

# Cuppa Cafe

Daily devotions  
from God's Word...



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## The Grind

*Savor the taste of our previous brew*



Since everything in the Bible leads into and prepares the way for what comes after it, refresh yesterday's Brew to let the previous passage get you ready for today's verses. Though you should have already explored the passage, personally with Jesus, here is the heart of what we saw, together.

**In the previous passage**, verses 1-4, Ezekiel illustrates Jerusalem's destruction after the siege and the scattering of its citizens.

Trouble is coming for the descendants of Israel, consistent with the funeral songs, words of sorrow, and pronouncements of doom in the scroll God gave Ezekiel to share with the people in 2:10, and previously prophesied by Isaiah (7:20). The drama that symbolized the disaster on its way to Jerusalem began in Chapter 4 and continues here. First, 4:1-3 made it clear that Jerusalem would undergo siege, then 4:4-8 showed it would last a long time, and finally 4:9-13 described how hard it would be on the people. While 4:14-17 spared Ezekiel from breaking the law, the LORD reaffirmed that the rest would suffer the full consequences of their sins.

Verses 1-4 divide into two main parts: verses 1, 2 describe the LORD's primary instructions to Ezekiel – shave your head and beard, collect the hairs, and divide them into three equal piles; while verses 3, 4 tell him to retrieve a few of the hairs from the third pile and deal with them according to further instructions.

1 The absence of a linking word connects this verse to the previous passage by context: the word "**shave**" continues the theme of rebels "**wast[ing] away**" because of their iniquities mentioned in v.17 with a twist. While "**waste away**" describes the decline and deterioration from the siege and exile that the rebels have earned for their immorality, the word "**shave**" symbolizes what will happen to the population of Jerusalem during the siege.

Ezekiel plays three parts in the divine drama to convey the full message God wants him to deliver. First, he represents the LORD, leading the siege against the people to punish them for their sins. Second, he substitutes for the people, enduring the consequences for their unlawfulness. Third, he stands for the suffering servant who will innocently bear the sins of the people so a few of them will survive. So, to separate him from the rebellious descendants of Israel as His fitting representative in this scene, the LORD calls Ezekiel "**Son of man**," a fallen descendant of Adam and orders him to "**take a sharp sword and use it as a razor to shave your head and beard**." To play his part, Ezekiel, a priest must violate a scriptural mandate for priests, not to "**shave their heads or trim their beards**" (Lev. 21:5). Evicted from the Promised Land, the people will end up in a world that wants nothing to do with God – that denies His jurisdiction and makes its own rules. So, just as Ezekiel had to break God's Law to demonstrate the fate of the people in verses 9-13, so now, he must also disregard God's commands to portray the fate of the rebels destined for exile. This also points to Christ, the Suffering Servant and a Nazirite (a word play on His coming from Nazareth; cf. Num. 6:1-21 and Mt. 2:23) also forbidden to use a razor anywhere on his body (cf. Samson, Jud. 13).

The "**sword**" must be "**sharp**" in order to simulate "**a razor**" that could cut-off his head-hair and chin-whiskers. The hairs stand for the population of Jerusalem, Israel's head or chief logo, and shaving represents reducing it to baldness and bare skin – emptiness. A shaved head symbolized either mourning (Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:37) or shame

(2Sam. 10:4). Both senses apply here. As a priest would be shamed, by having his head publicly sheared before a mocking audience, so too would a holy city suffer shame for the evacuation of its citizens (paraphrased from Craigie, *Ezekiel*, p.37). The LORD then ordered Ezekiel to divide the tresses and bristles that fell from his head and face, into three equal piles. A rough guess, however, won't do, because God doesn't deal with estimates. To assure accuracy, the prophet should "[use a scale to weigh the hair](#)," into perfect thirds.

**"Son of man**, Descendant of Adam (separating him from the rebellious descendants of Israel)

[take a sharp sword](#) get a blade with edges able to slash through anything

[and](#) so

[use it as a razor](#) it will act like a barber's straight cutter

[to shave your head and beard](#). And remove the hairs from your scalp and face

[Use a scale to weigh the hair](#) Instead of estimating, with the help of a balance, divide what you cut off [into three equal parts](#) into perfect thirds.

