



Book of Ezekiel

Chapter 9

Theme: Shekinah glory prepares to leave temple; Shekinah glory fills the holy place; Shekinah glory departs

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Theme: Shekinah glory prepares to leave temple; Shekinah glory fills the holy place; Shekinah glory departs.

Clarke Introduction: The vision in this chapter seems intended to denote the general destruction of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, excepting a few pious individuals that were distressed at the abominations that were committed in the land; who, in order to be delivered from the general calamity, were MARKED, in allusion, perhaps, to the custom of eastern princes, who marked their servants in the forehead, or rather to the custom very frequent among the Pagan worshippers, of indelibly imprinting on different parts of their body the marks of their idols. To indicate, likewise, that God was soon to forsake the temple, the shechinah, or glorious symbol of his presence, is seen to remove from the inner sanctuary to the threshold or door of the temple, vv. 1-7. The prophet intercedes for his people; but God, on account of the greatness of their sins, will not be entreated, vv. 8-11.¹

In chapter 9 the Shekinah glory prepares to leave the temple at Jerusalem. I believe that from the days of Manasseh there was the coming and going of the Shekinah glory. God is merciful; He doesn't, in a petulant mood, give up on people. God is long-suffering and not willing that any should perish.

ESV Introduction: Ezek. 4:1–24:27 Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah. In the roughly chronological ordering of Ezekiel's preaching, the oracles of chs. 4–24 precede the downfall of Jerusalem in 586 b.c. His message consistently points to approaching judgment; both the message and the messenger were vindicated by the fall of the city. Although the sequence appears to be chronological, there is also some grouping by theme and genre: chs. 4–7 include a high density of “symbolic actions”; chs. 8–11 comprise the second major vision sequence in the book, Ezekiel's first “temple vision”; chs. 15–23 are dominated by “parables” and extended metaphors. Almost the only relief from the relentless indictment of sin and announcement of judgment comes in 11:14–21, which anticipates the hopeful tone of the latter half of the book, but not without sounding the familiar warning.

¹ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

Ezekiel 9:1

He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man *with* his destroying weapon in his hand.

[He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near ...] this is the 10th prophecy in Ezekiel (Ezekiel 9:1-11, fulfilled). The next prophecy is in Ezekiel 11:4.

Ten Predictions—Fulfilled (Dake):

1. Six men came and stood from the outer gate with swords (Ezekiel 9:2).
2. One man among them was clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn by his side.
3. They went in and stood beside the brazen altar (Ezekiel 9:3).
4. God called to the man clothed in linen which had the writer's inkhorn, and said, Go through the midst of Jerusalem and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the city (Ezekiel 9:4).
5. He said to the others, Go after him and smite all without pity or mercy, young and old, women and children, all who do not have the mark on their foreheads (Ezekiel 9:5-6).
6. They began with the ancient men that were idolaters before the temple (Ezekiel 9:6).
7. Defile the house and fill the courts with the slain (Ezekiel 9:7).
8. My eye will not spare (Ezekiel 9:7-10).
9. Neither will I have pity (Ezekiel 9:10).
10. I will recompense their way upon their head.²

Clarke: Cause them that have charge over the city—By those six men with destroying weapons the Chaldeans are represented, who had received commission to destroy the city; and when the north is mentioned in such cases, Chaldea and the Chaldean armies are generally intended. There appears to have been six men with a sort of slaughter-bills, and one man with an inkhorn. These may represent the seven counsellors of the eastern monarchs, who always saw the king's face, and knew all the secrets of the government. One of them was that minister who had the office of reporting concerning criminals, who carried the book of death and the book of life into the presence of the king, where the names were entered of criminals who were destined to suffer, and of those who were either considered as innocent or recommended to mercy; those of the former in the book of death, those of the latter in the book of life. This person with the inkhorn might be termed, in our phrase, the recorder.

LAN: This chapter presents a picture of coming judgment. After Ezekiel had seen how corrupt Jerusalem had become, God called one man to spare the small minority who had been faithful. Then he called six men to slaughter the wicked people in the city. This judgment was ordered by God himself (Ezekiel 9:5-7).³

² Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

³ Life Application Notes, Life application Bible

BSB: 1-2 The “deadly weapon” and the “battle-ax” are symbols of destructive warfare (cf. Jer 51:20). Six men armed for battle entered the temple, followed by a seventh who wore linen robes, the garb of a priest (Ex 28:42; 1 Sam 2:18; 22:18). This man carried a writer’s inkhorn at his side, which, together with pen and wax tablet, comprised the scribal equipment.⁴

1-2. The second part of Ezekiel’s vision portrayed the execution of God’s judgment (announced in 8:18) on Jerusalem’s inhabitants. God summoned the guards of the city . . . each with a weapon in his hand. ”Guards“ comes from the verb ”to attend to, visit, muster, appoint.“ The **RSV** and **NASB** translate it ”executioners“ here, but this seems too strong. Ezekiel used it again in 44:11 (”having charge of“) to refer to the Levites who will serve as gatekeepers in the millennial temple.

The ”guards“ in 9:1 were probably angelic beings posted by God around His city. Each guard carried a deadly weapon—possibly a sword or a club.

