

## Ezekiel – the Desolate Temple

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Ezekiel has seen the Glory of YHWH leave the Temple, the city, the nation – **the Temple stands desolate. This is a concept that was unthinkable to an Israelite** – the Temple and the city were believed to be inviolable (Ez10:18a,19b, 11:23). Ezekiel had to communicate this new reality to the exiles (Ez12:19-20, 9:10, 12:23b,25a).

**Prophecy Against Wicked Counselors:** This is the last “scene” of the First Temple Vision – Ezekiel is “in vision” at the “east gate”, the location from which the “kavod” had departed with YHWH on the “portable throne” (Ez11:1-4). The “**princes of the people**”, שָׂרֵי הָעָם - sare ha'am, are not necessarily “royalty”, but the civic leaders, “thought leaders”. “**The time is not near to build houses**”, an example of “**wicked counsel**”, is perhaps an allusion to Jeremiah’s advice to the exiles (Jr29:4-5). “**This city is the cauldron**” – the “wicked counselors” are using the “cauldron” as **a metaphor of “protection”**, reverting to the notion of “**inviolability of Jerusalem**”.

**Judgement Upon the Wicked Counselors:** Israel, epitomized by **the “wicked counselors”**, has repeatedly refused to live by the Way of God, now they, **along with the last vestiges of the nation, will be destroyed** (Ez11:5-12). The phrase, “**the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me**”, is unique within the Temple Vision: it implies something special, i.e., the prophecy is for those in Jerusalem, not the exiles. Ezekiel could have communicated this prophecy back to Jerusalem by letter, as Jeremiah did to the exiles. Ezekiel generalizes to **the aggregate sins of the nation**, “O house of Israel”, now epitomized by the “wicked counselors”: whose **innermost “thoughts” have become evil** resulting in unjust killings (Gn6:5,11b,12b). God reverses the metaphor, “**they are the meat, and this city is the cauldron**”, the cauldron will consume the dead, it will NOT provide protection. The judgement was carried out in detail (2Kg25:18-21a).

**Ezekiel Pleads for Understanding:** Ezekiel takes the sudden death of one of the counselors as a sign that YHWH will destroy all vestiges of the nation - YHWH responded in the affirmative, the few remaining in Jerusalem will be destroyed (Ez11:13-15). **YHWH begins to reveal to Ezekiel the endgame, how it all works out: Second Exodus and New Israel** (Ez11:16-20). YHWH’s final word to the last vestiges of the Nation of Israel in Jerusalem – they will receive “retributive justice” (Ez11:21). The vision ends and Ezekiel has a lot to tell the exiles (Ez11:24-25).

**A Sign for the House of Israel:** We are NOT told how long a time lapse occurred before Ezekiel’s next symbolic action (Ez12:1-7). The phrases, “**eyes to see**”, “**ears to hear**”, are repeated often by Jesus, (see Mt11:15, Mk4:9,23, Lk8:8,14:35). They very much apply to people around us today: **the implication is that people should understand**. The phrase “**the house of Israel**” implied the exiles. Those remaining in Jerusalem were about to be destroyed (Dt28:64-65).

**An Object Lesson in Captivity:** Ezekiel is given **a very detailed predictive prophecy** to drive home the reality of the exile (Ez12:8-16). Zedekiah is “**the prince**”, the “last king”. Again, the prophecy was soon fulfilled in detail (2Kg25:4-7). The exile community around Ezekiel was the primary place where God allowed a “few of them to escape”. **When they saw the final destruction of Jerusalem and the detailed fulfillment of all the prophecies some did respond**.

**Another Object Lesson: Punishment:** Ezekiel reports to the “people of the land”, the exiles around him, a message from YHWH, with the objective that they “**shall know that I am YHWH**” (Ez12:17-20). The impending punishment of Jerusalem was inexorable due to “**violence of those who well in it**” – the land will be “**a desolation**” and “**cities shall be laid waste**”. **When God makes the decision to act, there is no going back, no reprieve**.

**A Fallacious Proverb:** This proverb is alive and well today - the lies and propaganda distributed by the mainstream media (Ez12:21-25). **When God decides to act, his word will be quickly fulfilled** (2Pt3:3-4,9a,10a,11b-12a). We all pray for God to make the decision again (Ez12:26-28). Then we can sign **the song from the Book of Revelation:**

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude ...

Hallelujah! **Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,**

for **his judgments are true and just;**

Praise our God, **all you his servants,** you who fear him, small and great.

Hallelujah! For **the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.**

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,

for **the marriage of the Lamb has come,** and his Bride has made herself ready;

it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure ...

And the angel said to me, “Write this: **Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**”

And he said to me, “**These are the true words of God.**” (Rv19:1b-2aα,5,6b-8a,9)