2 Verse 2 illustrates the fate of the three groups. The first third, "[at the center of your map](#) [or, model] [of Jerusalem](#)," represents people inside the city. The LORD tells Ezekiel to "[burn it there... after acting out the siege](#)," to show their fate at the end of the siege. Burning them up illustrates their doom, wiped out by the hardships within the city walls. The second third, "[scatter](#)[ed] [across your map and chop](#)[ed] [with a sword](#) [like a military force cut to pieces, or destroyed in battle]" represents those who will die defending the city from its attackers. The final third, "[scatter](#)[ed, or thrown up into the air] [to](#) [be carried off by] [the wind](#)," represents those forced to flee in all directions for their lives, "[scatter](#)[ed, by the LORD, Himself] [with](#) [or, using] [the sword](#) [of their attackers]" at the city's fall.

[Place a third of it at the center of your map of Jerusalem](#). Take one pile of hairs and put it in the middle of your 3D-model of Jerusalem under siege

[After acting out the siege, burn it there](#). Wait till the mock blockade is over and set it on fire within the city limits (to symbolize those who will die from the hardships of the siege)

[Scatter another third across your map](#) Sprinkle the second pile of hairs from one side of the entire model to the other

[and chop it with a sword](#). Then cut the hairs to bits with the blade you used to shave your head and beard (to symbolize those who will die fighting trying to escape the city from its attackers)

[Scatter the last third to the wind](#), Toss the last pile of hairs up in the air (so the wind can spread them like chaff)

[for I will scatter my people with the sword](#) because I, the Eternal One will chase and disperse my so-called people, or rebels who are trying to get away from their attackers

3 The LORD issues further instructions concerning the final third. Their story does not end with them on the run. The LORD demands that Ezekiel "[keep just a bit of the hair](#)," that he picks up from the ground those strands of hair that haven't blown away, yet, and insert, or "[tie](#) [them] [up](#)" into the pouch of his robe, already pulled up from his ankles and tucked into his belt to prepare him for action (4:7). However, their fate is still not a settled matter.

[Keep just a bit of the hair](#) Save a few strands from the third pile

[and tie it up in your robe](#) then tuck them into the tunic pouch between your ankles and your waist

4 After he grabs a small batch of those fleeing from the overthrown city, Ezekiel must "[take some of these hairs out](#) [of his robe] [and throw them into the fire](#)." In other words, some of those, who survived the blockade and escaped the fate of those who died during the siege will nevertheless suffer the same fate and

perish with them. The LORD wants us to know that exile does not guarantee survival. Even there some will die from the hardships of life separated from God and the consequences of their immorality. Unfortunately, the NLT misses the point of the *second* line by substituting “**this remnant**,” for the original word, “**there**.” Instead of those destroyed by fire, the “**remnant**” refers to the ones permanently preserved in Ezekiel’s tunic – the ultimate survivors of exile, or separation from God.

To avoid any confusion, most Bibles translate the second line, “**From there a fire will spread to all the house** [or, rebellious descendants] **of Israel**,” so we will understand that, a fire will spread from those destroyed by fire in the first line, that will ultimately wipe out the whole house of Israel evicted from the land. In other words: as some of the exiles from fallen Jerusalem will meet the same end as those who died from the siege, so also eventually national Israel will share the same fate as the exiles, symbolically removed from Ezekiel’s robe and burned with fire. This is just a more aggressive way of saying that those who go into exile will “**waste away under their punishment**” (4:17), growing progressively weaker and gaunt as they suffer the natural outcome of their immorality. Throughout the NT age, natural Jews have an opportunity to believe in the LORD Jesus Christ and be saved, but Messiah’s remnant of Jews and Gentiles, the church has replaced national Israel as the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

