

# The Inviolability of Israel

And the Day of the LORD

Ezekiel 6:1 The word of the LORD came to me:

<sup>2</sup> “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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> *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.

<sup>5</sup> “Thus says the Lord God: Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes.

<sup>6</sup> An end has come; the end has come; it has awakened against you. Behold, it comes.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> *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.

<sup>10</sup> “Behold, the day! Behold, it comes! Your doom has come; the rod has blossomed; pride has budded.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> The time has come; the day has arrived. Let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn, for wrath is upon all their multitude.

<sup>13</sup> 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.*

<sup>14</sup> “They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but none goes to battle, for my wrath is upon all their multitude.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> All hands are feeble, and all knees turn to water.

<sup>18</sup> They put on sackcloth, and horror covers them. Shame is on all faces, and baldness on all their heads.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> *I will turn my face from them*, and they shall profane my treasured place. Robbers shall enter and profane it.

<sup>23</sup> “Forge a chain! **For the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence.**

<sup>24</sup> 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.

<sup>25</sup> When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none.

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> 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.”

(Ezekiel 7:1-27)

# The Inviolability of Israel

It's Sabbath morning, sometime around 723 BC in the city of Jerusalem. Prophets like Isaiah and Amos have been saying some pretty disturbing things about God punishing Israel and leading them into captivity. The Psalm scroll is taken out and the reading for the week is Psalm 46:

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,  
<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*  
<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.  
<sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of her; *she shall not be moved*;  
God will help her when morning dawns.  
<sup>6</sup> The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.  
<sup>7</sup> *The Lord of hosts is with us*;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*  
<sup>8</sup> Come, behold the works of the Lord,  
how he has brought desolations on the earth.  
<sup>9</sup> *He makes wars cease to the end of the earth*;  
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;

he burns the chariots with fire.

<sup>10</sup> “Be still, and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth!”

<sup>11</sup> The Lord of hosts is with us;

the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

The priest sets the scroll down and tells the people, “See there, do not listen to these raving lunatic prophets. God dwells in Jerusalem. This is his temple. He owns this land, taken by his at the allotment. We have the covenant with David. Kingdoms may rage, but we shall not be moved. The Lord of hosts is with us. He will not fight against us. We are his chosen people.”

It is now 133 year later, around 590 BC. The northern kingdom of Israel is long since obliterated. The Assyrian invader struck with ferocity and force, just as the prophets said. *But he didn't take the temple.* He didn't take Jerusalem. He didn't take those Israelites who had the Davidic king, unlike those rebels up north. But now, a new “prophet” has arisen far away in Babylon. He had been taken into exile along with your king. You've heard rumblings of his prognostications, and his name is like a foul smell in the air: *Ezekiel*.

He's been saying some of the same things as Isaiah and especially Amos, even taking some of the Sycamore Shepherd

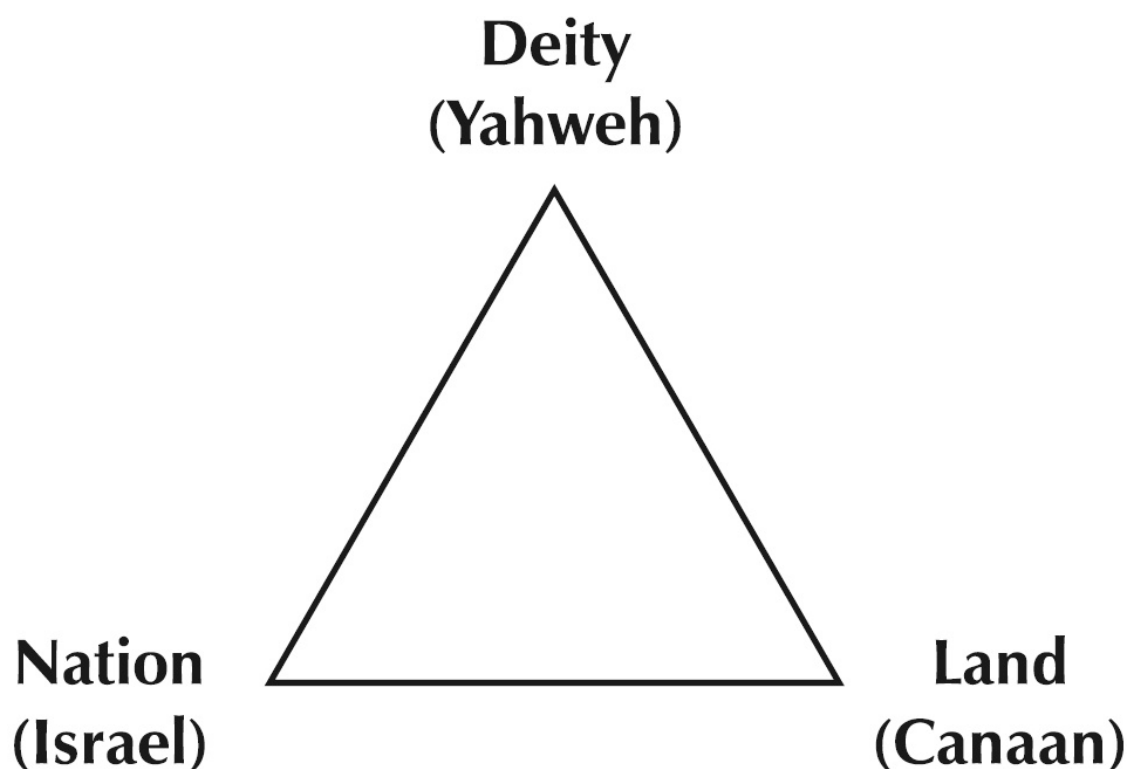
prophet's ramblings as his own, and acting very strangely as he does it—laying on his side for over a year, cooking his food over human dung, playing war games in his front yard. *What a kook!*

Nevertheless, you are here far away from that prophet at the temple in Jerusalem and the reading for the week is again Psalm 46. The words of that priest from long ago may have been wrong and even forgotten. But a new priest reads the text and says virtually the same thing. “See there, do not listen to these raving lunatic prophets. God dwells in Jerusalem. This is his temple. He owns this land, taken by his at the allotment. Kingdoms may rage, but we shall not be moved. The Lord of hosts is with us. He will not fight against us. We are his chosen people.”