The guards came into the inner court from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north. To reach Ezekiel they passed the four groups mentioned in chapter 8. With the six guards was a seventh man clothed in linen who had a writing kit. The linen clothing suggested dignity, purity, or divine origin (cf. Dan. 10:5; 12:6-7; Rev. 15:6). The ”writing kit“ was literally, a ”case for the scribe.“ ”Case“ is an Egyptian loanword, meaning a case for carrying reed pens with an inkhorn attached.⁵

ESV: 1–2 The first phrase of v. 1 ironically repeats the closing phrase of 8:18. Hebrew *pequddot*, here rendered executioners, also carries the sense of “governing officials.” The angels of the seven cities of Revelation 1–3 may be an analogy. In Ezekiel 9, destruction is by weapon; in ch. 10 it is by fire.

ESV: 1–11 Slaughter in Jerusalem. A team of seven angels carries out the execution of the unfaithful in Jerusalem at God's command. Only one of them is assigned the job of protecting the faithful. The prophet's anguished intervention does not dissuade God from judgment. Cf. the Passover (Exodus 12): a mark protects the faithful from God's agents of death.

Chuck Smith: So he heard Him now crying. He's not ordering Ezekiel. Ezekiel is hearing God cry to these others, "Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand." He is calling now these angels of God who are to bring the judgment against the people.⁶

Constable: In his vision Ezekiel heard the Lord (cf. v. 4) cry out loudly for the executioners (guards), who would punish the people of Jerusalem, to draw near to Him with their weapons in hand. The Lord had predicted that the people would cry out to Him for mercy with a loud voice (8:18), but first He cried out against them in judgment with a

⁴ Believer’s Study Bible Notes

⁵ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures (Eze 9:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ Chuck Smith, Pastor Notes, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa CA

loud voice. Though these executioners looked like men, they appear to have been angels in view of what they proceeded to do. Evidently Ezekiel's position at this time was in the inner temple courtyard, and the Lord spoke from inside the temple structure (cf. v. 3).⁷

Ezekiel 9:2

And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar.

[writer's inkhorn by his side] It was customary in the East to put into the girdle the case containing writing implements. The inkhorn consisted of two parts: a receptacle for the pens, and a box for the ink. It was made out of ebony, hardwood, brass, copper or silver, and of beautiful workmanship. It was about 10 inches long, 1.5 to 2 inches wide, and half an inch deep. The hollow shaft contained pens of reed and a penknife and had a lid.

Clarke: Stood beside the brazen altar—To signify that the people against whom they had their commission were, for their crimes, to be sacrificed to the demands of Divine justice.

LAN: The writing kit was a common object in Ezekiel's day. It included a long narrow board with a groove to hold the reed brush that was used to write on parchment, papyrus, or dried clay. The board had hollowed out areas for holding cakes of black and red ink that had to be moistened before use.

One man among them was probably one in addition to the six, making six men equipped as executioners and one representing the presence and purity of the holy God, who is worthy to mark out some for judgment and to omit others (see vv. 3–7; Ex. 12:1–13; Rom. 9:14–29; Rev. 7:3; 9:4). **his battle-ax:** Literally, “the implement of his shattering” (compare Jer. 51:20). The **upper gate** from which these seven came was equivalent to the north gate of the inner court (see 8:3; 2 Kin. 15:35). The **bronze altar** was the sacrificial altar.⁸

clothed with linen—(Da 10:5). His clothing marked his office as distinct from that of the six officers of vengeance; “linen” characterized the high priest (Le 16:4); emblematic of purity. The same garment is assigned to the angel of the Lord (for whom Michael is but another name) by the contemporary prophet Daniel (Da 10:5). Therefore the intercessory High Priest in heaven must be meant (Zec 1:12). The six with Him are His subordinates; therefore He is said to be “among them,” literally, “in the midst of them,” *as their recognized Lord* (Heb 1:6). He appears as a “man,” implying His incarnation; as “one” (compare 1Ti 2:5). Salvation is peculiarly assigned to Him, and so He bears the “inkhorn” in order to “mark” His elect (**Ez 9:4**; compare Ex 12:7; **Rev 7:3; 9:4; 20:4**), and

⁷ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, 2010 Edition of his notes on Ezekiel

⁸ The Nelson Study Bible

to write their names in His book of life (Rev 13:8). As Oriental scribes suspend their inkhorn at their side in the present day, and as a “scribe of the host is found in Assyrian inscriptions accompanying the host” to number the heads of the slain, so He stands ready for the work before Him. “The higher gate” was probably where now the gate of Damascus is. The six with Him make up the sacred and perfect number, *seven* (Zec 3:9; Rev 5:6). The executors of judgment on the wicked, in Scripture teaching, are good, not bad, angels; the bad have permitted to them the trial of the pious (Job 1:12; 2Co 12:7). The judgment is executed by Him (Ez 10:2, 7; Ez 10:2, 7, Jn 5:22, 27) through the six (Mt 13:41; 25:31); so beautifully does the Old Testament harmonize with the New Testament. The seven come “from the way of the north”; for it was there the idolatries were seen, and from the same quarter must proceed the judgment (Babylon lying northeast of Judea).⁹

stood—the attitude of waiting reverently for Jehovah’s commands.