**Then** After that

**take some of these hairs out** remove some of the strands you originally tucked into your tunic pouch

**and throw them into the fire, burning them up.** As well as fling them into the fire burning the first pile so they burn, too (reduced to ashes, suffering the same fate as the first pile for their sins)

**A fire will then spread from there** That same fire will grow

**and destroy all** [the descendants] **of Israel.** until it annihilates all the rebels (every national Israelite is still under the same sentence of death as the people under siege to this very day)



## The Brew

*Let us pour you a fresh cup, ground verse-by-verse from today’s passage*

**In today’s passage**, verses 5-13, the LORD criticizes the rebels in verses 5-6 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, comments on Ezekiel’s actions from 4:1-3 in verses 7-8, his actions from 4:4-8 in verses 9-10, and his actions from 4:9-13 in verses 11-12 – all in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, and finally climaxes the passage in v.13 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural. So, please open your Bibles to Ezekiel Chapter 5, and let me pour you a hot CuppaJesus from today’s brew, starting with v.5.



### WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

Here are the main items in the text that will lead you to its understanding.

	<b>Verse 5-6</b>	<b>Verse 7-8</b>	<b>Verse 9-10</b>	<b>Verse 11-12</b>	<b>Verse 13</b>
<b>Links</b>	But, and 3x, even more than	Therefore 2x, than, and 2x, even, now, while,	Because of, like, never before, or, ever again, and 2x	As surely as, because, and 3x	Then, and 2x, when
<b>Persons</b>	The Sovereign LORD, my, I, she 2x, her 2x (rebs)	The Sovereign LORD 2x, my, I 4x, myself, you people, you 4x (Rebs), your 2x, your neighbors, all the nations	Your, you 2x, (Rebs) anyone, I (the LORD), the few who survive	I 4x, the Sovereign LORD, my 2x, you 3x, your your people, them 2x (Rebs)	My 2x, I 2x (the LORD), them 2x (Rebs)

<b>Places</b>	To Jerusalem, at...the nations, the surrounding nations	Up, to, the nations, around, publicly	To (the winds)	At (all), in (the city), from (disease and famine), outside (the city walls), to (the winds)	At (last), against (them), to (them)
<b>Things</b>	This 2x, what, an illustration of what, the center of, regulations, the regulations, decrees 2x	This, what, enemy, decrees, regulations, the standards of	Detestable idols, parents, their own children, children, their parents, the winds	No pity, all, Temple, vile images, detestable sins, a third of (2x), a third, the city, disease, famine, the enemy, the city walls, the winds, sword	Last, anger, fury, all Israel, that, jealous anger
<b>Words</b>	Is, will happen, placed, has rebelled against, has been wicked, has refused to obey, gave to follow	Am, will punish, watch, says, have behaved worse, have refused to obey, have not lived	Will punish, have punished, will	Live, says, will cut off completely, will show, have defiled with	Will be spent, will be satisfied, has subsided, will know, have spoken

Pay careful attention to every item as you follow today's devotional in your study Bible. We have already grouped them by colors in "Today's Text," so you can follow the writer's flow of thought for yourself. Capture and grasp what he is trying to tell you with matching color pencils to draw lines connecting items to others in the same color-family, and a black pencil to cross-link items from different color-families that still have something to do with one another. Use circles, boxes, triangles, etc. to identify topics and themes (triangles, for instance, might represent the Trinity). Also mark with asterisks, etc., the ones you need to look up later for more information or greater details.

## TODAY'S TEXT

### NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

5 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: This is an illustration of what will happen to Jerusalem. I placed her at the center of the nations,

6 but she has rebelled against my regulations and decrees and has been even more wicked than the surrounding nations. She has refused to obey the regulations and decrees I gave her to follow.

7 "Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: You people have behaved worse than your neighbors and have refused to obey my decrees and regulations. You have not even lived up to the standards of the nations around you.

8 Therefore, I myself, the Sovereign LORD, am now your enemy. I will punish you publicly while all the nations watch.

9 Because of your detestable idols, I will punish you like I have never punished anyone before or ever will again.

10 Parents will eat their own children, and children will eat their parents. I will punish you and scatter to the winds the few who survive.

