



Welcome back! Remember that you may ask questions or comment at any time during the study.

**Let's pray.**

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## OVERVIEW

### Coming Judgement (Ezek 6-7)

- Prophecy Against the Mountains
- Clap and Stamp
- An End!
- Behold the Day!
- Forge a Chain!



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Oh no, there he goes with the cats again! This is Astrophe .. as in Catastrophe. Because we have seen, and this week we will continue to see God predicting catastrophe for Jerusalem.

Chapter 33 of the Book of Ezekiel approximately coincides with the fall of Jerusalem and the beginning of God's moving out in prophecy to Israel's future restoration and into end times events.

When we get to chapter 33, I am planning to include in each weekly lesson the history of modern Israel right up to today's events. This will show the fulfilled prophecy from Ezekiel and those prophecies that are yet future. Just going through all the agreements is a lengthy study in itself. But, I am not planning to go through all the agreements.

However, since things are happening all the time with Israel, I may choose to include current events at the start of a lesson.

For example, there is a bill before the Israeli Knesset, which is the legislative branch of Israeli government. The bill is called the "Greater Jerusalem" law. According to the news, this bill would "annex several towns – including some of the largest Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria – to the city of Jerusalem, strengthening the capital's Jewish majority and potentially paving the way for the extension of Israeli sovereignty over parts of Judea and Samaria." This law would add approximately 150,000 Jews to the city of Jerusalem.


Unfortunately, the US government is strongly against the implementation of this law in Israel. And according to the Jerusalem Post, "US pressure delayed an Israeli ministerial vote on Sunday on a proposed bill that Washington fears entails annexation of Jewish settlements near Jerusalem, an Israeli lawmaker said."

According to the Bible, the US position is dangerous. The land of Israel belongs to God, and He has given it to the Jewish people forever. Let's read Joel 3 verse 2 to see what God plans for those that seek to divide Israel:

*I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.*

Now let's begin our study...

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## Review

- Ezekiel is a priest and prophet living in exile in Babylon circa 593 B.C.
- God instructs Ezekiel when to speak and what to speak
- Ezekiel conducts symbolic enactments to demonstrate the wrath coming to Jerusalem

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Let's review.

Ezekiel is a priest who was taken to Babylon from Jerusalem 5 years ago in 598 B.C. in Nebuchadnezzar's second conquest of Jerusalem. He was dramatically commissioned by God to be a prophet primarily to the exiles in Babylon. When we get to chapter 33, we will see that the LORD will be speaking to a larger audience that includes us today.

Last time, we saw the Lord tell Ezekiel to create a miniature version of Jerusalem and to symbolically conduct a siege against the tableau. Ezekiel has to lie on his left side for 390 days and on his right side for 40 days to bear the punishment for Israel and Judah.

Ezekiel predicts a famine for the besieged city of Jerusalem and demonstrates this by daily eating 8 – 9 ounces of bread that he prepares and by drinking a pint of water. So, extreme rationing.

Lastly, Ezekiel shows how the people of Jerusalem will die by famine, pestilence, and the sword. Ezekiel also shows that the LORD will save a small remnant.

We also discussed how God had previously predicted that this would be the result if the Jewish people fell into idolatry and abominable practices.

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## Prophecy Against the Mountains

- Face the mountains of Israel
- Prophecy to the mountains
- Speak of the coming destruction
  - Destroy the “high places”
  - Destroy altars
  - Destroy idols
  - Kill idolaters
- Lev 26:30 – 33
- Leave a remnant – the LORD broken
  - Is 1:9 , 10:20 and Rom 11:5
- Modern idolatry - 1Tim 6:6-10

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Now, let's read Chapter 6 of Ezekiel verses 1 through 10. (*Read Ezek 6:1 – 10*)

Ezekiel is told to turn his back on the people and face the mountains of Israel. Ezekiel is then told to prophesy terrible destruction that will come upon the whole area.

The phrase, “and you shall know that I am the LORD” appears 62 times overall in the Book of Ezekiel. Chuck Missler states that this is the theme of Ezekiel.