brazen altar—the altar of burnt offerings, not the altar of incense, which was *of gold*. They “stood” there to imply reverent obedience; for there God gave His answers to prayer [CALVIN]; also as being about to slay victims to God’s justice, they stand where sacrifices are usually slain [GROTIUS], (Ez 39:17; Is 34:6; Je 12:3; 46:10).¹⁰

McGee: "Six men came from the way of the higher gate." These six men are angels -- I see no other explanation for them. Angels are used by God in the judgment of this world. They are associated with the nation Israel and have nothing to do with the church. On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came -- not angels -- and when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to take the church out of the world, there will be no angels with Him. However, when He comes to the earth to establish His Kingdom, He will send forth His angels. We read in Matthew 13:41, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all the things that offend, and them which do iniquity." Then in Matthew 16:27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Finally, Paul wrote: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Thess. 1:7-8). After the third chapter in Revelation, there is no mention of the church which had been previously mentioned frequently. Why? The church is gone from the earth, and angels have taken over the judgment upon the earth.

"And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub." That is, it had gone up from the Holy Place. The "cherub" were above the mercy seat. This is where the glory had been, but now it lifts up. The glory was a token of the presence of God, and it is now departing.¹¹

⁹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:2). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹⁰Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:2-3). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Chuck Smith: Even Jesus Christ, really, one of the theophanies, we find Him in many parallel passages to this.

Constable: Six men entered the inner courtyard from the north (upper; 8:3, 5, 14) gate each with a lethal weapon in his hand (cf. Jer. 51:20). A seventh man dressed in linen also approached with them, and he had a writing kit of the type that scribes used attached to his waist.

"This writing kit usually was made from an animal horn. It had a palette with a slot for pens and a hollow place for two kinds of ink, usually black and red. Professional scribes usually carried this kind of equipment."¹²

In other passages people who were divine messengers wore linen (cf. Dan. 10:5; 12:6-7; Rev. 15:6), and this was the role of these men. Priests also wore linen (Exod. 28:39-42; 1 Sam. 2:18; 22:18), and they too were divine messengers. They entered the inner courtyard and stood by the brazen altar. Their number, seven, often signified a complete work of God to the Jews, as in the seven days of creation.

Ezekiel 9:3

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side;

"Linen" - idiomatically suggests rank. This was a scribe, this was the one who would keep the books.

[And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub] The fifth time the glory was seen (Ezekiel 1:4-28; Ezekiel 3:12-14,22-23; Ezekiel 8:1-4; Ezekiel 9:3).

And he called to the man—The person here who called was that who sat on the chariot of the Divine glory. See Ezekiel 1:26.

LAN: What is God's glory? It is the manifestation of God's character—his ultimate power, transcendence, and moral perfection. God is completely above man and his limitations. Yet God reveals himself to us so that we can worship and follow him.

LAN: Cherubim ("cherub" is singular) are an order of powerful angelic beings created to glorify God. They are associated with God's absolute holiness and moral perfection. God placed cherubim at the entrance of Eden to keep Adam and Eve out after they sinned (Genesis 3:24). Representations of cherubim were used to decorate the tabernacle and temple. The lid of the ark of the covenant, called the atonement cover, was adorned with two gold cherubim (Exodus 37:6-9). It was a symbol of the very presence of God. The cherubim seen by Ezekiel left the temple along with the glory of God (Ezekiel 10). Ezekiel then recognized them as the living creatures he had seen in his first vision (see Ezekiel 1).

¹² Cooper, pp. 126-127. Allen p. 147

BSB:3-4 Ezekiel saw the glory of God depart from the threshold of the temple and move through the gate to the mountain east of the city, probably Olivet (11:23). Later in his vision of the restored city, he witnessed the return of God’s glory (43:2-5). The man in linen was commanded to go through Jerusalem and place a “mark” on those who were distressed and grieved because of the existing abominations (Ezek 9:4). Since the slaughter was not indiscriminate nor the apostasy absolute, God’s people were to receive a “mark” of safety (cf. Rev 7:3). The “mark” was the *tav*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which was cross-shaped (“x” or “+”) in early Hebrew script—perhaps an allusion to the cross. While it is true that he likely did not understand the fullest implications of what he saw, Ezekiel reported the fact that the mark provided deliverance (cf. Rev 7:3; 9:4). According to Jewish tradition the *tav* stood for the first letter of the Hebrew word *tihyeh*, meaning “you shall live.” The foreshadowing of the cross and the divine redemptive work reminds us that the prophets often spoke more than they knew.

It is not clear whether the term **cherub** here indicates (1) the cherubim on the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place or (2) the cherubim of the throne with wheels in 10:1–5, 18. Either way, this pictures the departure of God’s glory from the temple, then from Jerusalem, and then from Judah, as seen in chs. 9–11. The **threshold** refers to the entryway.¹³

a mark. Lit., a *taw*, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, written at that time like a cross (cf. Gen. 4:15 for another mark). Persons so marked would be spared. Similarly God will mark the 144,000 during the tribulation period (Rev. 7:3-4).¹⁴

3-7. As the guards and the scribe came through the temple, the vision of God’s glory (cf. comments on 1:28) went up from above the cherubim, where it had been, and moved to the threshold of the temple. Similar wording in 10:4 dramatically illustrated God’s departure from Jerusalem. Because this was a vision, events could happen in an otherwise unusual sequence. Thus one minute God was personally guiding Ezekiel through the temple while the next minute He was seated on the cherubim in the holy of holies or on His throne-chariot.

