

NOTES ON EZEKIEL CHAPTER SEVEN

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1. Review
 - a) Very short historical prelude:
 - i) Date: 593 – 571
 - ii) Audience: Exiles from Judah in Babylonia
 - iii) Milieu: Gross idolatry and systemic religious and societal corruption.
 - iv) Exile has/will come w/ destruction
 - b) The “hammer blows” of judgement (sword, famine, pestilence) that Elaine mentioned in chapters 4 & 5 are continued in chapter 6 and in 7.
 - c) Chapter 6 and 7 continue w/ the description of the terrors that will come upon Jerusalem and upon Judah.
 - d) Review of the “*threes*”:
 - i) Three judgements: *sword, famine, pestilence*
 - ii) Israel to become a *reproach, a reviling, a warning*
 - iii) Judgement coming as *anger, as wrath, as raging rebukes* (cf. 6.4b – 5)
 - (1) Cutting down worshipers in front of idols
 - (2) Lining up corpses in front of the idols
 - (3) Scattering the bones of the idolaters
 - e) Israel that was to be a light to the nations (Is 42.6; 49.6) now becomes a lesson to the nations about what happens when God’s rules are disobeyed.
 - f) Note Lev 26 and Dt 28.15 - 68 for God’s judgement for not keeping the covenant.
2. Introduction to Chapter 7
 - a) Three alarms:
 - i) 1 – 4: Judgement coming to the whole land; God will punish according to conduct; no pity
 - ii) Vss. 5 – 7: disaster has come
 - iii) Vss. 10 – 27: Day of the Lord is here, and this is what it means—i.e., what is going to happen.
 - b) Vivid language—short, punchy phrases (Cf. vss. 5, 6, 10)

CHAPTER 7

1. Verse 1: “The word of the Lord came to me, saying ...”
 - a) Same formulation as before
 - b) Emphasis that Ezekiel is not speaking of his own accord
 - c) [Best exposition IMHO of the import of the Lord’s word and its authority is B. B. Warfield’s *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*]
2. Verse 2: “And you, son of man, thus says the Lord ...”
 - a) Emphasizes the sternness of the message: The Lord really means this!

- b) The end has come—no more waiting
- c) Ezekiel only one to use the expression *adamat israel* as opposed to *eretz israel*.
 - i) We noted earlier that “Mountains of Israel” used only in Ezekiel (6.2)
 - ii) *adamat israel* used only by Ezekiel—maybe emphasizing the agriculture of the land (loss of grain, new wine, and oil)
 - iii) “Four corners of the land/earth”—Probably means Israel, although some feel it can be extended to the whole earth. (Depends upon the interpretation of *eretz*.)
 - iv) Context strongly argues for locality; i.e., judgement on the four corners of Israel
 - v) Perhaps the change between *adamah* and *eretz* is Ezekiel’s way of emphasizing Israel rather than the rest of the world as w/ Zephaniah (Cf. below).
- 3. Verse 3: The end has arrived ...
 - a) Note the immanence: “NOW the end is upon you” As opposed to “WHEN I send ... THEN I will” (Ezek 5.16)
 - b) Measure for measure judgement: “I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you”; i.e., *you deserve this!*
- 4. Verse 4: Continuation of vs. 3
 - a) No mercy or pity
 - b) Measure for measure (again)
 - c) Recognition formula: “You will know that I am the Lord.” (Cf. vs. 27; Ezek 6. 7, 10, 13, 14.)
- 5. Verses 5 – 7a: The end is here ...
 - a) “Staccato beat” emphasizing urgency
 - Example: Vs. 6: “An end has come, has come the end; it has awakened for you, behold, it has come!” (My translation)
 - b) Paronomasia (similar sound, different meaning): *ketz ba, ba hakketz, haikeetz ailayich, hinay, ba-áh.*
- 6. Verse 7b: “The day is near ...”

EXCURSUS 1: “The Day of the Lord”

- A. Expression used for an unusual pouring out of God’s wrath
 - 1. Zeph 1.14 – 16a:
 - “The great day of the Lord is near,
 - Near and coming very quickly;
 - Listen, the day of the Lord!
 - In it the warrior cries out bitterly.
 - That day is a day of anger,
 - A day of trouble and distress,
 - A day of destruction and desolation,
 - A day of darkness and gloom,
 - A day of clouds and thick darkness,
 - A day of trumpet and battle cry”

2. Is 13.9: "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it."
 3. Joel 1.15: "Woe for the day! For the day of the Lord is near, And it will come as destruction from the Almighty."
- B. Unusual natural phenomena associated w/ the day:
1. Is 13.10 "For the stars of heaven and their constellations, Will not flash their light; The sun will be dark when it rises And the moon will not shed its light.
 2. Amos 8.9: "It will come about at that time," declares the Lord God, "I will cause the sun to set at noon and the earth to darken in the daylight."
 3. Joel 2.31: "The sun will be given over to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and terrifying Day of the Lord." (Cf. Peter's use of Joel in Acts 2.)