11 "As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I will cut you off completely. I will show you no pity at all because you have defiled my Temple with your vile images and detestable sins.

12 A third of your people will die in the city from disease and famine. A third of them will be slaughtered by the enemy outside the city walls. And I will scatter a third to the winds, chasing them with my sword.

13 **Then** at last my anger will be spent, **and** I will be satisfied. **And when** my fury against them has subsided, **all Israel will know that** I, the LORD, have spoken to them in my jealous anger.

#### THE EXPANDED BIBLE

<sup>5</sup> "This is what the Lord GOD says: This is Jerusalem. I have put her at the center of the nations with countries all around her.

<sup>6</sup> **But** she has refused to obey [rebelled against] my laws [judgments] **and** has been **more** evil [wicked] **than** the nations. She has refused to obey [<sup>l</sup>walk in] my rules [statutes; ordinances; requirements], **even more than** nations [lands] around her. The people of Jerusalem have rejected my laws [judgments] **and** have not lived by [<sup>l</sup>walked in] my rules [statutes; ordinances; requirements].

<sup>7</sup> "**So** this is what the Lord GOD says: You have caused **more** trouble [been more insubordinate/arrogant] **than** the nations around you. You have not followed my rules [statutes; ordinances; requirements] or obeyed my laws [judgments]. You have not **even** obeyed the laws [judgments] of the nations around you.

<sup>8</sup> "**So** this is what the Lord GOD says: [<sup>l</sup>Look; <sup>†</sup>Behold] I myself am against you, **and** I will punish you [<sup>l</sup>execute judgments in your midst] **as** the nations watch [in the sight of the nations].

<sup>9</sup> I will do things among [to] you that I have not done before **and** that I will never do anything like again, **because** you do the things I hate [of your detestable practices/or idols].

<sup>10</sup> **So** parents [fathers] among you will eat their children [sons], **and** children [sons] will eat their parents [fathers; <sup>c</sup>because of horrific starvation during the siege; Deut. 28:53–57; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 4:10]. I will punish you [execute judgments] **and** will scatter to the winds all who are left alive [the survivors].

<sup>11</sup> **So** the Lord GOD says: You have made my Temple unclean [defiled my sanctuary] with all your evil idols [abominations] **and** the hateful things you do [your detestable practices/or idols]. **Because of this**, as surely **as** I live, I will cut you off [or shave you; <sup>c</sup>a humiliation]. I will have [<sup>l</sup>My eye will show] no pity, **and** I will show no mercy.

<sup>12</sup> A third of you will die by disease [plague; pestilence] **or** be destroyed [overcome; consumed] by hunger [famine] inside your walls. A third will fall dead by the sword outside your walls [all around]. **And** a third I will scatter in every direction **as** I chase them with a sword [<sup>l</sup>drawn/unsheathed sword].

<sup>13</sup> **Then** my anger will come to an end [be finished]. I will use it up against them [...and my wrath will cease], **and then** I will be satisfied [calmed; appeased]. **Then** they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken. **After** I have carried out my anger [wrath] against them, they will know how strongly I felt [my zeal/jealousy].

#### THE SCRIPTURES 1998

5 "Thus said the Master יהוה, 'This is Yerushalayim which I have set in the midst of the gentiles, with the other lands all around her.

6 'But she rebelled against My rightrulings, doing wrong, more than the gentiles, and My laws more than the lands all around her. For they have rejected My right-rulings, and they have not walked in My laws.'

7 "Therefore thus said the Master יהוה, 'Because you have rebelled more than the gentiles all around you, and have not walked in My laws, nor done My right-rulings, nor even done according to the right-rulings of the gentiles all around you,'"

8 therefore thus said the Master יהוה, 'Look I Myself am against you and shall execute judgments in your midst before the eyes of the gentiles.

9 'And I shall do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I never do again, because of all your abominations.

