

God Deals With Us According To Our Sins

In our recent studies in the book of Ezekiel, we have learned that Yahweh commissioned the prophet Ezekiel to speak to the nation of Israel. They had refused to listen to Him. Yahweh told Ezekiel to tell the nation of Israel the Babylonian army would be invading them soon. It would occur because they had not listened to Yahweh nor repented. In chapter 5, Yahweh revealed the invasion would cause many to die. Lamentations 4:10 stated that due to the famine that would occur, mothers would even eat their children. In chapter 6, Yahweh announced that their high places of worship to Baal, Ashtoreth and other Canaanite gods and goddesses would be destroyed. Acts of Canaanite worship included sexual perversion and the sacrifice of children. The same thing is occurring in our time. Those who worshiped these false gods would be killed, but God would leave a remnant (Ezekiel 6:8).

END IS COMING. Our study is from Ezekiel 7. In this study, I want to explain the chapter first and then give the application. So, we will start with the first two verses of chapter 7.

Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying, And you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel, 'An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land.' Ezekiel 7:1-2 (NASB)

The Hebrew word for LORD in the first verse and GOD in the second verse is Yahweh. This means that immediately Yahweh gave Ezekiel another message for the nation of Israel. Ezekiel was to announce, "End!" Your Bible may say, "An end!" But there is only one Hebrew word in that statement. It is *qes*. That means Ezekiel was to make a very dramatic statement—"End!" The Hebrew word for "end" simply has the idea that a limit has been reached. The end of the road had been reached, just as when a car is driving on a road and suddenly the road comes to an end.



But what did Yahweh mean by "end"? It was an announcement that Yahweh had waited long enough for Israel to repent. He had been warning them to repent through the major and minor prophets. But Israel had been ignoring His warnings.

They did not believe Yahweh would destroy Jerusalem or the temple. Many of them did not believe in Yahweh since they were worshiping Baal or they thought He had abandoned them. Now He could no longer wait for Israel to respond.

We have the same problem today. People do not believe in God and they do not fear being judged and punished because they do not believe hell is real. They believe that a loving God would never send anyone to hell. Some do not even think God is real. They will sadly discover someday that the road they are driving on will end!

Now, Yahweh was announcing that the end had been reached. Therefore, Ezekiel announced, “An end! The end is coming.” The limit of Yahweh’s patience and mercy had come to an end. The end of the nation had arrived. This truth extended to its four corners — northwest, northeast, southeast, and southwest. Nothing and no one would escape punishment.

Then in verses 3 and 4, Yahweh explained, “An end! The end is coming.” He said,

“Now the end is upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you. For My eye will have no pity on you, nor will I spare you, but I will bring your ways upon you, and your abominations will be among you; then you will know that I am the LORD!” Ezekiel 7:3-4 (NASB)

Once again Yahweh referred to the end. In fact, He referred to the end five times in verses 2, 3 and 6. His purpose was to make the very strong point, “the end is upon you.” History tells us the invasion did occur five years later. Then He described the type of judgment, “I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you.” Notice that Yahweh said He would do the judging and cause the abominations and the suffering. He did not say that Satan would cause them to suffer. He did not say that Satan would bring all of the abominations upon them. Instead, He announced He was completely responsible.

When God disciplines a nation or individuals, He is the responsible person. In verses 3 and 4, He was taking credit for their suffering. Why? First, He is a holy God and must punish sin because He is holy! He proves He is holy by punishing sin and suppressing evil. That is the meaning of “Hallowed be Your name” in Matthew 6:9. “Hallowed be” means to make holy. When Yahweh judges sin, He makes His name holy. He wanted Israel to know He is holy. Second, He reminded them that He had already warned them. He keeps His promises and warnings! He was not like some parents and corrupt politicians who selectively punish evil.