God told the scribe dressed in linen, Go throughout . . . Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over the detestable things in the city. God knew those who had remained faithful to Him, and would spare them in His judgment (cf. God’s marking of the 144,000 for preservation during the Tribulation, Rev. 7:3-4).

God then told the guards to follow the scribe through the city and kill, without showing pity. Those not receiving the mark were to be destroyed. There was to be no distinction by age or sex; the judgment would come on the old and young, on men . . . women, and children.

Then God ordered the guards, Begin at the sanctuary. Significantly the judgment first began in the house of God (cf. 1 Peter 4:17). Since the evil had spread from the temple throughout the land (Ezek. 8), the judgment would follow the same course. So the guards

¹³ The Nelson Study Bible

¹⁴ The Rurie Study Bible

began with the elders, the priests whose backs were turned to God (8:16). Their slaughter would defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain, but the temple had already been defiled with their idolatrous practices. The historical fulfillment of this is seen in 2 Chronicles 36:17-19.¹⁵

glory of ... God—which had heretofore, as a bright cloud, rested on the mercy seat between the cherubim in the holy of holies (2Sa 6:2; Ps 80:1); its departure was the presage of the temple being given up to ruin; its going from the inner sanctuary to the threshold without, towards the officers standing at the altar outside, was in order to give them the commission of vengeance.¹⁶

In vision, Ezekiel here sees the presence of God beginning to depart from Israel, first of all leaving His place between the golden cherubim over the ark in the temple, to go to the threshold of the house. Next He would leave the threshold, then the temple and the city (Ezekiel 10:18; 11:23).¹⁷

ESV: 3–7 Verse 3a is a parenthetical aside, foreshadowing the main focus of ch. 10. The seventh angel, in the role of scribe, puts a mark on the foreheads (9:4) of those faithful to the Lord. Preserving a remnant has been a feature of chs. 4–7. Here, the mark is the Hebrew *taw*, and in the script of Ezekiel's day would be an X. Ancient Christian interpretation saw in this symbol an anticipation of the cross. Verses 6–7 of ch. 9 indicate that the slaughter is to begin where Ezekiel's tour of ch. 8 ended. The command to defile the house (9:7) overcomes the reluctance to pollute the sanctuary with corpses (cf. 1 Kings 1:51; 2 Kings 11:15).

Chuck Smith (2-3): Now, the Spirit of God and the glory of God is now departing from Israel. No longer in the holy of holies, has now moved to the threshold of the house of God. Soon we'll find it moving to the east gate and then to the mountain, the Mount of Olives, towards the east and then departing completely. And so, God's glory, the cherubim leaving now. Dwelt there in the holy of holies of the temple, but now God's glory, the presence of God, is leaving.

Constable: Ezekiel then saw the glory of God (probably personified, cf. 8:2) move from the cherub (probably a collective singular for cherubim, the cherubim in the courtyard, 10:3) to the threshold (main entrance) of the temple building.

*"The departure of the glory of the Lord from Israel is one of the basic disclosures of this prophetic book, so Ezekiel traces it very carefully in its different stages (cf. 9:3; 10:18-19; [11:23;] 43:2-5)."*¹⁸

Ezekiel also heard the Lord call to the man with the scribe's inkhorn.

¹⁵Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures (Eze 9:3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁶Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:3-4). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

¹⁷Defender's Study Bible

¹⁸Feinberg, p. 56

Ezekiel 9:4

And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

Dake: [set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof] This mark was to be put on the faithful ones for their protection when the faithless were to be destroyed. It showed that they belonged to God. It was an ancient custom in Egypt that a runaway slave was freed from his master if he went to the temple and gave himself up to the god of that place, receiving certain marks upon his person to denote his consecration to the deity he worshiped. Romans marked their soldiers in the hand and their slaves in the foreheads. It is clear from Rev. 7:3; Rev. 9:4; Rev. 14:1 that in the future, 144,000 Jews from all tribes of Israel, except Dan, will have a mark in their foreheads as a sign for protection. It will be the name of God (Rev. 14:1). All the redeemed will be so marked in the next life (Rev. 3:12; Rev. 22:4). The followers of the beast will also be marked in the foreheads or hands (Rev. 13:16-17; Rev. 14:9; Rev. 20:4).

Clarke: **Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh**—This is in allusion to the ancient every-where-used custom of setting marks on servants and slaves, to distinguish them from others. It was also common for the worshippers of particular idols to have their idol's mark upon their foreheads, arms, etc. These are called sectarian marks to the present day among the Hindoos and others in India. Hence by this mark we can easily know who is a follower of Vishnoo, who of Siva, who of Bramah, etc.