10 'Therefore fathers are going to eat their sons in your midst, and sons eat their fathers. And I shall execute judgments among you and scatter all your remnant to all the winds.

11 'Therefore, as I live,' declares the Master יהוה, 'because you have defiled My set-apart place with all your disgusting matters and with all your abominations, therefore I also withdraw. And My eye shall not pardon, nor shall I spare.

12 'One-third of you shall die of pestilence, and be consumed with scarcity of food in your midst. And one-third shall fall by the sword all around you. And I shall scatter another third to all the winds, and draw out a sword after them.

13 'And My displeasure shall be completed. And I shall bring My wrath to[...]"

#### **THE NET BIBLE**

5 "This is what the sovereign LORD says: This is Jerusalem; I placed her in the center of the nations with countries all around her.

6 Then she defied my regulations and my statutes, becoming more wicked than the nations and the countries around her. Indeed, they have rejected my regulations, and they do not follow my statutes.

7 "Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: Because you are more arrogant<sup>9</sup> than the nations around you, you have not followed my statutes and have not carried out my regulations. You have not even carried out the regulations of the nations around you!

8 "Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: I—even I—am against you, and I will execute judgment among you while the nations watch.

9 I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again because of all your abominable practices.

10 Therefore fathers will eat their sons within you, Jerusalem, and sons will eat their fathers. I will execute judgments on you, and I will scatter any survivors to the winds.

11 "Therefore, as surely as I live, says the sovereign LORD, because you defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable idols and with all your abominable practices, I will withdraw; my eye will not pity you, nor will I spare you.

12 A third of your people will die of plague or be overcome by the famine within you.<sup>20</sup> A third of your people will fall by the sword surrounding you, and a third I will scatter to the winds. I will unleash a sword behind them.

13 Then my anger will be fully vented; I will exhaust my rage on them, and I will be appeased. Then they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken in my jealousy when I have fully vented my rage against them.

#### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL**

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Today's passage is part of a larger explanation of Ezekiel's actions that stretches from 5:5 to 6:14. The LORD formats this entire section as a "covenant lawsuit," a special class of scripture where the LORD formally accuses His people of breaking the covenant and finds them guilty (cf. Deut. 32; Isa. 1; Hos. 4; Mic. 6, et al.).

The LORD based His legal case on the Everlasting Covenant that closely resembled the Hittite Suzerainty Treaty. In the ancient near east, when a king conquered another country, he would establish a treaty with it, cutting or making a covenant with his new vassals with a sacrifice. In this covenant, the sovereign king established his claim over the people with a historical prologue, explaining his rightful rule, and stating stipulations that would regulate their conduct toward him – including penalties for disobedience, and rewards for obedience. Finally, the king called witnesses to testify, that the covenant had been ratified by, both Him and the people.

When Moses renewed the covenant God made with their parents, he delivered sermons in Deuteronomy to the next generation of Israel that follows this same covenant-treaty pattern. In Deut. 1-4 he describes the history of

God's gracious dealings with Israel. Then in chapters 5-26 he restated both, the covenant law of God, and the stipulations that Israel must keep as God's covenant people. Next, he spelled out in Deut. 27-28 the blessings God would bestow on Israel if it kept the covenant, as well as the curses that would fall on the unfaithful nation should they break it. After explaining that Israel would fail, he also guaranteed that God would regenerate rather than restore Israel in the end (Deut. 29-30). Finally, he called heaven and earth to witness this covenant in 30:19, and described the place of the covenant in Israel's future in Deut. 31-34, anointing Joshua as his successor and mediator. **Ezek 16**

In the context of the exile, this lawsuit supplies grounds for evicting the rebels from the Promised Land and banishing them from it. Examining His legal brief, we can see the LORD laid out an airtight case in six parts:

ELEMENTS	PURPOSE	EXCERPT	REF.
<b>Preamble</b>	To introduce the overlord/judge who accuses and presides over the court	<b>The Sovereign LORD</b>	5:5a
<b>Historical Prologue</b>	To provide a summary of past blessings from the Ruler to the accused	<b>I placed her at the center of the nations</b>	5:5b
<b>Indictments</b>	To spell out the charges against the accused unfaithful nation	<b>She has rebelled</b>	5:6, 7
<b>Guilty Verdict</b>	To show the outcome of the trial	<b>Therefore, I will punish you publicly</b>	5:8, 9
<b>Sentence</b>	To show that the accused has earned the curses for covenant disloyalty forecast in Deut. 28; Lev. 26	<b>Parents will eat their own children, and children will eat their parents</b>	5:10-17
<b>Witnesses</b>	Mountains (as usual) and the hills, the ravines and valleys – condemned here for providing the rebels with places to carry on an idolatrous fertility cult	<b>Proclaim this message from the Sovereign LORD against the mountains of Israel</b>	6:1-14

Pay attention to the person and number in each section. The third person indicates that the LORD talks like a narrator about the accused, to the witnesses – making His case, while the second person signals He has become the prosecutor and is speaking directly to the rebels, confronting them about their crimes to build His case. The third person shows God as the Sovereign in control of the situation, detached from the rebels who have broken His covenant and trampled on His relationship with them. The second person shows Him interacting with the rebels, no longer as their friend, but as an adversary who accuses them of criminal behavior. Communication now flows one way only, from Him to them; they no longer have His ear or the privilege to speak. He does not permit them to defend themselves because they have no defense. The infallible Sovereign merely pours out His indignation on them as the trial builds to a climax.

5 The Eternal One identifies Himself in the Preamble as both the Sovereign of the covenant with Israel and the plaintiff who has filed the lawsuit. The words, "**This is what the Sovereign LORD says,**" amounts to the divine signature on a legal brief. But before He details the charges against Israel in verses 7-12, the LORD sums up the case against it in verses 5 and 6. While the people probably hoped Ezekiel had acted out the downfall of Babylon as a sign of hope that God would end the Chaldean threat so He could bring the exiles home, Ezekiel announces to their dismay: "**This is an illustration of what will happen to Jerusalem.**" While Ezekiel obviously points to the drama he had just acted out, he also even more dramatically refers to his dilapidated self. Standing there bald and shaven, he is a living object lesson of Jerusalem after the siege, stripped, shamed, and as good as dead. He reminds us of Jonah, bleached white by the gastric juices of the big fish that swallowed him,

undermining the Ninevites faith in their fish-god, Dagon, by presenting himself as living proof that God was greater than Dagon, having forced the big fish to obey Him and spit Jonah up.

But what follows supplies more than an explanation of Ezekiel's symbolic actions. While the actions represented the divine judgment about to fall on Jerusalem, Ezekiel's words set out God's reasons for the imminent demolition of the city and ultimately wiping out national Israel. As a covenant blessing, the Sovereign LORD personally "placed her [that is, Jerusalem] at the center of the nations." This corresponds to the Historical Prologue above. In a way, this refers to the location of Jerusalem on the brick map, surrounded by the Babylonian army. More significantly, however, it points to the city's place as the centerpiece of God's favor in the world, based on exclusive reception of the Sovereign's covenant love. With this high privilege came certain covenant responsibilities. Like a lamp set on a stand to illuminate a whole house, God placed Jerusalem on Zion's hill for all the world to see His light shining through her and glorify Him. Chosen as the agent of salvation to the world, God gave her center stage to demonstrate His blessing to the whole world and attract converts to Him from all of earth's families (Gen. 12:1-3).