Scholars refer to this attitude as the “inviolability of Israel.” This word refers to its absolute security, its protection. Daniel Block explains,

Throughout the Babylonian crisis the people had maintained confidence in Yahweh's *obligation* to rescue them. In keeping with standard ancient Near Eastern perspectives, this sense of security was based on the conviction of an inseparable bond among national patron deity (Yahweh), territory (land of Ca-

naan), and people (nation of Israel), as reflected in the following triangle, which they perceived to be inviolable [meaning unbreakable; all italics mine]:

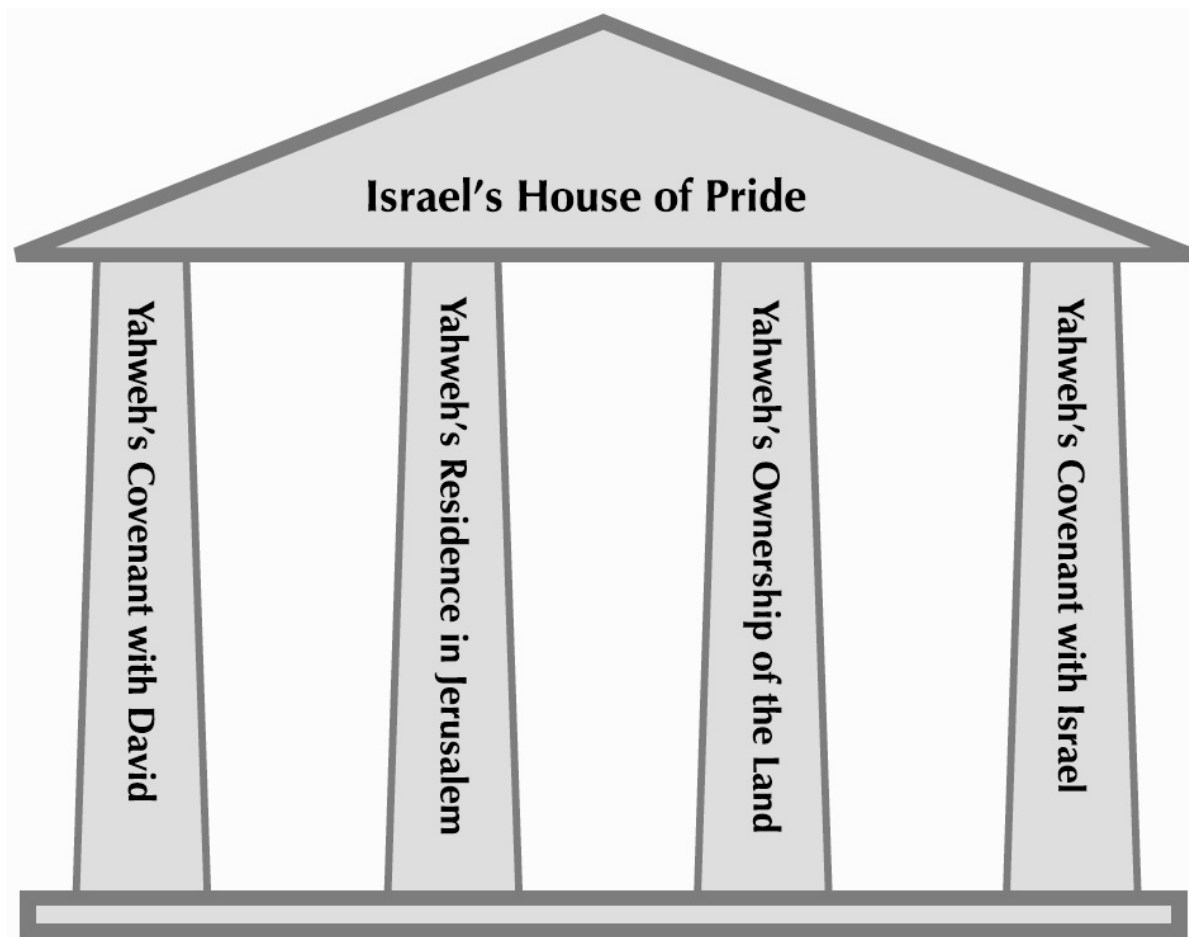


More specifically, however, Israelite confidence in Yahweh was founded on an official orthodoxy, resting on four immutable propositions, *four pillars of divine promise*: the *irrevocability of Yahweh's covenant with Israel* (Sinai), *Yahweh's ownership of the land of Canaan*, *Yahweh's eternal covenant with David*, and *Yahweh's residence in Jerusalem*, the place he chose for his name to dwell (see fig. 1). The nearer the forces of Nebuchadrezzar came, the more the people clung to the promises of God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 7–8.