LAN: 4-5 God told the man with the writing kit to put a mark on those who were faithful to God. Their faithfulness was determined by their sensitivity to and sorrow over their nation's sin. Those with the mark were spared when the six men began to destroy the wicked people. During the exodus, the Israelites put a mark of blood on their doorframes to save them from death. In the final days, God will mark the foreheads of those destined for salvation (Rev. 7:3), and Satan will mark his followers (Rev. 13:16-17), who, like him, are destined for destruction. When God punishes sin, he won't forget his promise to preserve his people.¹⁹

Election, Remnant—God marked out a faithful remnant for Himself even as He destroyed the wicked among elect Israel. Participating in worship ceremonies in the Temple did not distinguish the elect remnant. Sadness over sin did.²⁰

Mark translates the Hebrew name for the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which in Ezekiel's time looked like an X. Those so marked are people who **sigh and cry** over the abominations of idolatry so far mentioned. Those who demonstrated a righteous attitude through true repentance and remorse were marked out from the hardened rebels. These

¹⁹ Disciple's Study Bible

²⁰ Disciple's Study Bible

would be the remnant (see v. 8), the ones who continued to follow God's commands (see Rev. 7:2–4; 9:4; 14:1).²¹

midst of ... city ... midst of Jerusalem—This twofold designation marks more emphatically the scene of the divine judgments.²²

a mark—literally, the *Hebrew* letter *Tau*, the last in the alphabet, used as a *mark* (“my sign,” Job 31:35, *Margin*); literally, *Tau*; originally written in the form of a *cross*, which TERTULLIAN explains as referring to the badge and only means of salvation, the cross of Christ. But nowhere in Scripture are the words which are now employed as names of letters used to denote the letters themselves or their figures [VITRINGA]. The noun here is cognate to the verb, “*mark a mark*.” So in Rev 7:3 no particular mark is specified. We *seal* what we wish to guard securely. When all things else on earth are confounded, God will secure His people from the common ruin. God gives the *first* charge as to their safety before He orders the punishment of the rest (Ps 31:20; Is 26:20, 21). So in the case of Lot and Sodom (Ge 19:22); also the Egyptian first-born were not slain till Israel had time to sprinkle the blood-mark, ensuring their safety (compare Rev 7:3; Am 9:9). So the early Christians had Pella provided as a refuge for them, before the destruction of Jerusalem.²³

sigh and ... cry—similarly sounding verbs in *Hebrew*, as in *English Version*, expressing the prolonged sound of their grief. “Sigh” implies their *inward grief* (“groanings which cannot be uttered,” Ro 8:26); “cry,” the outward expression of it. So Lot (2Pe 2:7, 8). Tenderness should characterize the man of God, not harsh sternness in opposing the ungodly (Ps 119:53, 136; Je 13:17; 2Co 12:21); at the same time zeal for the honor of God (Ps 69:9, 10; 1Jn 5:19).²⁴

McGee: God has said, “Mark out the men who want these abominations and are seeking after them. I am going to judge them.” But this man with the inhorn marks out those “that sigh and that cry for all the abominations.” These are the remnant which God will save in that city.

the mark. The “mark upon the foreheads” (Ezekiel 9:4) is evidently similar to the future angelic seal which will be placed on “the servants of our God in their foreheads” (Revelation 7:3) during the coming period of great tribulation. These faithful Jews were to be supernaturally protected from slaughter in God’s terrible judgment on Israel’s apostasy.²⁵

²¹ The Nelson Study Bible

²² Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:4). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²³ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:4). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²⁴ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:4-5). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²⁵ Defender’s Study Bible

Chuck Smith: Talking to the one which had the writer's inkhorn by His side. So, this one with the inkhorn was to go through and mark all of those who were grieving over the abominations that existed. Those whose hearts were grieved by the things that were going on.

I'll tell you, when I read the newspapers and I read what's going on in our country, I grieve. God said, "Go mark those that have been grieving."

Constable: The Lord instructed this man to go through Jerusalem and put a mark on everyone who expressed grief over the abominations that existed in Jerusalem (cf. Rev. 7:3; 9:4; 14:1). The mark distinguished the godly from the wicked (cf. Exod. 12:7, 13; Josh. 2). Some expositors believed that this individual was the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Christ, because of his prominence among these messengers and because of what he did (cf. 10:2, 6-7).¹⁷⁷ There is no way to prove or disprove this theory. Most interpreters believe he was an angel.

*"There was special significance to the 'mark' used for the purpose. The word 'mark' is the Hebrew word *taw*, which is the name of the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It may have been understood as an abbreviation for *tam*, 'blameless.' In the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. the *taw* of Paleo-Hebrew script was written like an X or sloped cross."²⁶*

"Ezekiel, of course, could not have thought of Christian symbolism nor is the passage a direct prediction of Christ's cross. It is a remarkable coincidence, however."²⁷

"This is one of the many examples where the Hebrew prophets spoke better than they knew."²⁸

Ezekiel 9:5

And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

Revelation, Divine Presence—God's presence (as in the deliverance in Egypt) is active to identify and redeem those who are repentant. God is always seeking ways to save and reconcile not hurt or destroy. He marked off His faithful people before leaving Jerusalem to destruction. In Ezekiel's vision God symbolically left the Temple, refusing to live among an unholy people. Ezekiel faithfully carried out the prophet's role, interceding for His people. God was present to see the destruction of His faithless people.