**"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Let me quote the Eternal LORD of the covenant, saying:**

**This is an illustration of what will happen to Jerusalem. Ezekiel has acted out what is about to catch up with the city on the hill**

**I placed her at the center of the nations, I, the Eternal One gave her the most prominent position in the world.**

6 The linking word, "but," introduces what follows as the opposite of God's expectations and commences the indictments of the lawsuit against the rebels. Instead of using her preeminence to reveal God's majesty and splendor, Jerusalem became the epitome of spiritual defiance. Not only did she "rebel against [the Sovereign's] regulations and decrees," but she became "even more wicked than the surrounding nations." It's one thing to sin unintentionally, and quite another to intentionally resist God's will. The word translated "rebelled" means to defy, or as Ezekiel further clarifies its truest sense in the next line, "refuse to obey." In the Book of the Covenant, another name for Exodus chapters 21-23, the LORD handed down authoritative applications of His Law to Israel, as guides for them to follow. That the rebels openly resisted these examples, or "regulations," as well as His rules, or "decrees," amounted to outright rejection of the covenant Sovereign. Then, besides breaking every stipulation God demanded from them to live in covenant with Him, Jerusalem went so far as to become "even more wicked than the surrounding nations." Instead of illuminating those dark countries with the light God gave them, Jerusalem turned off the light and became more immoral than any of them.

Jesus taught, "when someone is given much, much will be required in return; and when someone is entrusted with much, even more will be required" (Lk. 12:48). Jerusalem had a lot to thank God for – given the place of highest honor in the world. And, while she still needed to trust Messiah for her salvation, Jerusalem enjoyed other advantages, including being "entrusted with the whole revelation of God" (Rom. 3:2). By failing to light up the world with God's light, that He expected her to care for and protect, God's holy people became His worst offenders – just as Paul, the Pharisee of Pharisees misused his privileges and became the chief sinner in the world (1Tim. 1:15). Unfamiliar with God and ignorant of His Law, the surrounding nations didn't know they were breaking it; while Israel knew God and His Law, yet deliberately disregarded and dismissed it. No wonder God brought the complete calamity on His former people that Ezekiel so effectively dramatized for them.

**but however, or instead of revealing the majesty and splendor exclusively given to her**

**she has rebelled against my regulations and decrees Jerusalem has resisted my covenant authority and her marriage vows prescribed in my legal examples and rules**

**and plus, or what's more on top of that**

**has been even more wicked than the surrounding nations. Has grown more immoral than the unenlightened pagans who live all around her (they finally got their wish and became like the nations around them)**

**She has refused to obey the regulations and decrees** Jerusalem has turned to the dark side and deliberately rejected the legal examples and rules

**I gave her to follow.** I, the Eternal One, her Husband and covenant LORD gave her to live by

7 The linking word, **"therefore,"** introduces the LORD's assessment of the rebels' attempts to openly resist His covenant authority and continues the indictments that began in v.6.. As their Sovereign LORD, He has blessed them and has the right to criticize them for their failure to live up to His expectations in obedience, or proper response to His kindness. In His infallible eyes, **"You people,"** not "my people," anymore, **"have behaved worse than your** [pagan] **neighbors."** The words **"worse than,"** compare them unfavorably with their ungodly neighbors, not because you **"have refused to obey my decrees and regulations,"** but because **"You have not even lived up to the standards of the nations around you."** Worse than failing to live up to God's expectations, expressed by His decrees and regulations, the Israelites haven't even lived up to the substandard code of behavior set by pagans. In other words, they have done things even immoral people won't do. This reminds me of the time Paul scolded the Corinthians: **"I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you—something that even pagans don't do"** (1Cor. 5:1). In that case, a man in the church there was living in sin with his stepmother. Here, some of the Israelites were practicing idolatry. None of Israel's neighbors tolerated worshiping other deities than the national god. By worshiping idols in God's place, the Israelites did something that wouldn't even enter the mind of a pagan.

**"Therefore,** Because you have grown more immoral than your pagan neighbors

**this is what the Sovereign LORD says:** let me quote the Eternal One, your Husband and covenant LORD, saying:

**You people have behaved worse than your neighbors** You (no longer, my) people, have conducted yourselves on a lower level than the unenlightened foreigners all around you

**and have refused to obey my decrees and regulations.** Plus, turned to the dark side and deliberately rejected my rules and legal examples

**You have not even lived up to the standards of the nations around you.** You (not, my) people, haven't even fulfilled the expectations of the ungodly pagan countries that surround you