It's a peculiar idea, that someone could do basically anything they want and **God somehow owes them his allegiance**, *obviously* not because they somehow control God, *of course*, but because God's promises and covenants are somehow utterly unconditional. Nevertheless, we see this same attitude today in **our own country**, in **our own churches**, and even with **the modern state of Israel**.

For example, there are Christians today who believe, no matter what the modern state of Israel is, how it came to be, or more importantly what it does, that this is God's chosen

nation, that he blesses them no matter what, and that anyone who says Israel is wrong about something—anything!—will be cursed by God. **John Hagee**, the famous TV preacher in San Antonio, has said things such as how trying to convert Jews is a “waste of time,” because “The Jewish people have a relationship to God through the law of God as given through Moses,” because “Jews already have a covenant with God that has never been replaced with Christianity.”<sup>2</sup>

But this attitude is deeply engrained even in our own country. Perhaps due to its Puritan roots and the Mayflower Compact—a most historically fascinating belief by the settlers, one of whom was my Great Grandfather (x13), the pastor of the Mayflower, William Brewster, that they could enter into a covenant with God as they started a new nation—people have long believed that **America is virtually the kingdom of God on earth**, that we are his nation, and that nothing we do could ever shake this foundation, let alone bring his displeasure. We are after all the “city of the hill,”<sup>3</sup> God’s “almost chosen people,”<sup>4</sup> “chosen” by God to smite the tyranny of kings, hierarchs, and oligarchs, and carry the glad tiding of

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<sup>2</sup> For this and many more inviolable claims of Israel from Hagee, see **CRI Statement**, “[Pastor John Hagee](#),” *Christian Research Institute* (April 22, 2009, updated, April 13, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> **Ronald Reagan**, “Farewell Address” (1989), citing John Winthrop’s, “A Model of Christian Charity” sermon of 1630.

<sup>4</sup> **Abraham Lincoln**, “Address to the New Jersey Senate,” 1861.



peace and good will to the world,<sup>5</sup> “destined” to lead the way in the moral and political emancipation of the world, ushering in the Millennium which will begin in America.<sup>6</sup>

And it isn't just America. Many Christians believe that even **our own churches** are inviolable, that they will always be here, that God would never snuff out the light of their candlestick, even if they profaned every one of his laws from worshiping other gods and turning to the goddess, to making “You shall not commit adultery” and “You shall not murder” mean that your gender is not assigned at birth and that you can sleep with whomever you want to and murder little helpless babies because they stand in the way of your personal happiness.

## Ezekiel 7: The Day of the LORD, It's Context and Structure

Having come out of the nine **sign-acts of Ezekiel**, which probably took a couple of years to fully perform, we find ourselves inching ever nearer that fateful hour when Babylon will ransack Jerusalem and the temple. Chapter 6 gave us **the first of two** terrifying messages. It dealt with God's judgment

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<sup>5</sup> John L. O'Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” 1839.

<sup>6</sup> Lyman Beecher, “A Plea for the West,” 1835, citing Jonathan Edwards view of America ushering in the Millennium.

against *the idolatry* of Judah. Chapter 7 will now take up a discourse on the very soon coming *Day of Judgment*.

Though we will see it crop up again, especially in Chs. 30 and 38, Ezekiel 7 is one of the most undiluted, blunt teachings about the so-called **Day of the LORD** in the entire Bible. And it is *terrifying*. Perhaps best summed up by Amos, a book that Ezekiel will allude to in this very chapter, that shepherd-prophet of older days said,

<sup>18</sup>Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!

Why would you have the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, and not light,

<sup>19</sup>as if a man fled from a lion,

and a bear met him,

or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall,

and a serpent bit him.

<sup>20</sup>Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

(Amos 5:18-20)

Amazingly, these three verses strike at the heart of the inviolability of Israel. Due to national pride, religious complacency and dullness, and misinterpretation of Scripture, there were actually *longing for the Day of the Lord*! Why? Because

just like today with Christians and the Second Coming, they anticipated the Day as a time of divine *vindication and triumph*, where God would intervene to *deliver his people* from their enemies and exalt them as his chosen people. But when you are spiritually bankrupt and morally corrupt, there is no reason to think that you will be on the side of Righteousness!

The Day of the LORD is a theme that begins all the way back in **Genesis 3:8**, though you might not realize it from the translations.<sup>7</sup> “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...” Meredith Kline argues that it should rather be translated something like, “*They heard the thunder of Yahweh, his footsteps patrolling the garden in the Spirit of the Day of Judgment.*” Why? Keep reading the verse, “... and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” This was no jolly saunter of Papa Smurf finishing his countdown and opening his eyes to see where Smurfette and Hidy-Smurf were playing hide-and-go-seek. They were terrified. God knew what they had just done. And they too had a covenant with God, a kind of marriage if you will, and they were about to feel the full effects of a divorce from him. *Their* relationship was hardly inviolable.

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<sup>7</sup> A very important take on this is Meredith Kline, “*Primal Parousia*,” *WTJ* 40 (1978): 245-80.

You can hear from Ezekiel 7 many repetitions, like the **drum-beat of a marching army** irresistibly and inevitably marching towards you. This is due to a complex series of mini-chiasms (**vv. 1-4, 5-9, 10-15, 19-22**), which are engulfed by a large chiasm that takes up the whole chapter. Their centers (showing no pity, showing no pity, sin's ruin, God's withdrawal) reinforce the **central theme of the chapter** which is that idolatry, the defilement of the holy places, and violence and blood show that the Day of the LORD is inevitable. Israel has been reading the Scriptures entirely wrong. God is coming to them *in judgment*. It is inescapable.