When Yahweh stated that He was sending His anger against Israel; we must remember that it is not evil for Yahweh

to be angry. We think that anger is evil because we sin when we are angry! But it is possible to be angry and not sin. Ephesians states,

BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN. Ephesians 4:26 (NASB)

But we must remember that it is very rare for our anger to achieve the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20 adds,

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20 (NASB)

The only time we can be angry and not sin is when our anger is like God’s anger. We are usually angry due to some sin.

James 1:13 reminds us that God cannot, has not sinned, and does not sin,

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. James 1:13 (NASB)

God’s anger is always directed at sin. God would not be holy and righteous if He always tolerated our sin, lack of repentance, and refusal to turn away.

Ezekiel 33:11 says that Yahweh does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. That means Yahweh has no choice when He punishes evil. Yahweh causes suffering when He must. Yahweh announced that He would punish them for ongoing sin.

Now I suspect that He allowed Satan to attack Israel by removing His hedge of protection that surrounded the nation of Israel just as He did with Job. 2 Thessalonians 2:6 also teaches us that God restrains the man of lawlessness. So, I suspect that God removed His protection from Israel. He then allowed Satan to attack Israel by using King Nebuchadnezzar’s army.

In verse four. Yahweh declared, “For My eye will have no pity on you, nor will I spare you.” That is, Yahweh would not have any pity on them. He would not show pity because He had been showing them mercy for many years and decades. But

now justice could no longer be delayed. The end had come. So, He said that He would, “Bring your ways upon you, and your abominations will be among you; then you will know that I am the LORD!” Then He caused them to suffer according to their sins. It proved that the Lord had spoken.

In verses 5-7, Yahweh emphasized His message again when He said,

“Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘A disaster, unique disaster, behold it is coming! An end is coming; the end has come! It has awakened against you; behold, it has come! Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land. The time has come, the day is near — tumult rather than joyful shouting on the mountains.’” Ezekiel 7:5-7 (NASB)

This message is a very sobering one. I would not want to hear these words from the Lord. He has already used the single word the “end.” Now He uses another single word, “disaster!” The end is disaster! The end referred to a nationwide disaster. I would not want to hear, “A disaster, unique disaster, behold it is coming!” I would not want to hear, “An end is coming; the end has come!”

In verse 7, Yahweh said, “The time has come.” Yahweh kept making a serious point. The end is upon you! The disaster is coming! The time has come! The day is near! Your doom has come to you!”

When Yahweh said, “Your doom has come to you” in verse 7, He used a unique Hebrew word for “doom.” The Hebrew word is *sepira*. It appears to have the meaning of “to twist.” It refers “to come back, to return, or come full circle.” It has the idea of something coming back upon them. He has already said in verse 4 that He would “bring your ways upon you.” The last part of verse 7 explains what will come back upon them—“tumult rather than joyful shouting on the mountains.” They did not believe Him. They did not repent. The message is that it is now too late to repent. Yahweh had been warning and waiting. Even if they did repent, which He knew they would not, they could not stop the doom. The disaster was coming. The coming pain and misery was coming!

Then in verses 8-9, Yahweh repeated verses 3-4 using different words.

“Now I will shortly pour out My wrath on you and spend My anger against you; judge you according to your ways and bring on you all your abominations. My eye will show no pity nor will I spare. I will repay you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst; then you will know that I, the LORD, do the smiting.” Ezekiel 7:8-9 (NASB)

Verses 3-4 and verses 8-9 are like the front and back covers to a hardbound book. They title the message that is between the covers. Verses 5-7 are the full message. Notice that in verse 3, Yahweh said He would send His anger against them. Then in verse 8 Yahweh added that He would pour out His wrath. That is, His anger resulted in wrath.

Next, Yahweh added that “My eye will show no pity nor will I spare.” This echoes verse 4. He had already been showing them pity by tolerating their sin. Now a third time Yahweh restates that, “I will repay you according to your ways while your abominations are in your midst.” At the end of verse 9, Yahweh took credit again for their suffering when He said He would “do the smiting.”