Christian Ethics, Moral Limits—The vision communicates in an extreme form in order for the audience to understand the perverseness which they had reached and their guilt before God. God's holiness demanded purity from His people. Unless they turned from

²⁶ Cooper P. 127

²⁷ Feinberg, p. 56

²⁸ H. L. elison, Ezekiel The man and His Message p. 44

their ways of bloodshed, the symbolic judgment would become real. God enforces the moral limits He sets for His people.²⁹

Go after him: The universality of this judgment is shocking to us; but this is in line with divine judgments from the time of the Flood in Genesis to the final judgment described in Revelation.

Chuck Smith (5-6): You remember that Peter said, "The time has come when judgment must begin at the house of Lord." It's a reference to Ezekiel, where God said, "Begin at My sanctuary." But Peter said, "If judgment begins at the house of the Lord, where will the sinner and the ungodly appear?" Now also these that are marked in the New Testament, in the book of Revelation, we have an interesting parallel in the book of Revelation, chapter 7, where there are four angels that are holding the four winds, ready to bring destruction upon the earth, and there is an angel that says, "'Don't release those winds until the servants of God have been marked in their forehead.' And I counted the number that were marked and there were a hundred forty-four thousand, that they should not be hurt by the plagues that were yet to come to pass" (Revelation 7:3-4).

So, God's preservation again of a remnant. God had His faithful remnant in Jerusalem, "Mark them, and when the judgment comes, when you are to slay, don't touch those with a mark." And so, again, God preserving His remnant in the book of Revelation, chapter 7. Parallel passages.

Constable (5-6) Ezekiel also heard the Lord instruct the six other men to go through the city after the man with the writing case and slay everyone who did not have the special mark on him or her. They were to start from the temple and show no mercy to any individual who lacked the mark. So these six men began their assignment with the elders of Jerusalem who were in front of the temple (cf. 8:11). Judgment started with those closest to God, as it typically must (1 Pet. 4:17; cf. Matt. 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2; Heb. 13:17).

Ezekiel 9:6

Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house.

Missler: See Rev 7:1-4. This is the famous passage about the 12,000 out of each of the 12 tribes, the 144,000 who were sealed in their foreheads. That is the positive form of sealing, marking, or setting aside. 'Segregating for inventory' - the inventory that has the protection of God upon it. Rev 14:1.

The negative side of marking is seen in Rev 13:16-18. "The Mark of the Beast" is Satan's mark. Satan is uncreative, his whole ministry is all tied up with counterfeits, copies.³⁰

²⁹ Disciple's Study Bible

³⁰ Chuck Missler, Notes on ezekiel, khouse.org

Those of all ages and both sexes who were not marked would be killed.

[begin at my sanctuary] This illustrates 1 Peter 4:17-18.

Clarke: Begin at my sanctuary—Let those who have sinned against most mercy, and most privileges, be the first victims of justice. Those who know their Lord's will, and do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. The unfaithful members of Christ's church will be first visited and most punished. But let not those who belong to the synagogue of Satan exult in this, for if judgment begin at the house of God what will the end be of them who obey not the Gospel! However, the truly penitent of all descriptions in such cases shall be safe. The command of God is, "Set a mark on all them that sigh and cry;" and his command to the destroyers is, "Come not near any man on whom is the mark."

LAN: The spiritual leaders ("elders") of Israel blatantly promoted their idolatrous beliefs, and the people abandoned God and followed them. Spiritual leaders are especially accountable to God because they are entrusted with the task of teaching the truth (see James 3:1). When they pervert the truth, they can lead countless people away from God and even cause a nation to fall. It is not surprising, then, that when God began to judge the nation, he started at the temple and worked outward (see 1 Peter 4:17). How sad it is that in the temple, the one place where they should have been teaching God's truth, they were teaching lies.

BSB: The command was given to destroy all those who have no "mark." Judgment proceeds without exemptions, as it did when the death angel struck all the homes which did not have blood on the doorpost (Ex 12:13).

My sanctuary: The corrupt spiritual leaders had been practicing idolatry and immorality in the temple itself (8:3–16). Judgment would begin with them because they had led the nation astray (1 Pet. 4:17). **Defile the temple:** This means to carry out the execution and leave dead bodies in the temple environs (see Lev. 21:1; Num. 19:11).

begin at my sanctuary. A comprehensive principle of divine judgment is that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). "Judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). "Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1). The people of Israel and Judah had been led into apostasy by their leaders, including especially false prophets and worldly priests.

ESV: they began with the elders. Just as the leaders had led the people astray, so now judgment begins with them, from their place before God's house (the temple). This judgment is echoed in Peter's talk of a purifying judgment that will "begin at the household of God" (1 Pet. 4:17).

Ezekiel 9:7

And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

1 Pet 4:17 notes that judgment begins at the House of God. God starts at the Sanctuary.

Missler: “Defile the House” - He tells them to defile the Temple. Since they themselves had defiled God’s House with their idolatries and their false worship, “if that’s what you want, that’s what you’ll get.” So God instructed them to go and defile the House with dead bodies.

