

# EZEKIEL

## Chapter 7

### *The Day of the Wrath of the LORD*

The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “And you, O son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel: An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. 3 Now the end is upon you, and I will send my anger upon you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations. 4 And my eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity, but I will punish you for your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 5 “Thus says the Lord GOD: Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes. 6 An end has come; the end has come; it has awakened against you. Behold, it comes. 7 Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land. The time has come; the day is near, a day of tumult, and not of joyful shouting on the mountains. 8 Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you, and judge you according to your ways, and I will punish you for all your abominations. 9 And my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. I will punish you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst. Then you will know that I am the LORD, who strikes. 10 “Behold, the day! Behold, it comes! Your doom has come; the rod has blossomed; pride has budded. 11 Violence has grown up into a rod of wickedness. None of them shall remain, nor their abundance, nor their wealth; neither shall there be preeminence among them. 12 The time has come; the day has arrived. Let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn, for wrath is upon all their multitude. 13 For the seller shall not return to what he has sold, while they live. For the vision concerns all their multitude; it shall not turn back; and because of his iniquity, none can maintain his life. 14 “They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but none goes to battle, for my wrath is upon all their multitude. 15 The sword is without; pestilence and famine are within. He who is in the field dies by the sword, and him who is in the city famine and pestilence devour. 16 And if any survivors escape, they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, each one over his iniquity. 17 All hands are feeble, and all knees turn to water. 18 They put on sackcloth, and horror covers them. Shame is on all faces, and baldness on all their heads. 19 They cast their silver into the streets, and their gold is like an unclean thing. Their silver and gold are not able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD. They cannot satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it. For it was the stumbling block of their iniquity. 20 His beautiful ornament they used for pride, and they made their abominable images and their detestable things of it. Therefore I make it an unclean thing to them. 21 And I will give it into the hands of foreigners for prey, and to the wicked of the earth for spoil, and they shall profane it. 22 I will turn my face from them, and they shall profane my treasured place. Robbers shall enter and profane it. 23 “Forge a chain! For the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence. 24 I will bring the worst of the nations to take possession of their houses. I will put an end to the pride of the strong, and their holy places shall be profaned. 25 When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none. 26 Disaster comes upon disaster; rumor follows rumor. They seek a vision from the prophet, while the law perishes from the priest and counsel from the elders. 27 The king mourns, the prince is wrapped in despair, and the hands of the people of the land are paralyzed by terror. According to their way I will do to them, and according to their judgments I will judge them, and they shall know that I am the LORD.”

**Ch 7** Excited or agitated in tone, which probably represents Ezekiel’s state of mind when he proclaimed the message. He may have intended to arouse the audience to the imminence of judgment. Ch 7 gives three announcements of Israel’s end (vv 2–4; 5–9; 10–27). (TLSB)

**7:2** *An end!* Serves as a heading for the entire chapter. Lit, “End,” since Hbr has no indefinite article. (TLSB)

*four corners of the land.* The whole world would be affected by God’s judgment on the land of Israel. (CSB)

Probably implies something more universal than the earlier land of Israel (cf 7:23). (TLSB)

**7:5-9** Six different Hbr words are used in this section to express the idea of disaster. *comes*. Emphasized by the fivefold repetition in this section. (TLSB)

**7:5** *Disaster after disaster!* A second announcement and stark title of doom opens again with a word without an article. (TLSB)

**7:6** *awakened*. Synonym for “comes,” chosen for literary reasons. (TLSB)

**7:7** *the day.*† The day of the Lord. Beginning with Amos (Am 5:18–20), that day is seen by all the prophets as a day of great judgment, tinged at times with the colors and configurations of the final day of judgment which will bring “the end of all things” (1Pe 4:7). (CSB)

*tumult...not of joyful shouting.* Cf. Am 5:20 (“darkness, not light”). (CSB)

May recall earlier prophecies of Zep 1:14 and Is 22:5. (TLSB)

**7:8** *pour out my wrath.* A common expression in Ezekiel (see 9:8; 14:19; 20:8, 13, 21; 22:31; 30:15; 36:18). (CSB)

First use of a common expression in Ezk. Perhaps derived from the practice of defenders on a city wall pouring hot liquid on attackers below. (TLSB)

**7:9** *I am the LORD, who strikes.* The recognition formula (see note, 2:5) is amplified with speaking of God as the striker (cf Is 9:13). (TLSB)

**7:10** This oracle opens by repeating v 7, but shifts to a botanical image. (TLSB)

*blossomed ... budded.* A plant is cut down when it is ripe or mature. So the final harvest is coming to nip the blossoms and buds of sin. Harvest imagery for the judgment is common in both testaments. (TLSB)

**7:11** After the harvest, nothing will be left standing. (TLSB)

**7:12** *Let not the buyer rejoice.* End-time advice similar to that of Jesus (see Mt 24:17–18). (CSB)

Commercial activity ends. Neither buyer nor seller will be able to react to the price paid in a transaction, because they will not be around. (TLSB)

