

The Book of Ezekiel

Lesson 13-Chapter Seven (Ezekiel 7:20-27)

Executive Summary

The judgment is characterized by three distinct phases: the physical removal of wealth and sacred objects, the psychological terror of continuous disaster, and—most critically—the cessation of divine communication. The document concludes that when the socio-religious hierarchy (prophets, priests, and elders) fails to provide guidance, the destruction itself becomes the primary message, intended to force the nation to recognize the sovereignty of the Lord.

I. The Transformation of Splendor into Abomination

The judgment begins with a reversal of value. Items and places once considered sacred and beautiful are rendered detestable due to the "arrogance" of the people.

- **The Misuse of Jewels (‘*āḏī*):** The text indicates that the "splendor of His jewels" refers to the ornaments and décor of the Temple. The exiles are accused of taking these divine adornments and "placing" (*śûm*) them into the service of pride and the creation of "detestable things" (idols).
- **The Disposition of Arrogance (‘*gā’ôn*):** This pride is not merely an emotion but a disposition of "rising up" or being "exalted" against God.
- **The Resulting Abhorrence (*ra*):** Because the nation made God's ornaments detestable to Him through idolatry, He declared He would make those very things abhorrent to the people. This word implies a "separation" or a "wandering away," highlighting a total breakdown in the relationship between the people and their sacred objects.

Historical Precedent: The Reign of Manasseh

To provide context for these "abominations," the source cites 2 Kings 21:1-7. King Manasseh is identified as a primary catalyst for this judgment, having:

- Rebuilt high places and erected altars for Baal and Asherah.
- Built altars for the "host of heaven" within the two courts of the House of the LORD.
- Practiced witchcraft, used divination, and consulted mediums.
- Placed a carved image of Asherah directly inside the Temple where God had promised to put His name forever.

II. Mechanics of Divine Desecration

God outlines the specific manner in which the Temple and the land will be judged. He does not merely destroy; He allows the "profane" to violate the "sacred."

- **Foreign Plunder:** Ezekiel 7:21 states that God will give the Temple's treasures into the hands of "foreigners" and the "wicked of the earth" as spoil.
- **The Violated "Secret Place" (‘*šāpān*):** God declares He will "turn His face" away, allowing robbers to enter and profane His "hiding place." This is understood to be the **Holy of Holies**, the most sacred inner sanctum of the Temple.
- **The "Chain" of Captivity:** The command to "make the chain" serves as an idiom for the coming captivity. This judgment is justified by the fact that the land is "full of bloody crimes" and the city is "full of violence."

III. The Breakdown of Leadership and Communication

A central element of this judgment is the "silence" of God. When the people seek relief from the "disaster upon disaster," they find that their traditional sources of wisdom and divine insight have been exhausted.

Role	Status of Guidance	Cause/Nature of Failure
Prophets	No Vision (‘ <i>hāzôn</i>)	God ceases all divine communication; there is no word to relieve despair.
Priests	Law (<i>Torah</i>) is Lost	The Law is not physically destroyed but "lost" (‘ <i>ābad</i>) through neglect and lack of practice; priests are now ignorant of the Law.
Elders	No Counsel	The advisory board, responsible for protecting the people according to the Law, can no longer provide guidance.

As "rumor is added to rumor," the resulting confusion leads to total disillusionment. The people seek a report (*šmû’â*) or tidings of peace, but find only "ruin" and "mischief" (‘*hvô*).

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IV. Socio-Psychological Trauma and Final Objective

The final verses of the chapter describe a total collapse across all strata of society. This is not merely a military defeat, but a psychological breaking of the nation.

- **The King:** Moves into a state of mourning.
- **The Prince:** Clothed with "horror" and "astonishment."
- **The People:** Their hands "tremble" in terror and disturbance.

The Message of Destruction

The document emphasizes a critical conclusion: the lack of divine communication is, in itself, a form of communication. Because the people ignored the Law and the Prophets during times of peace, God uses the "destruction itself" as the message.

Conclusion

The ultimate purpose of this judgment—the siege, the invasion, the loss of the Temple, and the silence of the priests—is defined in the final declaration: **"And they will know that I am the LORD."** God deals with the nation according to their own conduct and judges them by their own standards of "justice."