

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 7

This chapter contains a prophecy of the speedy destruction of the Jews, as being just at hand; of the particular judgments that should come upon them; of the horror that should seize them, and the distress that all ranks of men among them should be in, a few only escaping, who are described as in mournful circumstances. The destruction in general is denounced as being very near; the end being come, which is often repeated; and as it is represented as sudden, so without mercy; which is declared, (^{2470b}Ezekiel 7:1-14); the particular judgments, sword, pestilence, and famine, are mentioned in (²⁴⁷⁵Ezekiel 7:15), and the few that should escape are compared to mourning doves, (²⁴⁷⁶Ezekiel 7:16); the trembling, horror, and shame that should be upon all, are intimated in (²⁴⁷⁷Ezekiel 7:17,18); the unprofitableness of their gold and silver to deliver them, and the unsatisfying nature of these things, are expressed, (²⁴⁷⁹Ezekiel 7:19); the profanation and destruction of their temple are prophesied of, (^{2472b}Ezekiel 7:20-22); and for their murder, rapine, and oppression, it is threatened that their houses should be possessed by the worst of Heathens, and their holy places defiled; and one calamity should come upon another; when their application to prophets, priests, and ancient men for counsel, would be in vain, (²⁴⁷³Ezekiel 7:23-26); and king, prince, and people, should be in the most melancholy and distressed circumstances, (²⁴⁷⁷Ezekiel 7:27).

Ver. 1. *Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.*] Or again, as the Arabic version; for this is a distinct prophecy from the former; though of the same kind with it; and was delivered out, either immediately upon the former; or, however, some time between that and the following in the next chapter, which has a date to it. The Targum calls it the word of prophecy from the Lord.

Ver. 2. *Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel, &c.*] The inhabitants of it; not the ten tribes, who were already carried captive; but the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and those that were with them, who dwelt in the land. The mountains, hills, rivers, and

valleys, were before addressed; now the land itself: what the Lord by the prophet said unto the land, or the people of it, follows:

an end: for here a colon is to be placed; that is, the end of God's patience and forbearance; he would bear with them no longer, at least but a very little while; the time of vengeance was coming upon them, and an utter consumption should be made of them; (see ^{<4018>}Lamentations 4:18);

the end is come upon the four corners of the earth, or "land"; for not the whole world, and the end of that, as in (^{<4048>}Matthew 24:3), are meant; but the land of Judea and the destruction of it, which should be general; upon the four wings of it, as in the Hebrew text; that is, in all parts of it, east, west, north, and south. The Targum is,

"the punishment of the end, or the punishment determined to come upon the four winds of the earth;"

(see ^{<4010>}Revelation 7:1); and this punishment was just going to be inflicted on them; for this prophecy was in the sixth year of King Zedekiah; and in the ninth year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem; and in the eleventh year took it, (^{<4251>}2 Kings 25:1,2).

Ver. 3. *Now [is] the end [come] upon thee*, &c.] This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and for the sake of application of it to the people of Israel, of whom he had before spoken in the third person; but now in the second, in order to arouse them, and excite attention:

and I will send mine anger upon thee; the token of it, the punishment of their sins:

and I will judge thee according to thy ways; pass sentence, and execute it, as their evil ways and practices deserved:

and I will recompense, or "put upon thee"^{f101},

all thine abominations; cause them to bear as a burden the just punishment of their detestable iniquities; which would be more than they would be able to bear, though not more than they deserved.

Ver. 4. *And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity*, &c.] Though the punishment will be heavy, and the lamentation will be great; (see ^{<4051>}Ezekiel 5:11);

but I will recompense thy ways upon thee; the evil of punishment for the evil of sin, the righteous demerit of their actions:

and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee; not taken away, unatoned for, and indeed not repented of. The Targum is,

“and the punishment of thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee:”

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; to whom vengeance belongs; who takes notice of sinful actions, and punishes for them; to whom appertain the perfections of omniscience, omnipotence, and punitive justice.

Ver. 5. *Thus saith the Lord God*, &c.] Here should be a stop, a colon, requiring attention to what follows, it being something awful and terrible:

an evil, an only evil, behold, it cometh; meaning the destruction of the city and temple; which, though but one, was such an one as was never known before nor was there any like it. The Targum is,

“evil after evil, lo, it cometh;”

one evil after another; when one evil is gone, another comes, as in (^{2307B}Ezekiel 7:26). The Syriac version is, “behold, evil for evil comes”; the evil of punishment for the evil of sin.