## Ezekiel 7:1-9

As we go through the passage, I will highlight the larger chiasm, focusing our attention only on **the central points** of the smaller structures. I hope to bring out the power of the language so that you might feel just how misguided this whole idea that a group of people could never be judged for their sins just because they were in some sense blessed by God.

This oracle begins exactly the way Ch. 6's did, thus tying them together, "**The word of the Lord came to me**" (**Ezek 7:1**). **Christ is again coming** to the prophet in the form of the

Angel of the LORD—the Word of God. Never divorce in your thinking and always have at the front of your thinking, the same Person who mediates for mankind in both Testaments. For Jesus is the tie that binds God’s word together.

The Word comes to the “**son of man**” (2), speaking as “**the Lord God**” (Adonay Yahweh) to the land “**of Israel**.” This is Israel’s God, and he is Yahweh. But since the northern kingdom, known technically as “Israel” has already been destroyed, it is clear that these words are directed at whoever remains in the north *or the south*. “**An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land**” (2b). Vs. 3a, “**Now the end is upon you, and I will send my anger upon you.**” Now look at vs. 6, “**An end has come; the end has come; it has awakened against you.**” This is the apocalyptic scenario you see people today talking about. The famous meme is of some hobo on the street who holds up a sign, “**The End is Near**,” and nobody pays attention to him. He hasn’t showered in weeks. He has no home. He’s crazy! Is this how they viewed Ezekiel after all of his maddening sign-acts and refusal to say a word?

There’s more language just like it. Vs. 5, “**Thus says the Lord God: Disaster after disaster! Behold, it comes.**” Again at the end of vs. 6, “**Behold, it comes.**” And even in vs. 26, “**Disaster comes upon disaster**,” tying the chapter together. Again,

there's more language like it in vs. 7a, "Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land. The time has come." It is repeated yet again at the beginning of our next section in vs. 10, "Behold, it comes! Your doom has come." And again in vs. 12, "The time has come." Something like 10 times in the first 12 verses. Ezekiel isn't playing in riddles. He is perfectly clear and easy to understand.

Like the prophets of old, he calls it "the Day." "The day is near" (7). "Behold the day" (10). "the day has arrived" (12). He calls it "a day of tumult, and not of joyful shouting on the mountains" (7b). In the central axis of the chapter it is "the day of the wrath of the Lord." "Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you" (8a), he says. In the next section, "For wrath is upon all their multitude" (12), and again, "For my wrath is upon all their multitude" (14).

**Wrath? God?** This is not a topic we hear about today in church. God is *Love*, we are told. And yes, God *is* love. But the attributes of God are one and indivisible. God is not composed of parts. This means that God's love and his wrath are equally essential to what it means to be God. He pours out his love through covenant. But when the covenant is violated, he



must, because he is holy and just, carry out wrath. **Justice demands punishment** and wrath is God's hostility and animosity and anger being exercised.

But friend, this is **no capricious god like Zeus**, throwing lightning bolts down on his subjects because he finds it amusing. God's love is indivisible from his wrath. In fact, it is because God truly loves and loves truly that his wrath is displayed. If he did not show wrath, it would mean that he did not love, for he wouldn't care less, and not caring isn't love, it is ambivalence. Yet, his wrath comes because something terrible has occurred in the covenant. This is where **we must read carefully**. Why does the day come? Why is it a day of doom? Why is it a day of wrath? Let's go through the remaining part of vv. 1-9.

“I will judge you according to **your ways**, and I will punish you for all **your abominations**” (3b). Do you hear? This is not God judging basically good people. Their ways are *abominations*. Again in **vs. 4**. “I will punish you for **your ways**, while **your abominations are in your midst**.” These abominations are not in the past. They continue on right now to this very moment. It's like someone saying with the recent legal documents released by DNI Gabbard that there is a statute of limitations that those who have committed treason against a

sitting president cannot be tried in a court of law, because it was years ago, even though the conspiracy continues to this very day. We will see how that plays out.

Again in vs. 8, God will “judge you according to *your* ways, and I will punish you for all *your* abominations.” Again in vs. 9, “I will punish you according to *your* ways, while *your* abominations are in your midst.” It’s the same thing, over and over. The repetition is a like the constant drip of Chinese water torture. You may not feel it the first couple of times, but after enough time, you will get the point loud and clear and you will cry out for it to stop.

**Vv. 1-9** form the first of five component parts of the large chiasm of Ch. 7. But inside of these verses are contained the first two smaller chiasms (see Appendix). Amazingly, they both have *the same central idea*. It is identical. Vs. 4, “And my eye will not spare you, no will I have pity,” and again, “And my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity” (9). *Pity*. Our word derives from the Latin *pietatem*, “*piety, loyalty, duty*.” Pity is a feeling of sympathy and compassion aroused by the sorrow or suffering of another. It is a disposition to mercy, a kindness and generosity of spirit. But God is the one who is going to bring this disaster and he is bringing it because these people are so dull, so senseless, so steeped in their own sin that

they can no longer tell right from wrong. They put good for evil and evil for good. They twist every possible thing about God's law, forming perverted wraiths and zombies out of the living word of God, kidding themselves that they are moral and upright when they are depraved and a crooked generation, hell-bent on justifying their corruption with ear-tickling words and like those taking the blue pill in the Matrix, **completely oblivious** to the reality that is going on all around them and *inside* them that had been made crystal clear in the book of Moses.