SHORT COMMENTS ON JOEL 2.28 – 32:

1. Main points:
 - a. Young and old, men and women, owner and servant will dream dreams (vs. 29)
 - b. Serious astronomical signs will occur (vss. 30, 31)
 - c. God will pour out his Spirit (vs. 28)
 - d. But all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (vs. 32a)
 - e. Deliverance will come for Mt. Zion and for Jerusalem and to all survivors whom the Lord calls (vs. 32b, c)
 2. Peter quoted this portion of Joel at Pentecost (Acts 2.17 – 21, except *for* 32b, c)
 - a. The Spirit did descend upon the people of various standings.
 - b. But we do not read about astronomical signs occurring at Pentecost.
 3. Suggestions:
 - a. Peter is telling his hearers that the first part of Joel's prophecy is being fulfilled
 - b. And this becomes a sign that the second part will also be fulfilled at some future date
 - c. In short, first the calling, and then the judgment. We can still expect the judgmental aspect of "The Day of the Lord."
- C. A day of judgement: "Multitudes, multitudes in the Valley of Judgment! For the Day of the Lord is near in the Valley of Judgment! (Joel 3.14)
- D. An eschatological day of God's wrath from which God will protect his people (1 Thess 5.9: "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ")

- E. On the other hand, “For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pt 4.17)
- F. But one should not be lazy or deceived in thinking the Day of the Lord will not overtake them?
1. Amos 5.18, 20: “Woe to you who are longing for the day of the Lord, for what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you? It will be darkness and not light Will the day of the Lord not be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?”
 2. 1 Thess 5.3: “While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”
 3. Mk 13.33: ““Watch out, stay alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is.”
 4. Beware! Don’t be like those at the time of Noah (Mt 24.37, 38, 42 – 44; Lk 17.26, 27).
- G. Is there escape?
1. Is 33.13b: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire?
 2. Answer: Is 33.15, 16

He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions,
 who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil,
he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.

7. Verse 7c: Tumult instead of joyful shouting *on the mountains*—
- a) Note the “mountains” that in 6.2, 3, 13 are singled out for the first time as the centers of worship.
 - b) Hence, the mountains will not be a refuge when “the day” arrives; they’ll be a place of judgement!
 - c) (We’ll look at vs. 16 later.)
8. Verses 8 & 9:
- a) More measure for measure
 - b) The expression “I am the Lord who *strikes* (hits, smites; Heb. *Jehovah makeh*).
 - i) The word *makeh* is the root for “hammer”
 - ii) Judas Maccabeus—“Judah the Hammer.” (Note the hammer on Independence Day in Israel.
 - c) Quite a change from other names for God, as in ‘*Jehovah yireh*’ [Lit. “The Lord will see (or provide”)] and ‘*Jehovah-nissi*’ [“The Lord is my banner.”] (Gen 22:14; Ex 17:15)

9. Verse 10: "The rod has budded ..."
 - a) Aaron's rod budded during rebellion (Num 17.8): The Lord said to Moses, "Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against me, so that they will not die"). Here, full arrogance and violence have budded.
 - b) Perhaps a reference to Jer 1.11, 12 w/ the allusion to the budding almond tree = sure sign of invasion by the Babylonians.
10. Verse 11: "Rod of wickedness ..." emphasizes the full blooming of arrogance and violence
11. Verse 12: Normal business activity will stop ...
 - a) 12a: "The time has come, etc."
 - b) 12b – 13: The "day" will be such that normal business activities will cease.
 - i) Pride on one's own ability to gain wealth instead of trusting in the Lord who gives it will bring destruction
 - ii) Note Dt 8.17,18: "You may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who is giving you power to make wealth..."
 - iii) Perhaps the "seller/buyer" refers to land returned during the year of Jubilee. The end is coming, so don't make plans for land exchange. (Note: The Jubilee years during Ezekiel's time were 624 and 574 B.C.)
 - iv) More specifically, all debts were canceled and all slaves freed during the sabbatical year, and that fell on 588 B.C., 1 – 2 years before the fall of Jerusalem!
 - v) For land redemption during the year of Jubilee year, cf. Lev 25.8 – 12.
12. Verses 14 – 15: The trumpet sounds, but no one is able to go to battle. Why? (vs. 15):
 - a) The sword is outside
 - b) Plague and famine inside
13. Verse 16: But some will escape. Even so, they will moan like doves as they remember their iniquity [for that was the reason for the destruction].