Why does God tell Ezekiel to prophesy against the mountains, hills, rivers, and valleys?

At this point the children of Israel were deep into idolatry. They had built altars to false gods on every high place. In every green area, they had groves, or rather collections of idols, many of which are twisted and gross. The practices associated with the worship of these idols was an abomination to God. Hence, He determined to destroy idol worship out of Israel. Ezekiel alone uses the Hebrew word גִּלּוּל gillul for Idols, which literally means a round log, which is apparently a term of derision and mocking.

Now, let's look at chapter 26 of Leviticus verses 30 – 33. I am reading from the ESV translation.

**30 And I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols, and my soul will abhor you.**

**31 And I will lay your cities waste and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing aromas.**

**32 And I myself will devastate the land, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it.**

**33 And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.**

So you can see that the LORD is true to His word. The people violated their covenant with God, and He mercifully waited approximately 860 years from the exodus from Egypt before bringing this final destruction. Notice that 860 years is twice the time the Jewish people were in Egypt.


In verse 9, the LORD says that He is broken because the people have departed from Him to go after idols. The word broken in Hebrew is שָׁבַר sha-var', which means to burst. The word is also translated as broken-hearted, crushed, and destroyed. So, it is apparent that Israel's infidelity to the LORD has caused Him significant anguish.

Therefore, the LORD states that they will know that He is the LORD, and that the evil He intends is not an empty threat.

Nevertheless, the LORD will preserve a small remnant as a witness to the nations and to future generations. This remnant will remember and know that this was done because of their evil. This also foreshadows the diaspora. See also Is 1:9 , 10:20, and Rom 11:5 regarding remnants.

We have to be wary of the modern idolatry of materialism. See 1Tim 6:6-10 for Paul's warning.

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## Clap and Stamp

- Ezekiel is to clap his hands and stamp his foot
- Ezekiel is to lament
  - For all the evil and abominations of “the house of Israel”
  - For their coming destruction – those far off
- They will then know the LORD
- The LORD will make the land desolate

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Now let's read Chapter 6 verses 11 through 14. (*Read verses 6:11-14.*)

This section is a primarily a recapitulation of the prior section. However, the LORD orders Ezekiel to clap his hands and to stamp his foot. While there are various opinions as to why the LORD has Ezekiel do this, it appears to me that it is for emphasis and to get people's attention.

God is once more letting the people know that He, the LORD, intends to strike Jerusalem with pestilence, famine, and the sword. Furthermore, He reminds the people that this is the result of their evil and abominations. Ezekiel is told to raise a lamentation because the evil will bring God's wrath.

Interestingly, God does not limit this judgment to just Jerusalem. The LORD says that those that are far off will be affected as well.

Lastly, the LORD says that He will personally make the land desolate.

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## An End!

- The End has come upon the whole nation
- Punished for their abominations
- No pity or mercy
- Only Disaster
- The Day of tumult – Amos 5:18
- Matt 25:1-13

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Let's read Chapter 7 verses 1 through 9. (*Read Ezek 7:1-9*)

The style of chapter 7 is a lamentation like a poem, which is quite emotional. In Hebrew this chapter uses plays on words and puns that are not really recognizable in English. However, you may sense some of the emotion and the somewhat odd wording even in English.

In the beginning of chapter 7 the LORD really gets down to brass tacks. Not mincing any words, He says through Ezekiel "An End!" In a movie, this is where you roll the credits while the smoke rises over the smoldering remains of Jerusalem.

Once again, God says that He is bringing an end to the entire nation of Israel because of their abominations. We can see this when He says it will come upon the four corners of the land, which just means the entire nation.

The LORD no longer intends to delay, and He states unequivocally that He will not pity or spare the inhabitants. This is a terrible place to be.

And in case they may still have missed it, the LORD says that disaster after disaster is coming. And He says that they will then know that He is the LORD.

In verse 7 Ezekiel tells the people that their doom has come and that the day of tumult was near. The exiles would understand the reference to that day from the prophet Amos 5:18:

*18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light.*

The people were not expecting this destruction from the LORD. This was probably around 592 B.C. The situation seemed stable, and there was no thought of rebellion from Zedekiah. The people probably thought that they had plenty of time.