Ver. 6. *An end is come, the end is come*, &c.] These words, so often repeated, show the eagerness and concern of the prophet’s mind; the speed and haste destruction was making; and the great stupidity of the people, which required such a frequent repetition:

it watcheth for thee; that is, their damnation slumbered not, but was awake, and waited till the time was up, which was just at hand, for it to take place; (see ^{611B}2 Peter 2:3);

behold, it is come; either the end, or rather the evil before mentioned; it was just at the door; it denotes the certainty of it, and its near approach.

Ver. 7. *The morning is come upon thee, O thou that dwellest in the land*, &c.] That is, early ruin was come, or was coming, upon the inhabitants of Judea, which before is said to be awake, and to watch for them; and now the day being broke, the morning come, it hastened to them. Some, because this word ^{f102} is used in (^{2386B}Isaiah 18:5); for a crown or diadem, think a crowned head, a king, is here meant; particularly Nebuchadnezzar

king of Babylon, the instrument of the destruction of Jerusalem. So the Targum,

“the kingdom is revealed upon or against thee, O inhabitant of the land.”

Jarchi interprets it of the morning setting as the sun does, its light and glory disappearing; and so denotes a dark and gloomy day;

the time is come; the appointed time of Jerusalem’s ruin, the time of her visitation;

the day of trouble, or “noise”^{f103},

[*is*] *near*; either of the Chaldean army, its chariots and horses, and of their armour; or of the howling and lamentation of the Jews:

and not the sounding again of the mountains; not like the echo of a man’s voice between the mountains, which is only imaginary, but this is real; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it: or this was not like the shoutings of the vintage, which were joyful ones, (²³⁶⁹Isaiah 16:9,10); but this the voice of lamentation and sorrow, doleful sounds. Jarchi says the word signifies the cry of the voice, proclaiming or calling on persons to fly to the tops of the mountains, which now should not be; and so the Targum,

“and there is no fleeing or escaping to the tops of the mountains.”

Ver. 8. *Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee*, &c.] It might be very well said to be shortly, or near at hand, that the Lord would bring down his judgments upon this people; since it was some time in the sixth year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity that this prophecy was delivered; and it was in the ninth year that Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem; so that it was but about three years before God would begin to pour out his fury on them:

and accomplish mine anger upon thee; not only send it, and begin to express it, but go on to finish it, till he had spent all his fury upon them he meant and threatened, and their sins deserved:

and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will recompense thee for all thine abominations; which is repeated from (²³⁰⁸Ezekiel 7:3), for the confirmation of it, and to show the certainty of it, that nothing would prevent it.

Ver. 9. *And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, &c.*] This verse is the same with (²³⁷⁰⁴Ezekiel 7:4); only instead of “I will recompense thy ways upon thee”, here it is,

I will recompense thee according to thy ways upon thee and thine abominations [that] are in the midst of thee; which have both the same sense, showing the equity and justice of the divine proceedings: and to the clause, it is added,

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord that smiteth; with the rod of his anger, inflicts punishment for sin. The Syriac version is, “that smiteth them”; the Jews, by suffering them to be carried captive: and so the Targum,

“I am the Lord that bringeth upon you a smiting,”

or the blow; the sense is, that when it came, they should be sensible that it was the Lord’s doing. (See Gill on “²³⁷⁰⁴Ezekiel 7:4”).

Ver. 10. *Behold the day, behold, it is come, &c.*] That is, the day of trouble and distress, said to be near, (²³⁷⁰³Ezekiel 7:3);

the morning is gone forth; (see Gill on “²³⁷⁰⁷Ezekiel 7:7”);

the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded; both these phrases may be understood of Nebuchadnezzar; he was the rod, with which the Lord smote his people, as the Assyrian monarch is called the rod of his anger, (²³⁷⁰⁵Isaiah 10:5): and was a very proud prince, and had budded and blossomed, and had brought forth much bad fruit of that kind; (see ²³⁷¹⁵Daniel 3:15 4:30,37); or these may be separately considered; the rod may be interpreted of Nebuchadnezzar, which had been growing up, and preparing for the chastisement of the people of the Jews, and now was just ready to be made use of; and “pride” may respect the sin of that people, which was the cause of their being smitten with this rod, as the following words seem to indicate. The Targum is,

“a ruler hath budded, a wicked one hath appeared.”

