (cf. Job 1:13-19), no sooner would one catastrophe be reported

²⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

than word would come of another. Rumors spread through Jerusalem of alliances and deliverers and coups and reversals in Babylon—and each piece of gossip was eagerly received by a terrified people.

In addition to listening to the many false rumors racing through the city, the people would also seek out the prophet . . . the priest, and the elders to gain insight from God. But this too would be in vain. They had refused to heed the warnings from God’s true spokesmen. So when they would desperately seek an answer, none would be available.

Ezekiel 7:26

Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.

He is saying that they would not listen when they were in force; now there would be a famine of the Word. Amos also talks of a famine of the Word.

We have no ability to conceive what a famine of the Word would be like. But many countries are of that kind, where people would expose themselves to incredible dangers just for a few pages of God’s Word. That is what Israel experienced when the prophet, priest, and elders were no longer available to them for counsel.²⁸

Dake: [law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients] The law was the special realm of the priest (Deut. 17:8-13; Deut. 33:10), the vision was that of the prophet, and the counsel of wisdom that of the elders (cp. Jeremiah 18:18).

Clarke: **Then shall they seek a vision**—Vision shall perish from the prophet, the law from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. Previously to great national judgments, God restrains the influences of his Spirit. His word is not accompanied with the usual unction; and the wise men of the land, the senators and celebrated statesmen, devise foolish schemes; and thus, in endeavoring to avert it, they hasten on the national ruin. How true is the saying, *Θυεμ Δευσ πυλτ περδερε, πριυσ δεμεντατ*. “Those whom God designs to destroy, he first infatuates.”

Prophets, priests, and elders were the normal channels through whom God’s guidance came. The blocking of these channels prohibited receiving a message from God (cf. Hos 4:6; Amos 8:11-14).

ESV: Loss of divine direction from the **prophet, priest, and elders** forges another link to Jeremiah, where the oblivious Judeans assume that such guidance will always be forthcoming (Jer. 18:18).

²⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Ezekiel, khouse.org

Ezekiel 7:27

The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

BKC: Because there would be no help from God, the king, Ezekiel said, would mourn, the prince would be clothed with despair, and the hands of the people of the land would tremble. Who are “the king” and “the prince”? Ezekiel generally used the word “prince” to refer to Zedekiah (12:10, 12; 21:25), never giving him the title “king.” The only Israelite Ezekiel called “king” was Jehoiachin, in captivity in Babylon (1:2).

“King” Jehoiachin was already in captivity mourning Jerusalem’s certain fall, while “Prince” Zedekiah was in Jerusalem in despair over his plight. As a result the people were trembling in fear at their uncertain fate. God again said their punishment would be according to their conduct (a standard mentioned five times in chap. 7 [vv. 3-4, 8-9, 27]).

The punishment will fit the crime—God promised to do to them according to ... what they deserve. Because Judah had been so bloodthirsty, God would send the worst of the Gentiles to possess their houses, defile the temple, and bring violence to the land. This section predicts Nebuchadnezzar’s desecration of the Jerusalem temple in 586 B.C. As a last resort, peace at any price would be fervently sought from false prophets, priests, and politicians, but without success. The deadline for decisive action would have passed.²⁹

Summary OTS: Ezekiel next described the social, military, economic and political impact of the calamity which was about to befall Jerusalem.

1. *Social disruption (7:10–13).* The day of Jerusalem’s judgment would begin with the blossoming of the arrogant superpower Babylon, God’s judgment “rod.” The wickedness and violent deeds of the citizens of Judah created the need for this rod of correction. Babylon’s rise would bring disaster to Judah. None would remain in the land. National wealth would be confiscated. Those who survived would experience a grief beyond tears (7:10f.).

That day of accountability was at hand. Every economic institution would be shaken. Real estate transactions, normally sad for the seller and joyous for the buyer, would cease altogether. Sellers would never return to properties they once owned. They would die in captivity. This threatening “vision” regarding the multitudes of sinners would not be averted! (7:12f.).

2. *Military dismay (7:14–18).* In that day of calamity organized resistance to the invaders would fail. Outside Jerusalem the “sword” of the enemy would cut down all who stood in the way. Inside the city plague and famine would take their toll. The few who escaped would bemoan their iniquity in lofty heights and deep ravines. With

²⁹ The Nelson Study Bible

sackcloth on their bodies and heads shaven in humiliation they would sit in fear and trembling as they contemplated what worse fate might still be awaiting them.

3. *Economic distress (7:19–22)*. Silver and gold would become worthless in the day of judgment, an actual liability to the one who was attempting to flee. Fugitives would cast it away like some unclean thing. No amount of wealth would deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath. Food would be unavailable at any price (7:19).

They had abused the wealth which God had given them. From their gold and silver they fashioned jewelry which became objects of pride. They made from their precious metals "images of their abominations and their detestable things," i.e., idols. This abused wealth would become to them worthless, foul, and unclean. God would take their silver and gold from them and give it to the foreign invaders, i.e., the Babylonians. Sacred objects would be put to profane use by the conquerors. Since God would turn his face from his people, even the secret treasuries of the Temple would be ransacked by the invaders (7:20–22). What a terrible judgment! Yet, as Blackwood has observed, "the death of material property turned out to be the resurrection of faith."

4. *Political disorder (7:23–27)*. In view of the bloodshed and violence which he had been describing, Ezekiel called sarcastically upon the leaders in Jerusalem to "make the chain." The chain was used to deflect battering rams as a last ditch defensive maneuver of besieged cities. In the case of Jerusalem, this effort would not succeed. God had brought against them "the worst of the nations." The thought is that Judah must be wretched if God selected as the agent of punishment the worst of the nations. Those ruthless invaders would overrun Jerusalem. They would take possession of private houses. They would humble proud rulers, and profane sacred sanctuaries (7:23f.).

In the coming "anguish" the Jerusalemites would sue for peace, but there would be none. Disaster would follow upon disaster. Rumors would abound. Neither priest nor elder would be able to give any authoritative advice. In desperation men would look for prophets who might have "a vision" from the Lord. The civil authorities and "people of the land," i.e., land owners, would tremble before the bombardment of the enemy. Yet the terrible judgment was not inappropriate. God would deal with these sinners "according to their conduct." They would learn through this horrible experience that Yahweh is sovereign, awesome in power and justice (7:25–27).³⁰

³⁰ Smith, J. E. (1992). *The Major Prophets* (Eze 7:10–27). Joplin, Mo.: College Press.