But there is **one more point that is made twice**, each time after this central pitilessness from the God who will not spare even a single ounce of his wrath until it is totally spent upon his people. For this is **not done out of malice or cruelty**, but rather so that “**you will know that I am the LORD**” (4), “**then you will know that I am the LORD, who strikes**” (9). They do not think God could ever do such a thing. How could he. Destroy his temple? What about the eternal promise of the Davidic covenant to have a king sit on the throne? Or all those promises given to the Patriarchs? No. They have forgotten who they are dealing with. They have created God in their own image. He's not their buddy. He's not a genie. **He is the Lord God Almighty.**

They have forgotten that **God never promised unconditional protection**. But rather, in the very Law of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, there are expanded devastating curses that are promised for idolatry and disloyalty, expanding upon Ch. 6. God is not bound by your human assumptions about one-sided attributes such as love and mercy that cause you to become complacent in sin are create a god in your own image, a god who doesn't care, who is far off, and who doesn't take sin seriously.

## Ezekiel 7:10-18

Coming to **the second of the five sections** of this chapter, we note that we've already briefly looked at a few of these verses. They will **expand the theme of judgment**, focusing especially on the economic and psychological devastation that is coming for the people.<sup>8</sup>

It begins with beholding the day, for it comes, “**your doom**” (10). It speaks of this doom as a “**rod**” that has blossomed, a rod of pride that has budded. There are two interesting things to think about here. First, our word “**doom**”

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<sup>8</sup> I'm following Heiser's three-fold take of economic, psychological, and spiritual devastation which follows in the next section. See **Michael Heiser**, “[Naked Bible 116: Ezekiel 7](#),” *Naked Bible Podcast* (Sept 2, 2016).

(*tsephirah*) is found only here and in **Isaiah 28:5** where it is translated as “**diadem**” of beauty. Translations are all over the map. The **LXX** has, “**tribe**” (*phulē*). The **Targum** renders it as “**the kingdom**,” both likely referring to Babylon. Older English translations such as **KJV**, Gen, etc., translate it as “**the morning**,” likely referring to the moment the enemy comes. **Robert Altar** has, “**the gyre**,” playing off the root word *tsafar*, meaning “**to plait, wreath, or encircle**.” A gyre, a spiral or cycle, closely related to the coming new morning. **Block** has it as “**a leash**,” and **Heiser** “**a chain**,” a kind of play on the coming bondage of captivity that also plays on a diadem, which were headdresses of royalty sometimes constructed as linked segments or chains of metal that would encircle the head as a symbol of glory and royalty.

The second idea is that a budding rod reminds us of **Aaron's staff** that blossomed into a virtual tree of life. But not here, here, the staff that is budding is one of pride, the very thing that caused our first parents to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

In **vs. 11**, pride gives way to “**violence**,” that has grown up into a rod *of wickedness*. Pride never stays hidden for long and it usually works its way out in the form of terrible sins. In this case, Israel has become full of violence, like unruly

mobs in the streets of our own cities that our own police forces have been told they must do nothing to stop. It all starts at the top and that **institutionalized governmental evil** that brought about the idolatry of Ezekiel 6.

The oracle takes us straight to the economic impact. “None of them shall remain, nor their abundance, nor their wealth; neither shall there be preeminence among them” (11b). Who are the “none of them?” **Vs. 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.” **The buyer and the seller**. It is language that reminds us of Revelation where people will not be able to buy or sell unless they have the mark of the beast (**Rev 13:17**). Here we see that the Babylonians will have no problem buying or selling, because they are the givers rather than the receivers of doom. It is God’s people who will find their entire economic system collapsed. “For the seller shall not return to what he has sold, while they live” (13a). this is a cryptic reference to **the Year of Jubilee**, when all things returned to their original owner. There will be no coming Jubilee. It, not the debts, will be canceled. God is putting an end to the entire system.

“For the vision concerns all their multitude; it shall not turn back; and because of his iniquity, none can maintain his



life” (13b). This is the center of the third small chiasm. It is because of sin, Israel’s own iniquity, that the doom, the chain, the kingdom, the morning, the gyre is coming. Who will be able to survive? Block summarizes it well,

The collapse of the economy will be total, rendering all business transactions futile ... buying and selling, celebrating and mourning business deals will be irrelevant in this environment where the economic infrastructure has totally collapsed ... The people will fall victim to their own iniquity with all their props knocked out from under them ... the wrath of Yahweh will prove the great equalizer; when [God] is through the entire population—people and priest, servant and master, maid and mistress, buyer and seller, lender and borrower, creditor and debtor—will have been reduced to the lowest common denominator.<sup>9</sup>

Vs. 14 is a fascinating verse and one to ponder. “They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but none goes to battle, for my wrath is upon all their multitude.” Why are they unwilling to fight? Is it because they are too afraid and simply faint at the sight of the coming onslaught that they cannot overcome? Is it because they still

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<sup>9</sup> Block, 259-60.

don't actually believe that the Day is coming and so they refuse to put on their battle-gear? In **Romans 1:18ff**, remember, God's wrath comes to people in the form of given them over to their own dullness and sin! These are opposite ideas, **but both of them will be found** in the coming verses.

Whatever the case, the prophet sees the future. “**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**” (**15**). It doesn't matter if you try to seek refuge inside the safe-confines of the walled off Jerusalem or flee out to the country. You will either be persecuted by the invader who will kill you with the sword if you try to escape or you will **starve to death** and be hunted down by “**pestilence**” if you stay in the city. I say “hunted down” because while the pestilence certainly refers to some kind of plague like dysentery or typhus, it can also refer to evil that accompanies the gods of the ANE, as the *Deber* throughout the OT (**Hab 3:5; Ps 91:3,6; cf. Hos 13:14**) and ANE is personified as a demonic entity (as previously preached).<sup>10</sup> This supernatural evil, of course, it at the beck and call of Yahweh, like the evil spirit who is sent out to be a lying spirit in

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<sup>10</sup> del Olmo G. Lete, “Deber,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 231–232.

the mouths of the prophets in **1 Kings 22:22-23** who is bringing all of this upon them.