Ver. 11. *Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness, &c.*] Some understand this of the Chaldeans, who came with great violence against the Jews, and were a rod in the hand of the Lord, to scourge them for their wickedness; and this seems to be the sense of the Targum,

“spoilers are risen up to visit the wicked;”

but rather the violence, oppression, and rapine of the Jews are meant, and mentioned as the cause of their punishment; for this their oppression of the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, among them, God suffered the king of Babylon, a wicked prince, to come and chastise them:

none of them [shall remain], nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs; meaning not the Chaldean army, as if they came not of themselves, but of God, and much less were cut off, for they returned to their own land again; but the Jews, who either should die in the siege with the famine and pestilence, or be put to death by the sword, or be carried into captivity:

neither [shall there be] wailing for them; the destruction should be so general, that there would be but few left to mourn; and those that were left would be struck with such a stupor and amazement at the calamity, that they would not be capable of mourning; or with such a dread of the enemy, that there would be no place for lamentation over their dead friends and relations.

Ver. 12. *The time is come, the day draweth near,* &c.] According to the Targum, the time of the recompence of iniquities, and the day of punishment of sins; of the sins of the Jews, by the Chaldean army, which no doubt is true; but it seems chiefly to refer to what follows: and the sense is, the time was coming on, in which

let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn; it is usual for the buyer of houses or lands to rejoice, because an addition is made to his estate, and especially when he has made, as he thinks, a good purchase; and the seller, he mourns because he is obliged to part with his estate to pay his debts, and so is reduced in his circumstances; but now the time was coming when the one would have no occasion to rejoice, nor the other to mourn; not the buyer rejoice, because, being carried captive, he cannot enjoy his possessions; nor the seller mourn, because, if he had not sold his house or field, he must have left it:

for wrath [is] upon all the multitude thereof; upon the whole body of the Jewish nation, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, buyer and seller; those that are in good circumstances, and those that are in bad ones; so that hereby they were all upon a level, in the same case and condition.

Ver. 13. *For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, &c.*] In the year of jubilee, because he shall be in captivity: according to the law in (^{<02513>}Leviticus 25:13), when a man had sold his possession, he returned to it again, if alive, in the year of jubilee; let it come sooner or later, within thirty, or twenty, or ten years after the sale, be it as it will: now the Babylonish captivity being seventy years, in that time there must be a jubilee; and yet those that had sold their estates, being captives in another land, could not return to them:

although they were yet alive: either though what they have sold is in being, and in good condition; or rather, though they that have sold them are in the land of the living, but, not being in their own land, cannot possess:

for the vision [is] touching the whole multitude thereof; the prophecy of the destruction of the Jews is general, and respects the whole body of the people; men of all ranks and degrees, the buyer and the seller, the rich and the poor:

[which] shall not return; void and of no effect, but shall be fully accomplished; (see ^{<2511>}Isaiah 54:11); though some think this refers not to prophecy, but to the people, who did not upon it return by repentance; in this sense it is taken by Jarchi and Kimchi; and so the Targum,

“for the prophets prophesied to the whole multitude of them to return by repentance, and they returned not:”

neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life: either secure himself from danger by his unrighteous mammon, his ill gotten goods; or think to escape by his daring impiety, and vicious course of life, continued in without repentance.

Ver. 14. *They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready, &c.*] That is, the Jews, when they understood that the enemy was approaching, blew the trumpet, to give the inhabitants of their several cities and towns warning of it; that they might gather together, provide themselves with armour, and put themselves in a posture of defence, or go forth to meet the enemy, and stop his progress: or, “blow ye the trumpet”, so the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and so may be considered as an irony or sarcasm; blow the trumpet, as an alarm of war, and see what will be the effect of it:

but none goeth to the battle: not having courage enough to face the enemy, but instead of that find to the fortified cities, and particularly to Jerusalem: the reason of this timidity and cowardice was,

for my wrath [is] upon all the multitude thereof; the intention of God was to destroy them all by one means or another; and therefore a heart was not given them to defend themselves, or oppose the enemy.

Ver. 15. *The sword [is] without, &c.*] Without the city, where the enemy was besieging; so that those that went without, in order to make their escapes fell into their hands:

and the pestilence and the famine within; within the city; so that such who thought themselves safe in their own houses died by those judgments:

he that [is] in the field shall die by the sword; by the hands of the Chaldeans:

and he that [is] in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him; and he shall die by the hand of God.