Num 19:11; 1 Kgs13:2 or 2 Kgs 23:16. A dead body Levitically defiled something. Here we have not just the weight of physical judgment, but also the spiritual implications of it being a defiling action.

“courts” - So they filled the courts with the slain. The “courts” here refers to the courts surrounding the Temple.

Defile the house—A dreadful sentence, Let it be polluted, I will no more dwell in it; I now utterly forsake it.

Chuck Smith: Now, if you touched a dead carcass, you were to be defiled for a day. You weren't to be allowed to come into the temple to worship if you'd touched a dead body. But he said, "Defile the temple, just kill the people in the courts of it, let it all be defiled."

Constable: The Lord directed these executioners to go out into the city. They were even to slay people in the temple courtyards, though by doing so they defiled the temple (made it ritually unclean; cf. Num. 19:11; 1 Kings 13:2; 2 Kings 23:16). Justice was more important than ritual cleanliness. The six men proceeded to carry out their duty (cf. 2 Chron. 36:17-19).

Ezekiel 9:8

And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?

Clarke: **Wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel, On thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?**—These destroyers had slain the seventy elders, the twenty-five adorers of the sun, and the women that mourned for Tammuz; and on seeing this slaughter the prophet fell on his face, and began to make intercession.

[wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?] This is question 7 in Ezekiel. The next question is in Ezekiel 11:13.

The Church, Remnant—Destruction does not please God’s spokespersons even though they have predicted it. Ezekiel pleaded with God to spare His remnant, but God refused to spare a guilty people. God expects obedience from His remnant.³¹

The prophet was horrified by what he saw. The word **Ah** was sarcastic in 6:11; here it is a sincere gasp of pain (as in 11:13). **The remnant**, a group chosen and saved from destruction by a sovereign God, is a recurring theme in the Bible (see 2 Kin. 19:31; Ezra 9:8; Isa. 1:9; 10:20–23; Amos 5:15; Rom. 9:27–29; 11:1–8).³²

Ezekiel was overwhelmed at the severity of God’s judgment.

8-10. Overwhelmed by the magnitude of this judgment Ezekiel cried out, **Are You going to destroy the entire remnant of Israel?** (cf. 11:13) Ezekiel was a man of compassion who cared for his nation (cf. Abraham’s intercession for Sodom, Gen. 18:20-33; and Amos’ praying for Israel, Amos 7:1-9).

Though Ezekiel’s appeal revealed his concern, the nation’s **sin** had progressed too far to avert disaster. God had given Israel and Judah ample time to repent of her sin, but the people had used the time to grow more perverse in their ways of **bloodshed** (cf. ”violence,” Ezek. 8:17) and **injustice**, all the while thinking **the LORD** no longer cared for them or saw them (cf. 8:12). Without **pity** (cf. 7:4, 9; 8:18; 24:14) He would give them what they deserved.³³

ESV: 8–10 Ah, Lord God! Ezekiel’s impassioned outburst pleads for the remnant, and prompts the question: was the preserving angel finding any faithful? See also 4:14; 11:13; 21:5. God reiterates the firm intention of his justice and pointedly responds to the delusion of divine ignorance voiced by the elders (cf. 8:12 and 9:9).

Constable: Ezekiel saw that these men were slaying everyone in the temple area and that he alone remained alive. So he prostrated himself before the Lord and prayed earnestly for mercy. Would the Lord destroy even the faithful remnant of Israel in His devastating judgment of the city (cf. Gen. 18:22-33; Amos 7:1-6)? Clearly Ezekiel felt deeply for his people, sinful though they were.

³¹ Disciple’s Study Bible

³² The Nelson Study bible

³³Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures (Eze 9:8). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Ezekiel 9:9

Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

[house of Israel and Judah] Here the term "the house of Israel and Judah" is used, so it is clear that Judah was, after the destruction of the ten-tribe kingdom, representative of all Israel whose capital was Jerusalem.

[is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not] Five reasons Jerusalem to be destroyed:

1. Judah's sin is exceeding great.
2. The land is full of blood.
3. The city is full of perverseness.
4. They say, The Lord has forsaken the earth.
5. They say, The Lord does not see our sins.

Clarke: For they say, The Lords hath forsaken the earth *eth haarets*, "this land." He has no more place in Israel; he has quite abandoned it; he neither sees nor cares, and he can be no longer the object of worship to any man in Israel. This seems to be the meaning; and God highly resents it, because it was bringing him on a level with idols and provincial deities, who had, according to supposition, regency only in some one place.

LAN: 9-10 The people said that the Lord had forsaken the land and wouldn't see their sin. People have many convenient explanations to make it easier to sin: "It doesn't matter," "Everybody's doing it," or "Nobody will ever know." Do you find yourself making excuses for sin? Rationalizing sin makes it easier to commit, but rationalization does not convince God or cancel the punishment.

Three reasons are given as to why the nation deserved this terrible outpouring of God's wrath—serious and undeniable (1) **iniquity**, or guilt of sinful offenses (see 4:4–8); (2) **bloodshed**, or violence (see 8:17); and (3) **perversity**, or more precisely injustice. The people and especially rich rulers willfully chose to believe that God did not see or care what injustices went on.