Instead, God tells them that He intends to pour out His wrath upon them. And that He will judge them and punish them without pity or mercy so they will realize that it is the LORD that strikes them.

We also tend to think there is plenty of time before Jesus is coming. Peter warns of this in 2Peter 3:3-4:

*3 knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.*

*4 They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."*

We are to be ready at all times for His return. Remember the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25!

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## Behold the Day!

- God's patience has come to an end
- The punishment is certain and for the entire nation
- This is the result of their collective sin
- Silver and gold will not save them
  - Matt 6:19-24, 1Tim 6:6, 10, 17-19
- The remnant will mourn
- God will bring the destruction of the Temple and the Holy of Holies

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Let's read Chapter 7 verses 10 through 22. (Read Ezek 7:10-22)

Notice again the poetic style of the verses:

*Behold the day!  
Behold it comes!  
Your doom has come;  
The rod has blossomed;  
Pride has budded.*

The LORD has waited a long time and pleaded with His people through judges, prophets, and various instructive judgements, yet they have not turned back to Him. Instead, they have joined themselves to false gods and have committed abominations. The people have progressed from violence or injustice to wickedness. And so, their time is up!

The LORD also makes it clear that this is for all of the people when He says, "for my wrath is upon all their multitude." The text speaks as though none will escape or ever return. But, we know that God will spare a small remnant. However, any that do escape will hide in the mountains and mourn because of their iniquity.

The destruction will cause the hands of the survivors, and presumably those exiles in Babylon, to be feeble and their knees to be like water. They will mourn in sackcloth, and they will shave their heads as a sign of their shame and sorrow.

Although the people had trusted in their gold and silver, now it would be so worthless to them that they would cast it in the street. In their famine, they can't eat their gold and silver, there is nothing to buy, and there is no way to purchase escape.

This warning is also for us. We are not to trust in money, but rather, in the Living God who provides for us. If the LORD brings us wealth, we are not to set our heart on it. See for example Matt 6:19-24 and 1 Tim 6:10, 17-19.

In the last part of this section the LORD turns His attention to the destruction of The Temple in Jerusalem, which He calls, "His beautiful ornament." Why did God allow the destruction of His Temple and the profaning of the Holy of Holies, the "treasured place" in verse 22?

The LORD had the invaders take away the Temple from the people, because they did not honor it. The LORD warned of this in Lev 26:31. Now it would occur.

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## Forge a Chain!

- Make a chain to symbolize going into captivity or enslavement
- The “worst” of the foreign nations would take possession of the homes of the rich
- The holy places would be profaned
- Nothing will stop disaster from coming
- They will be judged according to their ways and judgements

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Let's read Chapter 7 verses 23 through 27. (*Read Ezek 7:23-27*)

The forging of a chain is a clear statement that the people will go into captivity and enslavement. But this is only for those that survive.

The LORD says that the land and Jerusalem are full of “bloody crimes.” So, the ultimate Judge of all things has pronounced sentence and is moving to carry it out.

The rich and powerful will lose all that they had illegally accumulated. Foreigners will move into their houses, and the places for worship of their false gods will be destroyed.

Although they will seek peace, they will find none.

Significantly, they will no longer have prophets, priests, or elders to look to. This will be a famine of the Word as Amos described in Amos 8:11:

*“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.*

From the king to the lowliest of the people, all will be in terror. And the LORD will bring these judgements to them in the same fashion as they have judged and treated people. And, though it is too late, they will know the LORD.

This is just grim. Even though we think the LORD's patience is infinite, it is not. Genesis 6:3 says, “My spirit shall not always strive with man”.

We have abundant scriptural evidence that the LORD is full of grace and mercy, that He is good and kind. We also have abundant scriptural evidence that the LORD is holy and righteous, and that He will not accept sin. We would do well to remember that grace and mercy and holy and righteous go hand in hand together. We can't have one and forget the other.

Questions? Next time, we are going to try and make it through Ezekiel's visions in Jerusalem. So please read chapters 8 through 11.

**Let's pray.**