If the sword doesn't get the survivors, **the psychological damage** will. PTSD has been around for a very long time. “**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**” (**16**). This **isn't necessarily a bad thing**, of course, as it hints at the center of Ch. 6 where the **people actually repent** of their sin when they finally come face to face with how God truly views it. Perhaps this is why **the dove** imagery, a bird that just coos senselessly over and over is used.

**Vs. 17** is another of **the crasser images** and it further reinforces the psychological damage of the coming invasion. “**All hands are feeble, and all knees turn to water.**” What does that mean, “**knees turn to water?**” It is a polite, Victorian way of saying that **they pee their pants!** That only happens at the most extreme moments of terror, where the bowels become uncontrollable, much like they do at the moment of death when everything just comes pouring out. It's a horrific image of the shock and awe of the coming judgment of God, even as this section concludes, “**They put on sackcloth, and horror covers them. Shame is on all faces, and**

baldness on all their heads” (18). Sackcloth, horror, shame, and baldness symbolize utter despair, with no reset for this generation—life won't return to normal.

## Ezekiel 7:19-24a

The middle and center (structurally speaking) is vv. 19-24a. In it, we appropriately move to the spiritual failure of Israel as we return to the theme of the previous oracle and idolatry. As the center, it is also the focal point of the entire oracle. “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” (19). Silver and gold are precious metals. But they were used in the construction of idols. Thus, they are as unclean as a vulture eating a dead carcass.

They made their idols thinking that the gods were powerful. But they were a “stumbling block” that caused them to sin. Curiously, the same word (*mikshol*) is used of God being a stumbling block in Isaiah 8:14, which the NT tells us is Christ (Romans 9:32–33; 1 Cor 1:23). In both instances, the

stumbling block is spiritual. In both, it relates to divine beings. Sadly, the Jews will not have learned their lesson from this day of doom, as they will later reject the Messiah, an even greater sin than fashioning idols.

But here, the idols cause them to **sin by committing adultery against Yahweh**, the God of their covenant. On the day of judgment, they will look at their idols and realize that they are unclean, unable to deliver them, unable to fill their bellies with food as they starve to death in the siege of Jerusalem.

**Vs. 20** seems to continue the idea. “**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.**” The **beautiful ornament** is oblique and may refer to **the wealth of the temple** that was used for idols. Heiser speculates it may refer to the Ark of the Covenant being melted for idols! While it is uncertain if the Ark was actually destroyed, **Jeremiah 3:16** may suggest that it would be (sorry Indiana Jones wannabes). “**And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the LORD, they shall no more say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; *it shall not be made again.***” Heiser

doesn't say much more about it and it seems to me that the Ark, if it was destroyed, would have been so by the Babylonians, not the Jews. Nevertheless, the idea is certainly a powerful image of the lengths people go to desecrate the holy things of God, turning even the temple's gold and silver into idols.

For their desecration and adultery, God says, “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” (21). The temple in which they have placed all their trust even while defiling will not save them. God could care less about an earthly home, even if he is the one who gave the instructions for how to build it. He is God and he is omnipresent. He does not dwell in houses made by man. Heaven is his throne. Earth is his footstool (Isa 66:1).

So, in what becomes the center of the third smaller structure, he says, “I will turn my face from them” (22). God will not look upon them with favor. He will not answer their prayers. He will not have mercy. He will look away, like a husband who has just caught his wife in the act of adultery.

The central point of the Chapter is just about upon us. “Robbers shall enter and profane it,” meaning the temple (22b). “Forge a chain!” It is a prophetic command that takes



us back to the “chain” of “doom.” Captivity is coming. The decree has gone out. There is nothing that can stop it.

The arrow points at the heart immediately after these words, “For the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence” (23). We’ve seen this already, but now it comes as the tip of the spear, an arrow pointed right at the heart of the nation. This is happening because *you*, dear people, are full of blood and violence. This is *your* fault. It is coming because of *your* sin. Do not blame God because you have become so vile and evil that you are shedding innocent blood in your streets and God is coming to make it right.

The central section completes its spiritual focus by turning from the house of God to the houses of Judah. “I will bring the worst of the nations to take possession of their houses” (24). God isn’t using some morally pristine people to carry out his vengeance. He is using *Babylon*, “the worst of the nations,” an empire that came to power through ruthless terror as it enslaved people after people. Theirs was not the spreading of freedom through democratic republics and free elections where the people govern themselves and are ruled only by Constitutions and transcendent moral laws. This is the totalitarian imperialism bent on world domination of megalomaniacal kings that want to rule every single

man, woman, and child on the face of the earth. And they went to any and every conceivable length to do it, including siege warfare and starvation (2Kgs 25:3; Jer 52:6; Lam 4:9-10), mass destruction and looting (2Kgs 25:9, 13-17; Jer 52:17-23), mass deportation and exile (2Kgs 24:14-16; 25:11; Jer 52:28-30), execution and enslavement (2Kg 25:7; Jer 39:6-7; 52:16); cultural suppression (2Kgs 24:17), and profaning of anything sacred (Ezek 7:22).

