

Dr. Leslie Allen, Daniel, Session 4, Messages of Destruction for the Land of Israel (Ezek 6:1-7:27)

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Allen, Ezekiel, Session 4, Messages of Destruction for the Land of Israel (Ezek 6:1-7:27), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Leslie Allen's lecture focuses on Ezekiel chapters 6 and 7, exploring messages of destruction aimed at the land of Israel, shifting the focus from solely Jerusalem. These chapters contain oracles of judgment, literary units marked by the phrase "The word of the Lord came to me," which signifies a prophetic message. **Chapter 6 contains two messages emphasizing gestures and the land, condemning idolatrous high places and warning of desolation as covenant curses from Leviticus are recalled. Chapter 7 is a series of messages, referencing Amos and Zephaniah, emphasizing "the end" and "the day" of the Lord, depicting the collapse of society, and the futility of earthly possessions.** Ultimately, these messages served to disabuse the exiles of their hope for an imminent return, emphasizing impending destruction and the recognition of God's judgment.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Allen, Ezekiel, Session 4 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Ezekiel).



**Allen_Ezekiel_Sessi
on04.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 4, Messages of Destruction for the Land of Israel (Ezek 6:1-7:27)

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Leslie Allen's Lecture 4 on Ezekiel 6-7, focusing on the messages of destruction for the land of Israel:

Briefing Document: Ezekiel 6-7 - Messages of Destruction for the Land of Israel

Source: Excerpts from "Allen_Ezekiel_EN_Lecture04.pdf" (Dr. Leslie Allen, Ezekiel, Lecture 4)

Main Themes:

- **Shift from Jerusalem-centric Judgment to Land-Focused Destruction:** The earlier oracles in Ezekiel focused primarily on the fate of Jerusalem. Chapters 6 and 7 broaden the scope to include the entire land of Israel (Judah), emphasizing the widespread destruction and devastation to come due to Babylonian invasion. The dark shadow of the siege and fall of Jerusalem looms.
- **Idolatry and High Places as a Primary Cause of Destruction:** The lecture highlights the significance of the "high places" (local sanctuaries) and their association with idolatrous worship as a key reason for God's judgment. This connects to the prohibition of religious images in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:4-5). "These were local sanctuaries, local places of worship, scattered all up and down Israel...there was Canaanite influence, there was pagan influence in those local churches." The destruction of these high places is a recurring motif.
- **Covenant Curses of Leviticus 26:** Ezekiel's message heavily relies on and echoes the covenant curses outlined in Leviticus 26. This emphasizes the consequences of breaking the covenant with God and provides a framework for understanding the impending disaster.
- **"The End" and "The Day of the Lord":** Chapter 7 focuses heavily on the concepts of "the end" and "the day of the Lord", drawing on earlier prophetic texts like Amos and Zephaniah. This signifies not a day of triumphant divine intervention on Israel's behalf, but a day of judgment and darkness.
- **Psychological Suffering and God's Grief:** Beyond the physical destruction, the lecture underscores the psychological suffering of the exiles, including remorse, guilt, and regret. It also introduces the idea that God Himself experiences grief

and loss as a result of Israel's actions. "God has been harmed, that God has been psychologically hurt too in all this experience."

- **Divine Intervention and Human Consequences:** The destruction is presented as a result of both God's direct intervention (e.g., stretching out his hand against them) and the human consequences of sin and disobedience.
- **Radical Theocentricity:** The messages of judgment in Ezekiel all point back to God. They are a revelation of God, teaching about who God is. "Very much, God is at the center of this book."

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Structure of Ezekiel 6:** Chapter 6 comprises two separate messages (6:1-10 and 6:11-14), each introduced by a specific formula: "Hear the word of the Lord God" (v. 3) and "Thus says the Lord God" (v. 11). Both messages begin with physical gestures from Ezekiel.
- **Symbolic Gestures:** Ezekiel's actions, such as setting his face toward the mountains of Israel or clapping his hands and stamping his foot, are not merely symbolic actions, but physical gestures accompanying the prophetic message. Clapping and stamping are interpreted as expressions of God's anger and indignation.
- **Rhetorical Address:** The address to the "mountains of Israel" (6:3) is a rhetorical device. The true audience is the exiles in Babylonia. The landscape imagery evokes nostalgia and highlights the loss of God's gift to Israel.
- **Recognition Formula:** The phrase "Then you shall know that I am the Lord" is a recurring "recognition formula" that concludes messages of judgment in Ezekiel. It indicates that through the experience of destruction, the people will come to a deeper understanding of God's reality.
- **Three Forms of Punishment:** Ezekiel 6 mentions three forms of punishment: dying by the sword, famine, and pestilence. These are elaborated upon in Ezekiel 5:12 and elsewhere.
- **Echoes of Leviticus 26:** Parallels between Ezekiel 6 and Leviticus 26 include: destruction of high places, laying cities waste, and scattering among the nations. "And so pretty obviously, you're, there's a picking up of Leviticus 26."
- **Structure of Ezekiel 7:** Chapter 7 contains a series of messages. The boundaries of these messages can be found in verse 2: "Thus says the Lord God to the land of