Ver. 16. *But they that escape of them shall escape, &c.*] Some few should escape the pestilence, famine, and sword, and flee to the mountains, where they should live a very miserable and uncomfortable life; so that this is no contradiction to the wrath of God being upon the whole multitude, (³¹⁷²Ezekiel 7:12,14); as it follows:

and shall be on the mountains; whither they shall flee, when the city is broken up and taken; and so the Syriac version reads it, in connection with the preceding words, “and they that escape of them shall escape to the mountains”; barren and desert places, where they shall find no subsistence, nor have any agreeable company and conversation, but live in solitude and distress:

like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, everyone for his iniquity: like doves that live in valleys, or gather together there, and hide themselves in the holes of the rocks, on the sides of the valleys, from birds of prey; or are so called, to distinguish them from wild doves, which, when they have lost their mates, make a very mournful noise, though not loud and clamorous. So those Jews that escaped, being in such an uncomfortable condition, turned out of house and home, and deprived of their substance, should lament their fate; not in loud cries, lest they should be heard by the

enemy and taken, but in secret sighs, and in a mournful tone; acknowledging to God, and to one another, their sins; they now became sensible of, which brought these calamities upon them. So God's people, the remnant according to the election of grace, who "escape" the general ruin sin has brought on mankind, are for the most part "upon the mountains", in an afflicted and persecuted state; they are like "doves" for their harmlessness, amiableness, cleanness, modesty chastity, sociableness, and timorous disposition; and like doves "of the valleys", in a low estate, through corruption, temptation, desertion, affliction, and persecution; and "mourn" over their own "iniquity", the sin of their nature, their unbelief and various transgressions being committed against a God of love, contrary to his grace, grieving to his Spirit, and dishonourable to his Gospel; and being what break their bereave them of comfort, and deprive them of communion with God.

Ver. 17. *All hands shall be feeble*, &c.] No strength in them, to lay hold on weapons of war to defend themselves, or fight the enemy; no heart nor courage in them, to go forth and meet him; and even afraid to lift up their voice in mourning, lest they should be heard, and pursued, and taken:

and all knees shall be weak [as] water; tremble and beat one against another, for fear of the enemy; or,

"shall flow with water,"

as the Targum; either with sweat or urine, which are sometimes both caused by fear.

Ver. 18. *They shall also gird [themselves] with sackcloth*, &c.] As a token of mourning, (^{<013734>}Genesis 37:34);

and horror shall cover them: either the horror of a guilty conscience, or the perpetual dread and terror of the enemy:

and shame [shall be] upon all faces; because of their sins and transgressions, which they shall now be convinced of; or because of their desolate condition, their sins had brought them into:

and baldness upon all their heads; through the plucking off of the hair of their heads in their distress; for to make baldness as a token of mourning for the dead was forbidden the Jews, (^{<015401>}Deuteronomy 14:1).

Ver. 19. *They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed, &c.*] As being of no use unto them to preserve them from famine and pestilence, and as being an hinderance to them in their flight from the enemy. Kimchi observes that this may be interpreted of their idols of gold and silver, which shall now be had in contempt by them, and cast away, when they shall find they cannot save them from ruin; (see ^{<2420>}Isaiah 2:20);

their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; these can neither deliver from temporal judgments nor from wrath to come; (see ^{<2400>}Proverbs 10:2 11:4); nor idols made of them:

they shall not satisfy their souls, nor fill their bowels; gold and silver cannot be eaten; these will not satisfy the craving appetite, nor fill the hungry belly: the words show that the famine would be so great, that bread could not be got for any money; and therefore gold and silver would be of no avail; since they could not be fed upon, or give any satisfaction to a famishing soul; nor could idols of gold and silver neither:

because it is the stumbling block of their iniquity; what was the occasion of their iniquity, covetousness, and idolatry, at which they stumbled, and fell into sin, and so into punishment for it.

Ver. 20. *As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty, &c.*] Or, “for pride”^{f104}. The gold, silver, jewels, riches, and treasure, which the Lord gave to this people, they made a bad use of; and instead of contributing to the support of his worship and interest, and of giving liberally to the poor, they converted it to their own pride and luxury: or rather the temple, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, is meant; which was a beautiful structure, and adorned with gifts, and set for glory, majesty, and excellency by the Lord; yea, where his excellent Majesty dwelt himself:

but they made the images of their abominations [and] of their detestable things therein; or, “of it”^{f105}; that is, of their gold and silver, which is another bad use they put their riches to: or rather “in it”^{f106}; that is, the temple; where, having made their idols, they placed them; (see ^{<2400>}Jeremiah 7:30);

therefore have I set it far from them; that being destroyed, and they being carried away captive into a strange land, far from that.

Ver. 21. *And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, &c.]* The Babylonians, who lived in a foreign country, and were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel; the temple was suffered of the Lord to fall into their hands as a prey; who spoiled it of all its riches and glory, and carried away the vessels of gold, of silver, and of brass, and other valuable things; (see ^{<457>}Jeremiah 52:17-23);

and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; meaning the same persons, and the same thing, and the same use they should make of it; for not the wicked of the world in general are meant, but of the land, or this land; the land of Babylon, where the prophet was:

and they shall pollute it; by entering into it and spoiling it, by pillaging and burning it.