God had been showing kindness, tolerance, and patience to Israel. He gave them time to repent. He gives us time to repent. He is not eager to punish. But we can be stubborn and refuse to repent. When we do, we are just storing up wrath for ourselves. Eventually God must punish us because He is a holy and just God. When He does punish, He renders to each person according to their deeds. Every believer has been punished and then remembers some sin that caused it to occur. Only Israel never repented.

COMMERCE DESTROYED. So, the announcement has been repeated and repeated. Hopefully, Israel would hear. Now He describes things that would be destroyed that were not mentioned in chapters 5 and 6, such as the massive destruction of human lives and high places. Here are verses 10-13,

“Behold, the day! Behold, it is coming! Your doom has gone forth; the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed. Violence has grown into a rod of wickedness. None of them shall remain, none of their people, none of their wealth, nor anything eminent among them. The time has come, the day has arrived. Let not the buyer rejoice nor the seller mourn; for wrath is against all their

multitude. Indeed, the seller will not regain what he sold as long as they both live; for the vision regarding all their multitude will not be averted, nor will any of them maintain his life by his iniquity. Ezekiel 7:10-13 (NASB)

Once again, Yahweh repeats the message, but He says it this way, “Behold, the day! Behold, it is coming! Verses 10 and 11 describe what is coming by the illustration of two different rods. In verse 10, the rod is a stick or a staff like Aaron’s staff that blossomed. The blossom is arrogance—sin! That described Israel. But in verse 11, it is the rod of wickedness. It was a product of Israel’s violence. This rod refers to the Babylonian army. Violence has created the wicked rod. It would soon destroy the people, their wealth, and anything that was valuable. The Hebrew word for “eminent” is *noah*. It means “valuable” or “distinction.” So, the time has come. The day has arrived. Israel’s commerce would be destroyed by the invading army. There was nothing they would be able to do. They would not be able to rescue themselves even by sinning. Yahweh said, “Your doom has gone forth.” The wicked Babylonian army will be swinging the rod and killing people.

PEOPLE AND ARMY DESTROYED. Verses 14-19 describe a weakened army and people at the time of the Babylonian army’s invasion of the land.

“They have blown the trumpet and made everything ready, but no one is going to the battle, for My wrath is against all their multitude. The sword is outside and the plague and the famine are within. He who is in the field will die by the sword; famine and the plague will also consume those in the city. Even when their survivors escape, they will be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, each over his own iniquity. All hands will hang limp and all knees will become like water. They will gird themselves with sackcloth and shuddering will overwhelm them; and shame will be on all faces and baldness on all their heads. They will fling their silver into the streets and their gold will become an abhorrent thing; their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD. They cannot satisfy their appetite nor can they fill their stomachs, for their iniquity has become an occasion of stumbling. Ezekiel 7:14-19 (NASB)

The description jumps to the future. The trumpet is pictured as already blown. The invasion had already started, but there will not be an army for Israel. God was working against Israel. When Yahweh said, “The sword is outside,” He was clearly describing an invasion. When Yahweh said, “the plague and the famine are within,” He was referring to sickness and extreme hunger within the city. People would die outside and inside the city of Jerusalem. Those who could escape to the mountains would mourn because of their sin. Verses 17-18 describe fear and shame over their sin.

In verse 19, we are back inside the city. We are told the people would throw their worthless money into the street. Why? Because their money cannot buy anything to fill their hungry stomachs. There is no food.

TEMPLE DESTROYED. In verses 20-22, the destruction of the temple takes place.