Israel." Additionally, the ending of verse 4 is another indication with the recognition formula, "then you shall know that I am the Lord." Another can be found in verse 5, "thus says the Lord God" and ends with another recognition formula. Verses 10-27 is the last message ending with another recognition formula in verse 27, "and they shall know that I am the Lord."

- **Repetition as a Key to Interpretation:** Repetition of words, like "end" in Ezekiel 7, is a solid indication that you should take that word very seriously. "In Hebrew writing, you always have to notice the repetition. If words are repeated, that's a very solid indication that you take that word very seriously. And it's the theme of what's being said."
- **Parallels within Ezekiel 7:** The lecture highlights the parallels between the first two oracles (7:2-4 and 7:5-9) and the two halves of the third oracle (7:10-27). These parallels reinforce the central themes of the chapter.
- **Futility of Commerce:** Ezekiel 7 describes the futility of commerce and the loss of wealth during the destruction, highlighting the collapse of the economy.
- **Moral and Religious Causes:** The destruction is attributed to both religious sins (idolatry) and moral failings (bloody crimes, violence).
- **Rejection of "Normalcy":** Chapter 7 is portrayed as a loud "no" to the exiles' hopes of returning to a normal way of life in Judah. It emphasizes that this is a time of reckoning and punishment.
- **Galatians 6:7 Parallel:** The lecture draws a parallel to Galatians 6:7 ("You reap what you sow") to emphasize that the destruction is a consequence of the people's own actions.

Quotes:

- "They were speaking essentially about Jerusalem, the fate of Jerusalem. But here we move on to think more widely of judgment related to the land."
- "You shall not make for yourself an idol or an image, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them."
- "How I was crushed by their wanton heart that turned away from me."

- "Sometimes, parents have a wayward child, and they're angry with that child, but they're also grieving that the child has done such a thing, and they can't really understand it. And there are mixed emotions with God, too."
- "The end has come upon my people, Israel; I will never again pass them by."
(Quoting Amos)
- "God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow." (Quoting Galatians)

Overall Lesson:

Ezekiel's message to the exiles in 597 BC was a stark warning that worse was to come. The fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC and the widespread destruction of Judah were inevitable consequences of the people's idolatry, moral failings, and broken covenant with God. By drawing on priestly and prophetic traditions, Ezekiel sought to awaken the exiles to the reality of God's judgment and the need for repentance.

4. Study Guide: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 4, Messages of Destruction for the Land of Israel (Ezek 6:1-7:27)

Ezekiel's Messages of Destruction: A Study Guide to Ezekiel 6-7

Review of Key Concepts

Before attempting the quiz or essay questions, review these key areas:

- **Context:** Understand the historical context: The Babylonian exile (597 BC exiles and the looming destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC). Ezekiel is speaking to exiles in Babylon.
- **Literary Structure:** Recognize the literary units and their introductions (e.g., "The word of the Lord came to me") and conclusions (recognition formula: "Then you shall know that I am the Lord"). Identify the use of introductory formulas in chapter 6 and their purpose.
- **Oracles of Judgment:** Differentiate between oracles focused on Jerusalem and those focused on the land of Israel.
- **Symbolic Gestures:** Understand the meaning and significance of Ezekiel's symbolic gestures (setting his face toward the mountains, clapping his hands, and stamping his foot).
- **Rhetorical Devices:** Recognize the use of rhetorical address, especially addressing the mountains of Israel, and the intended audience behind these addresses.
- **High Places:** Understand the significance of the "high places" as local sanctuaries and their association with idolatry and Canaanite religious practices.
- **Recognition Formula:** Know the importance of the recognition formula ("Then you shall know that I am the Lord") as a marker of divine judgment and revelation.
- **Psychological Suffering:** Acknowledge the emphasis on the psychological suffering of the exiles, including remorse, guilt, and regret.
- **God's Grief:** Recognize the concept of God's grief and loss due to Israel's unfaithfulness.
- **Covenant Curses:** Understand the dependence on the covenant curses in Leviticus 26, particularly the parallels between Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 6.