Ver. 22. *My face will one turn also from them, &c.]* Deny them his presence, and withdraw his protection from them; show them no favour, nor afford them any help and succour in their distress, when they cry unto him; so the Targum,

“I will cause my Shechinah to remove from them:”

unless the Chaldeans are meant, as some think, whose robberies and ravages the Lord would wink at, and not restrain, but suffer them to plunder and spoil at pleasure: since it follows,

and they shall pollute my secret [place]; the holy of holies, by going into it, which none but the high priest might do, and he but once a year; though the Targum understands this of the Jews, and makes it to be a reason of what is threatened in the preceding clause, rendering it thus,

“because they have profaned the land of the house of my Shechinah:”

for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it; as did the king of Babylon and his army; and afterwards, in the second temple, Antiochus, Pompey, and Titus Vespasian.

Ver. 23. *Make a chain, &c.]* To bind them; not the robbers, the Chaldeans, but the Jews; in order either to bring them to the bar to be tried for capital crimes hereafter mentioned, or to be led bound in chains into captivity; (see ^{<480>}Nehemiah 3:10);

for the land is full of bloody crimes; or, “judgment of bloods”^{f107}; capital crimes, such as are deserving of death, particularly murder, or shedding of innocent blood; so the Targum interprets it of sins of murder:

and the city is full of violence; rapine, oppression, and injury done to the poor, the widow, and the fatherless; meaning the city of Jerusalem, where was the great court of judicature, and where justice ought to have been administered.

Ver. 24. *Wherefore I will bring the worst of the Heathen*, &c.] The Chaldeans, notorious for their cruelty, savageness, and barbarity:

and they shall possess their houses; which they have built, and thought to have lived and died in, and left them to their children for an inheritance; but the Chaldeans, and not their children, became their heirs, and inherited their houses and lands:

I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; or, “the pride of the mighty ones”^{f108}; the noble and the rich; their wealth and substance, by which their pride and grandeur were supported, being taken away from them:

and their holy places shall be defiled; the temple, in which were the holy place, and the holy of holies: or, “they that sanctify them”; the priests that offered sacrifices, which only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; even these holy persons and things, as well as holy places, would be defiled.

Ver. 25. *Destruction cometh*, &c.] Upon the temple, city, nation, and people; the king of Babylon, the destroyer of the Gentiles, and now of the Jews, being on his way, (²⁰⁰⁷Jeremiah 4:7);

and they shall seek peace, and [there shall be] none; that is, the Jews will seek to make peace with the Chaldeans; but the latter will not hearken to them, but go on with the siege, till they have taken the city, put part to the sword, and carried the other captive.

Ver. 26. *Mischief shall come upon mischief*, &c.] One misfortune or calamity after another; first one unhappy event, and then another, as was Job’s case. The Targum is,

“breach upon breach shall come”^{f109};

and rumour shall be upon rumour; that the Chaldean army is in such a place; and then that it is in another place still nearer; and then that it is but a few miles off, and, will be here immediately: rumours of wars, as well as wars, themselves, are very distressing; (see ^{<4106>}Matthew 24:6);

then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; apply to him for a prophecy, to know the event of things, whether and when they might expect a deliverance:

but the law shall perish from the priest; whose lips should keep knowledge, and from whose mouth the law, the doctrine and interpretation of it, might be expected; but now either there would be no priests at all; or such as were would be ignorant and unlearned, and incapable of instructing the people:

and counsel from the ancients; with whom it usually is; and which is of great service in a time of distress: this therefore adds greatly to the calamity, that there would be no prophet to tell them what should come to pass; no priest to instruct them; nor senator or wise man to give them counsel.

Ver. 27. *The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation*, &c.] Meaning one and the same person, Zedekiah not being able to save himself and his people; and who falling into the hands of the king of Babylon, his children were slain before him; then his own eyes put out, and he bound in chains, and carried captive to Babylon, (^{<2406>}Jeremiah 39:6,7);

and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled; weakened through fear and distress; incapable of business, and unable to help themselves and others; and the more so, when they found their case desperate; which was manifest by the mourning and desolation of their king, in whom their confidence had been placed:

I will do unto them after their way; or, “for their way”^{f110}; because of their evil ways and works:

and according to their deserts will I judge them; take vengeance on them, as the Targum: or, “in their judgments will I judge them”^{f111}; the same measure they have meted out to others shall be measured out to them, (^{<4101>}Matthew 7:1):

and they shall know that I [am] the Lord; the only Lord God, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, true and faithful, holy, just, and good.