This was deeply offensive to all Jews, including some of the prophets. How could God use such vile people to bring justice upon his own? Well, that's part of the horror of it. If God would use the worst of peoples to carry out his vengeance, then what must he have thought about the sins of his own people? That's one to contemplate long and hard.

## Ezekiel 7:24b-26

The last two sections are much shorter, and bring us back 360 degrees to the beginning. “I will put an end to the pride of the strong, and their holy places shall be profaned. When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there shall be none. 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” (24b-26). We’ve seen how the horror of the enemy at the gates was so great that it caused grown men to pee their pants, thus helping us see that **for some, they would not fight because they were faint of heart** and had given in to the fear—something that came upon them at the decree of God. But here, we see that **there are still many who even at this late of a time are seeking visions** from prophets and counsel from the elders who might give them some word of what they should do, perhaps being able to forestall the doom a few more years, or maybe, to even tell them that Ezekiel is a false prophet and that no harm will come to them.

That’s a classic attitude that people have even into our own day as they are **unable to assess their own times** objectively because they just can’t believe that there could be people so evil. For example, from the Georgia Guide Stones that openly and brazenly spoke about getting the world’s **population down** to only half a billion people, and then were destroyed by a rocket on American soil that to this day no one has dared to investigate, to people like Bill Gates openly saying that he wants to **depopulate** the world through vaccines, to the World Economic Forum and so many others all singing the same tune in concert and then literally seeking to

carry it out before the watchful eyes of the world, **people just refuse to believe it** and instead call *you* a conspiracy theorist for quoting their own words because they just can't find the will to believe the ramifications of all that this would and already does mean. And that's why even though the trumpet is blown and everything is made ready, no one goes to battle. And God makes it very clear that at least in Israel's case, **it is because his wrath prevents them from even lifting a finger to help themselves**. The people have been totally given over and all they can do is watch the enemy come down upon them like a ravenous bear mauling its prey. Israel isn't exempt because it is in covenant, because God gave promises of a king, because this was his land, or because he built a temple there. God isn't going to save Israel. They are finished.

## Ezekiel 7:27

**The last verse** brings it full circle and shows the true horrors that now faced God's people. **"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” (27). The words are so final, so resolute, so stamped in cement, and so simple to understand that I feel like commenting further would only blunt their sharp edge. The people need to hear the Word of the Lord.

## Conclusion: The Myth of Inviolability: From Judgment to Grace in Christ

As we wrap up [this sobering look](#) at Ezekiel 7, let’s circle back to where we started: that stubborn idea from Psalm 46’s misapplication and the “[inviolability of Israel](#).” The priests in 723 BC and again in 590 BC assured the people, “[God is our refuge; He dwells here in Jerusalem. No harm can come to us—we're His chosen, His temple stands, His promises endure.](#)” They twisted Scripture to say God could never do anything bad to His people, no matter what they did. But Ezekiel 7 shatters that illusion. The Day of the LORD isn’t a day of vindication for the complacent; it’s darkness, doom, and wrath for the unrepentant.

For Israel in Ezekiel’s day, this myth crumbled under the weight of their own sins. They [clung](#) to the covenants—Sinai’s law, David’s throne, the land’s inheritance, Jerusalem’s

temple—as unbreakable shields. But as Block noted, their “official orthodoxy” ignored the conditions or obedience, faithfulness, and holiness. In their place, idolatry, violence, and bloodshed profaned everything sacred. God didn’t owe them protection; He owed justice to His own holiness. So He turned His face away, sent the “worst of the nations,” and brought the end they never thought possible. The temple fell, the king mourned, the people scattered. Their theology was bad; their inviolability was a lie. They reaped what they sowed, learning the hard way: “You shall know that I am the LORD who strikes.”

Fast-forward to Israel in our own day. Whatever the origins of the modern state are and how good or bad those might be, many Christians, echoing John Hagee, treat it as untouchable: “God blesses those who bless Israel, and curses those who curse her” (from Genesis 12:3). They say no matter what Israel does—policies, conflicts, or even rejecting Christ—it’s God’s chosen land, inviolable. But Ezekiel warns us: National identity or borders do not guarantee divine favor. If ancient Israel faced judgment for abominations, why assume modern Israel is exempt? It seems like an obscenely dismissive view of history to me. God’s promises



to Abraham are not about geopolitics today; they are fulfilled in Christ ([Galatians 3:16](#)). Blind support ignores sin on all sides and risks idolizing a nation over the gospel. The Day of the LORD still looms for unrepentant hearts, Jewish or Gentile.

So what about [America](#)? From Puritan roots and the Mayflower Compact, we've nursed this notion of a “[covenant nation](#)” and “[a city on a hill](#),” a phrase Jesus used for *the church*. I'm not saying it was even a bad thing to make such a covenant nor that God hasn't in fact blessed us in amazing ways as a nation. But today, we wave [flags in churches](#), invite political pundits into our pulpits from both sides of the political aisle, and assume God blesses us no matter what—endless wars, moral decay, or cultural idolatry. But [Ezekiel asks](#): What if our “abominations” invite wrath? Violence in streets, bloodshed of the unborn, gay “pride, deeply corrupt institutions—sound familiar? If God judged His ancient covenant people, why think America's “exceptionalism” makes us inviolable? And don't change your view of this every time a new president that you either like or despise comes into office. America is clearly unique among all the nations of the world; but [we are not the new Israel](#); compla-

cency could easily bring our own “day of doom,” with economic collapse, societal paralysis, and invaders at the gates (literal or cultural). All people in sin, including our nation, must repent or face the chain of judgment. We will see much more of this in later chapters.