**7:13** Refers to the Year of Jubilee, when all property was to revert to the original owner. Loss of all property makes the law irrelevant. Cf Mt 24:17–18. (TLSB)

**7:14** When they sound the trumpet, calling people to battle, they will be so weak or petrified with fear that no one will respond. (TLSB)

**7:15** *without ... within.* The first threat will massacre those outside the city; the other threats will overtake those trapped inside. (TLSB)

**7:16** *doves of the valleys.* The few who might escape are compared to doves, who can do nothing but mournfully moan about their fate. (TLSB)

*each one over his iniquity.* Implies they may bemoan their guilt, but not repent. (TLSB)

**7:17** Pictures either paralyzing fright or weakness of starvation. (TLSB)

*turn to water.* Lit, “run with water,” implying loss of bladder control. (TLSB)

**7:18** Four expressions of grief are mentioned—the first and last voluntary, the middle two involuntary. (TLSB)

*horror ... Shame.* Figurative articles of clothing. (TLSB)

*baldness.* Expression of mourning. (TLSB)

**7:19–22** God judges the sin of materialism, no less a danger in antiquity than in modern times. Their silver and gold are now useless, so they discard it. (TLSB)

**7:19** *unclean thing.* Refers primarily to menstrual impurity, but can also refer to anything polluted and causing pollution (cf 36:17). (TLSB)

*stumbling block of their iniquity.* A favorite phrase of Ezekiel. Their attachment to silver and gold is a manifestation of their iniquity. (TLSB)

Materialism is by no means only a modern malady, since it is endemic to the fallen human condition. As this and the following verse make plain, it always entails idolatry: the worship of the created instead of the Creator. The culpability is even greater for recipients of divine revelation; “everyone to whom is given much, much shall be required from him” (Lk 12:48). As an “-ism” intrinsically at odds with God’s plan of redemption, materialism inevitably triggers God’s wrath. It is not merely a closed-circuited, this-worldly human conclusion that a person’s deepest needs cannot be satisfied by the “abundance of things he possesses” (Lk 12:15), but materialism is an orientation that brings judgment, unless repented of and forgiven. (CC)

**7:20** *beautiful ornament.* Might refer to gold and silver jewelry, which they idolized, either figuratively or literally, as when they made the golden calf at Sinai (Ex 32). Or, “his” may refer to the temple (used as the national treasury; see notes, 1Ch 18:11; 26:20–28), which would highlight the magnitude of their greedy pride. (TLSB)

**7:21** *foreigners.* Babylonian besiegers. (TLSB)

*wicked of the earth.* Perhaps generalizing to include any who oppose Jerusalem. (TLSB)

**7:22** *turn My face from them.* God will abandon them. (TLSB)

*treasured place.* The temple and Zion. (TLSB)

**7:23–27** God will also hold accountable the Israelites and their leaders, who corrupted the judicial system and legalized all sorts of criminal behavior. (TLSB)

**7:23** *Forge a chain!* To bind the captive Israelites together into a long train to be led into captivity. (TLSB)

**7:24** *worst.* Describes the Babylonians who, as the world power, most immediately threatened Jerusalem. (TLSB)

*pride of the strong.* Probably refers to the Jerusalem temple. Cf 24:21; 33:28. Alongside of it were illegitimate, pagan “holy places” (including the high places). (TLSB)

**7:25** Jeremiah’s refrain: the false prophets had been preaching “peace, peace” (Jer 6:14; 8:11). (TLSB)

**7:26** The people turn desperately, but in vain, to traditional spiritual and tribal leaders. (TLSB)

*vision.* A prophecy, but true prophets in this context prophesy only judgment. (TLSB)

*prophet ... priest ... elders.* There would be no guidance from God and no direction from the elders (see 1Sa 28:6; Am 8:11–12; Mic 3:6–7). (CSB)

Traditional repositories of wisdom, but they are no more faithful than other Israelites. “The Church does not allow itself to change Christ’s ordinances into unimportant matters” (Ap XXII 15). (TLSB)

**7:27** *king ... prince.*† Here both nouns describe the same person. (CSB)

*king ... prince ... people.* A tripartite hierarchy of Israelite society. (TLSB)

*people of the land.* Full citizens of Judah who owned land and served in the army (cf. 12:19; 45:16, 22; 46:3). (CSB)

*they shall know that I am the LORD.* Repetition of the recognition formula shows that they will learn the hard way that God is in control. (TLSB)

**Ch 7** Ezekiel describes God’s coming wrath. The Law is necessary to the message of salvation. A weak preaching of the Law inevitably sets one up for a deficient or weak understanding of the Gospel. All of us constantly stand at the edge of the void, with the devil, the world, and our flesh ever-active and formidable enemies before whom we can never hope to stand by our own resources. Thanks be to God there is a day of mercy, too, which Ezekiel will proclaim and we may celebrate with joy in Christ, our Savior. • Heavenly Father, when the end comes for us, safely usher us through the grave to rest with Christ, and finally, to resurrection and eternal life. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (TLSB)