Lord ... forsaken ... earth ... seeth not—The order is reversed from [Ez 8:12](#). There they speak of His neglect of His people in their misery; here they go farther and deny His providence ([Ps 10:11](#)), so that they may sin fearlessly. God, in answer to Ezekiel's question ([Ez 9:8](#)), leaves the difficulty unsolved; He merely vindicates His justice by showing it did not exceed their sin: He would have us humbly acquiesce in His judgments, and wait and trust.³⁴

³⁴Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:9-10). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

McGee: It was as if the people were saying, "God is blind, and He can't make it to the earth." That is the same as those who say today that God is dead. It may be easy to say that God is not out there and He doesn't know what is going on in the earth, but when you really think about it, it is absurd. My friend, just because you haven't seen God and have seen no evidence of Him is no proof that He does not exist. I have never been to Tokyo, Japan, but I believe there is a great city by the name of Tokyo in Japan. I have never been there, and I can act as if it's not there, but the fact remains that it does exist. Just because a man has had no intimate relationship with God does not mean that God does not exist. The people of Israel were trying to say that God had forsaken the earth. Why? Because they had forsaken God.

Constable: The Lord replied that the wickedness of the Israelites was extremely great (cf. Exod. 23:2). Bloodshed and perversion filled the land because the people had concluded that the Lord had abandoned them and would not see and take action regardless of what they did. Awareness that God sees us restrains people from sinning, but belief that He does not see us leads to flagrant sinning.

Ezekiel 9:10

And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their way upon their head.

[**mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity**] Six times a similar expression is used (Ezekiel 5:11; Ezekiel 7:4,9; Ezekiel 8:18; Ezekiel 9:10; Ezekiel 24:14).

Clarke: Mine eye shall not spare—They say, the Lord seeth not: this is false; I have seen all their iniquities, and do see all their abominations; and I will bring deserved judgment upon them, and then that eye which now sees will neither pity nor spare.

Evil and Suffering, Punishment—God's punishment is often delayed in His grace. He does not delay forever. At the time best suiting His purposes, He exercises unrelenting judgment on a sinful people.³⁵

Sin, Responsibility—We destroy society through injustice and greed. Then we complain that God has ignored us and cannot see our troubles or help us. God will not take responsibility for our sins. We must.

Christian Ethics, Justice—An unjust people who think they can fool God face His inevitable judgment.

mine eye—to show them their mistake in saying, "The Lord *seeth* not."
recompense their way upon their head—(Pr 1:31). Retribution in kind.³⁶

³⁵ Disciple's Study Bible

McGee: The destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the burning of the temple were frightful things. Why did God do it? He has said, "I will recompense their way upon their head." God is running things, my friend; and, if you are out of step with Him, it might be well to get in step with Him. If I saw a lion coming down the street toward me, I wouldn't meet him head on. I would turn and be going the same direction as he was going as far ahead of him as I could go! You can defy God if you want to, but may I say to you, the chariot of the Lord is riding triumphantly, and God have mercy on you if you get in His way.

Constable: Yahweh promised to have no pity and to spare none of them from destruction but to bring the consequences of their actions back on their own heads. He had not abandoned His people, but He knew their wickedness and would punish them for it (cf. 8:18). They thought He did not see (v. 9), but His eye was upon them.

Ezekiel 9:11

And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which *had* the inkhorn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me.

Missler: "I have done as thou hast commanded me." - sound familiar? The Lord closes His ministry with the words, "I have done all that you have commanded me to do." John 17:4. An obedient servant. God does not delight in judgment. He prefers mercy; but there comes a point at which His patience is expended.

Clarke: I have done as thou hast commanded me—Angels and men must all give account of their conduct to God; for although he is every where, and his eye sees all things, yet they must personally account for all that they have done. I have done as thou hast commanded me. The penitents are all signed; the penitents are all safe. This is good news for them that mourn.

I have done: The report of judgment was brought by one man (vv. 3, 4) appearing as a righteous accountant.

Then the angelic scribe returned with his report: I have done as You commanded (cf. v. 4). Those who were righteous and whose hearts grieved over the nation's sin had received God's mark of protection. They would be spared. The unrighteous who had rejected God and embraced evil did not receive the mark of protection. They would be killed. Each person's destiny was determined by his character.³⁷

³⁶Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:10-11). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³⁷Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures (Eze 9:11). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

I have done as thou hast commanded—The characteristic of Messiah (Jn 17:4). So the angels (Ps 103:21); and the apostles report their fulfilment of their orders (Mk 6:30).³⁸

McGee: There were those who were picked out for judgment, and there was the remnant which was to be saved. Our God is merciful when men will turn to Him; that fact makes His judgment actually more frightful.

Constable: The man with the inkhorn returned to the Lord and reported that he had carried out his assignment as instructed. There were some that he was able to mark, and they remained alive. This was the faithful remnant that was a very small group at this time (cf. Rom. 9:27-29; 11:4-5).

³⁸Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Eze 9:11-10:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.