Finally, **church**, we must not exempt ourselves. This hits home the hardest. Many believe their congregations are untouchable. But look around: Churches profane God’s laws, worshiping “other gods” like success or politics or literally Mother Earth. They redefine adultery, murder, and gender to fit cultural whims. We twist Scripture like those priests, assuming grace covers deliberate rebellion. But Ezekiel’s oracle screams that churches are not inviolable. In fact, of all three of these modern applications, **it is the church that comes the closest** to ancient Israel, for the church is the one in covenant with God today. God removes lamps from unfaithful stands (**Revelation 2-3**). If a church harbors abominations, they can expect the Day of the LORD. No peace, no vision, law perishing from priests. Surrendering to invaders such as false teachers or cultural pressures may very well cause God to turn his face away. This is our sharp wake-up: Repent or mourn like the king.

But praise God, this isn't the end. **Even Ezekiel 7 isn't hopeless.** God's promises in the new covenant are not unconditional national pacts, but a progressive unfolding *in Christ*—the one who has kept the covenant perfectly and taken God's wrath upon himself willingly for us. The disaster that befell Jerusalem always had the coming of Christ in mind. This is why it is absolutely vital that Jesus his active and passive obedience be the center of every church's and every individual's life. For **in Christ, the wrath of God is taken away.** In him, there is no remembrance of sins, and in him, by his Spirit, he puts those abominable desires to forsake God to death. He gives us new hearts that willingly desire to follow him.

**Here is the only true inviolability.** It is not based on ethnicity, land, or works, but on God's sovereign grace in Christ. Jesus, the stumbling block became the offense: Jews stumbled over Him as Messiah. We all stumble if we trust in our own works and self-righteousness. But for believers, He is the cornerstone. In this covenant, God writes his law on hearts, forgives sins completely, and gives His Spirit—ensuring perseverance. Faith in Christ alone receives this truth. Is it yours?

The good news is that The Day of the LORD's vengeance came first at the cross: **God's wrath was poured on Jesus**, not us (**Romans 5:9**). He bore the doom, the chain, the violence—our abominations—so we know Him not as “**the LORD who strikes**” but as our Savior who saves. America, Israel, and even churches may fall, but Christ's people are secure, so long as they keep their eyes on Jesus.

Dear people, do not cling to myths of inviolability—**cling to Christ alone**. Repent of your sins, trust His finished work once-for-all, and live as New Covenant people—the antithesis of those Israelites of old who pridefully rebelled against their Redeemer. The ultimate Day approaches (**2 Peter 3:10**). It is a day of darkness for the lost, but light for those in Jesus. Be still, know He is God (**Psalms 46:10**), exalted through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Appendix: Chiasms of Ezekiel 7

### First Small Chiasm (vv. 1-4): The End Announced

A (vv. 1-3a): God's word: The end has come upon the land.

B (v. 3b): Anger poured out; judge ways, punish abominations.

**Center (C, v. 4a): My eye will not spare, no pity.**

B' (v. 4b): Punish ways, abominations in your midst.

A' (v. 4c): Then you shall know I am the LORD.

*Emphasis: No mercy in judgment, leading to knowing God.*

### Second Small Chiasm (vv. 5-9): Disaster Echoed

A (vv. 5-7a): Disaster and end come; the day is near.

B (vv. 7b-8): Wrath poured; judge ways, punish abominations.

**Center (C, v. 9a): My eye will not spare, no pity.**

B' (v. 9b): Punish ways, abominations in your midst.

A' (v. 9c): Then you shall know I am the LORD who strikes.

*This mirrors the first, doubling the warning for impact.*

### Third Small Chiasm (vv. 10-15): Wickedness' Consequences

A (vv. 10-11): Day comes; violence and pride bud, none remain.

B (vv. 12-13a): Time arrives; wrath on the multitude.

**Center (C, v. 13b): Vision is final; no one maintains life in iniquity.**

B' (v. 14): Trumpet sounds, but none battle; wrath on all.

A' (v. 15): Sword outside, pestilence/famine inside; death everywhere.

*Emphasis: Sin's fruit is total ruin.<sup>11</sup>*

### Fourth Small Chiasm (vv. 19-22): Treasures Defiled

A (vv. 19-20): Silver/gold unclean, used for abominations.

B (v. 21): Given to foreigners; they profane it.

**Center (C, v. 22a): I turn my face from them.**

B' (v. 22b): They profane my treasured place.

A' (implied): Treasures fail to save.

*Emphasis: Idolatry leads to God's withdrawal.*

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<sup>11</sup> See [RS](#), "[Ezekiel 7:1-15](#)," *Biblical Chiasm Exchange* (Sept 18, 2018); [Christine Miller](#), "[Ezekiel 7 and 8](#)," *A Little Perspective* (Nov 3, 2015).

## Overarching Chiasm of Ezekiel 7

A (vv. 1-9): End/disaster announced (includes first two small chiasms); judge abominations, no pity, know the LORD.

B (vv. 10-18): Doom unfolds; violence/pride, wrath on multitude, no escape/shame (includes third small chiasm).

**Center (C, vv. 19-24a): Idols/holy places defiled due to violence/blood; invaders end pride** (includes fourth small chiasm).

B' (vv. 24b-26): Profanation, disasters pile up; no peace/vision/counsel.

A' (v. 27): Judge according to conduct; know I am the LORD.

*This structure shows the Day of the LORD as inevitable and just—the center reveals violence as the root cause. It builds like a crescendo, urging Israel (and us) to heed the warning.*

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