“They transformed the beauty of His ornaments into pride, and they made the images of their abominations and their detestable things with it; therefore I will make it an abhorrent thing to them. I will give it into the hands of the foreigners as plunder and to the wicked of the earth as spoil, and they will profane it. I will also turn My face from them, and they will profane My secret place; then robbers will enter and profane it.” Ezekiel 7:20-22 (NASB)

The most difficult part of this passage is to determine what is being described. The answer is the destruction of the temple is being described. This becomes clear when we notice that we are told, “His ornaments” in verse 20, and “My secret place” in verse 22. The “His” and “My” refer to Yahweh. The Hebrew word translated as “secret” can also mean “treasured.” God’s treasured place refers to the temple. “His ornaments” refers to the gold, silver, furniture, and various items in the temple.

That is, the Israelites had stripped these from the temple and made idols of them—abhorrent things.” So, Yahweh will give all of that to the invading army. He would let the invading army enter the temple to strip it. They would profane it because their presence in the temple had polluted the temple.

NATION DESTROYED. Finally, Yahweh described the total destruction of the land in verses 23-27.

“Make the chain, for the land is full of bloody crimes and the city is full of violence. Therefore, I will bring the worst of the nations, and they will possess their houses. I will also make the pride of the strong ones cease, and their holy places will be profaned. When anguish comes, they will seek peace, but there will be none. Disaster will come upon disaster and rumor will be added to rumor; then they will seek a vision from a prophet, but the law will be lost from the priest and counsel from the elders. The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with horror, and the hands of the people of the land will tremble. According to their conduct I will deal with them, and by their judgments I will judge them. And they will know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 7:23-27 (NASB)

The chain in verse 23 refers to chains that would bind the very violent people. So, Yahweh’s plan was being implemented. Israel would be invaded by the worst of nations. The homes of the Israelites would be occupied by the invading army. There would be no peace. Disaster was coming. In addition, false rumors upon false rumors would spread making things worse. The people would seek help from false prophets, and the law would be lost. The whole nation would mourn from the king, the prince, and down to the people. Then Yahweh made this incredible statement, “According to their conduct I will deal with them, and by their judgments I will judge them. And they will know that I am the LORD.”

CONCLUSION. That statement has been Yahweh’s theme through the book of Ezekiel and especially in this chapter. In verse 3 Yahweh said, “I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you.” In verse 7, Yahweh said, “Your doom has come to you!” Then verse 27 repeats the same idea. That is, what we sow, we shall reap. That is a divine principle that applies to everyone. We cannot escape it. Galatians 6:7 states,

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Galatians 6:7 (NASB)

PROVERBS 11:18 WARNS,

The wicked earns deceptive wages,

But he who sows righteousness gets a true reward. Proverbs 11:18 (NASB)

HOSEA 8:7 HAS THIS INSIGHTFUL COMMENT,

**For they sow the wind
And they reap the whirlwind.
Hosea 8:7 (NASB)**

JOB 4:8 SAYS,

**According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity
And those who sow trouble harvest it.
Job 4:8 (NASB)**

Our study is a very difficult illustration of this principle. Whatever a person sows, he or she will reap. The only exception to this principle is found by forgiveness that comes only through Jesus Christ. If we refuse to repent of our sins, we will be punished eventually. But if we confess our sins and repent, we are forgiven.

Hebrews 12:7-11 reminds us that God disciplines us as a father disciplines a son. He must eventually punish evil since He is holy and just. God must eventually punish after He has shown tolerance, love, and mercy. Romans 2:4-6 explains,

“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.” Romans 2:4-6 (NASB)

SO, GOD SHOWS US KINDNESS, TOLERANCE, AND PATIENCE. He is not eager to punish. He wants us to confess our sins and repent, or turn away from them.

1 John 2:1-2 tells us that Jesus then defends us before God the Father against any accusation of wrongdoing. So, believers should daily confess their sins and repent. Unbelievers need to

believe in Christ and call upon the Lord to be forgiven and be saved. Romans 10:13 promises that if we do, we will be saved. So, let us sow righteousness and do good deeds. Let us seek to please the Lord, and obey Him in all that we do! Then will see showers of blessings (Matthew 6:33).

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33 (NASB)