- **Prophetic Tradition:** Know the allusions to and use of earlier prophetic texts, especially from Amos and Zephaniah, regarding the "day of the Lord."
- **Repetition:** Note the use of repetition, especially the word "end" in chapter 7, and its significance in Hebrew writing.
- **Parallelism:** Identify the parallelism within chapter 7, particularly in the futility of commerce, war and death, and general demoralization.

Quiz: Short-Answer Questions

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the primary difference between the earlier oracles of judgment in Ezekiel and the messages in chapters 6 and 7?
2. Explain the significance of Ezekiel setting his face toward the mountains of Israel.
3. Why are the "high places" targeted for destruction in Ezekiel's prophecies?
4. According to Ezekiel, what are the two levels of suffering that the exiles will experience?
5. What is the meaning of Ezekiel's gesture of clapping his hands and stamping his foot?
6. How does Ezekiel use the concept of covenant curses from Leviticus 26 in his messages?
7. What is the significance of the repetition of the word "end" in Ezekiel chapter 7?
8. How does Ezekiel draw upon the prophetic traditions of Amos and Zephaniah?
9. What are the three parallel themes found in Ezekiel 7:10-27?
10. What is the overall lesson Ezekiel is trying to convey to the exiles of 597?

Quiz: Answer Key

1. The earlier oracles focused primarily on Jerusalem, while chapters 6 and 7 broaden the scope to include the entire land of Israel, predicting its destruction. This shift reflects a more comprehensive judgment against the nation.
2. Setting his face toward the mountains of Israel is a symbolic gesture that directs Ezekiel's message toward the land and its people. It is a fixed staring posture

intended to give direction to his message for those to whom the message is intended. Though rhetorical, its real audience is the exiles in Babylonia.

3. The "high places" are targeted because they represent unauthorized local sanctuaries often associated with idolatrous worship and Canaanite religious practices. They violated the orthodox theology that worship should be centralized in the Jerusalem temple.
4. The exiles will experience physical suffering through exile and destruction, as well as psychological suffering in the form of remorse, guilt, and regret over their actions and their consequences. The psychological suffering includes God's loss and psychological loss.
5. The gesture of clapping his hands and stamping his foot expresses God's anger and indignation at Israel's vile abominations. It serves as a call to attention and a hostile expression of God's fury.
6. Ezekiel reinforces his message by drawing upon the covenant curses in Leviticus 26, highlighting the consequences of breaking the covenant with God. By echoing these curses, Ezekiel emphasizes that the impending destruction is a fulfillment of God's predetermined judgment.
7. The repetition of the word "end" emphasizes the finality and totality of the impending destruction. It highlights that there will be no return to normalcy and that the old way of life in Judah is over.
8. Ezekiel draws upon Amos's and Zephaniah's prophecies about the "day of the Lord," portraying it not as a time of salvation but as a time of judgment. He uses their language and themes to warn the exiles that God's intervention will be negative.
9. The three parallel themes are the futility of commerce, war and death, and general demoralization and consternation. These themes reinforce the idea of total societal collapse.
10. Ezekiel's overall lesson is that the exiles' hopes of returning to a normal life in Judah are misplaced, as worse is to come with the fall of Jerusalem and the wholesale destruction of the land, because of their religious and social sins. God intervened because it was their own fault. They would realize that God had been at work in the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Judah.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of Ezekiel's symbolic actions in chapters 6 and 7. How do these actions contribute to the overall message of destruction and judgment?
2. Discuss the role of idolatry and the "high places" in Ezekiel's prophecies of destruction. How does Ezekiel connect these religious practices to the impending judgment on the land of Israel?
3. Explore the concept of God's grief and loss in Ezekiel 6-7. How does Ezekiel portray God as a victim of Israel's unfaithfulness, and what is the significance of this portrayal?
4. Compare and contrast Ezekiel's use of the priestly tradition (Leviticus 26) and the prophetic tradition (Amos, Zephaniah) in chapters 6 and 7. How does he integrate these traditions to bolster his message of judgment?
5. Examine the psychological impact of the impending destruction on the exiles, as depicted in Ezekiel 6-7. How does Ezekiel portray their emotional and spiritual state, and what does this reveal about the nature of divine judgment?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Babylonian Exile:** The period in Jewish history when a large number of Jews from the ancient Kingdom of Judah were captives in Babylon (modern Iraq).
- **High Places:** Local sanctuaries or places of worship outside of the Jerusalem Temple, often associated with idolatry and Canaanite religious practices.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or images as gods, a practice strictly forbidden in orthodox Old Testament theology.
- **Oracle of Judgment:** A prophetic message declaring God's judgment and punishment for disobedience.
- **Recognition Formula:** The phrase "Then you shall know that I am the Lord," used to mark the end of a message of judgment and to emphasize God's revelation.
- **Symbolic Action:** A gesture or act performed by a prophet to convey a message or prophecy visually.
- **Covenant Curses:** The negative consequences outlined in the covenant (Leviticus 26) for disobedience to God's commands.
- **Theocentricity:** Having God as the central focus.
- **Day of the Lord:** A prophetic concept referring to a time when God will intervene in history, often associated with judgment and salvation.
- **Prophetic Badge:** The words, "Thus says the Lord God," are a prophetic badge that Ezekiel is to proclaim at the beginning of his messages.

5. FAQs on Allen, Ezekiel, Session 4, Messages of Destruction for the Land of Israel (Ezek 6:1-7:27), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Ezekiel's Messages of Destruction: An FAQ

1. How do Ezekiel Chapters 6 and 7 differ from the previous chapters in Ezekiel 1-5?

While earlier oracles focused primarily on Jerusalem and were often linked to symbolic actions, Ezekiel 6 and 7 broaden the scope to encompass the entire land of Israel/Judah. These chapters deliver messages of destruction that will befall the land as a whole, emphasizing the widespread nature of the impending judgment.

2. What specific sins are the mountains of Israel associated with in Ezekiel 6?

The mountains of Israel are singled out due to the presence of "high places" which were local sanctuaries. These were deemed problematic because they were associated with idolatrous worship, influenced by Canaanite practices, and deviated from the orthodox belief that worship should occur solely at the Jerusalem temple.

3. What are the two phases of the message in Ezekiel 6:1-10, and what does each emphasize?

The first phase (verses 1-7) focuses on the physical destruction of high places, altars, and idols throughout the land, serving to defile and render them unusable for worship. This phase ends with the recognition formula, "Then you shall know that I am the Lord," highlighting the lesson to be learned from this destruction regarding God's expectations of purity in worship. The second phase (verses 8-10) shifts to the psychological suffering of the exiles, emphasizing their remorse, guilt, and recognition of God's hand in their exile.

4. What is the significance of Ezekiel's gestures of clapping and stamping his feet in Ezekiel 6:11?

Clapping and stamping the feet are expressions of God's anger and indignation at the vile abominations of the house of Israel. Clapping signifies calling to attention in order to silence, while stamping is a hostile gesture. These actions, combined with the exclamation "Alas!" represent a mixture of grief and anger towards Israel's sins and the coming disaster.

5. How does Ezekiel 6 connect with Leviticus 26?

Ezekiel 6 echoes the covenant curses outlined in Leviticus 26, specifically verses 30-33. This connection reinforces the message of judgment by referencing a well-known priestly text that details the consequences of breaking the covenant with God. Specific parallels include the destruction of high places, the laying waste of cities, and the scattering of people among the nations.

6. What is the significance of the repeated word "end" in Ezekiel 7?

The repetition of the word "end" three times in Ezekiel 7:2-4 is significant because it emphasizes the finality of the coming destruction. It indicates that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom is the ultimate conclusion, leaving no hope for recovery. The emphasis on the end also is used to harken back to the prophet Amos, and the idea that the end has come for Israel.

7. How does Ezekiel 7 draw on earlier prophetic traditions from Amos and Zephaniah?

Ezekiel 7 builds upon earlier prophetic messages, particularly from Amos and Zephaniah. It echoes Amos's pronouncement that "the end has come" (Amos 8:2) and Zephaniah's emphasis on the "day of the Lord" being near (Zephaniah 1:7, 14). By referencing these well-known prophetic voices, Ezekiel corroborates his authority and authenticates his message.

8. What is the state of commerce, war, and morale described in the two halves of Ezekiel 7:10-27?

The first half of the oracle (verses 12-19) presents the futility of commerce and the worthlessness of silver and gold when there is nothing to buy, in addition to the war and death which comes from the invasion, siege, pestilence and famine in the city. The second half describes the people's demoralization and mourning. Similarly, the second half of the oracle repeats these themes, detailing the invasion and destruction, as well as the general consternation and seeking of answers without success, as prophets, priests, and elders are all unable to offer guidance or hope. The repetition between the two halves serves to show just how terrible things will be.