8 When the LORD takes you to court there isn't even a chance of changing His mind or proving your innocence. You're as good as convicted. So now, on the heels of the indictments in verses 6, and 7, and in view of God's negative evaluation of them in v.7, the same covenant LORD who swore to defend them against their enemies has now become their enemy – another way of saying they have lost the Judge's favor. And, as Ezekiel dramatized the siege of Jerusalem for everyone to see in 4:1-3, so now the LORD announces His verdict and pronounces them guilty: **"I will punish you publicly while all the nations watch."** Instead of private discipline to spare them from public shame and humiliation, the LORD will inflict the curses for disobeying the covenant on Jerusalem, in plain sight of the whole world. Everyone will witness her disgrace. As they have not hidden their rejection of God, so, neither will God cover up disowning them.

**Therefore,** So, or as a result, or consequently, or because you do things even pagans won't do,

**I myself, the Sovereign LORD,** I, the Eternal One personally

**am now your enemy.** Have become your foe

**I will punish you publicly while all the nations watch.** I will make you pay for that, in full view of your neighbors

9 The LORD now explains His verdict and spells out what He is punishing them for: **"Because of your detestable idols, I will punish you."** Consistent with what Jesus says in Luke 12:48, **"Someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required,"** the LORD will punish those who were entrusted with His Law and absolutely knew better

than to worship anything in His place, **"like I have never punished anyone before or ever will again."** The writer of Hebrews explained the LORD's cryptic words here, when he warned the Hebrews: **"Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins. There is only the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies. For anyone who refused to obey the Law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Just think how much worse the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God, and have treated the blood of the covenant, which made us holy, as if it were common and unholy, and have insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit who brings God's mercy to us. For we know the one who said, "I will take revenge. I will pay them back." He also said, "The LORD will judge his own people." It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God"** (Heb. 10:26-31). Rejecting god's covenant offer of salvation left the rebels unprotected from His wrath against sin. All the curses for breaking the covenant fell on them like a ton of bricks. Exposed to His full fury they suffered the undiluted penalty for sin – the worst ever inflicted in earth's history.

**Because of your detestable idols, Your false-god lovers are the reason**

**I will punish you like I have never punished anyone before or ever will again. I will make you pay for your adultery in a way I have never collected on a debt in the past or ever will in the future**

10 Having reached His verdict, the LORD now passes sentence on the rebels. Without cushioning the blow, God drops the hammer – announcing the gruesome details of the punishment He promised in v.9. As Ezekiel acted out the shortage of water and food in verses 4-8, rationed drop by drop and to the ounce though insufficient to keep an adult alive, so the starving rebels will turn to cannibalism, the worst form of inhumanity the world has ever known. The LORD passes judgment on them in a way that leaves no doubt that He has sentenced the rebels to death: **"Parents will eat their own children, and children will eat their parents."** Jeremiah saw the LORD's words come true, wondering at the horror of what he personally witnessed: **"O LORD, think about this! Should you treat your own people this way? Should mothers eat their own children, those they once bounced on their knees"** (Lam. 2:20)? Though he knew they deserved it, the outpouring of God's fully concentrated wrath deeply disturbed Jeremiah. Even a prophet could not imagine the full penalty for sin. Cannibals confined to the city by the siege will eventually run out of people to eat. But not everyone will die within the city walls from starvation. So, the LORD says, **"I will punish you and scatter to the winds the few who survive [the siege]."** Ezekiel shaved his head and face to dramatize the shame and humiliation of Jerusalem. He then divided the shavings into three equal piles. One third represented those who would die inside the city from the siege. Another third stood for those who died defending themselves outside the city as they tried to escape the Babylonian blockade. And the final third symbolized those who survived the famine and the slaughter, and kept on running in all directions to get away. But instead of the invaders, the LORD will disperse the survivors. The writer of Hebrews explained that the LORD Himself takes revenge. He is the one who pays back those who break the covenant for their disrespect to Him and the Suffering Servant who alone can save them (Heb. 10:28-31).

**Parents will eat their own children, Mothers and fathers will cannibalize their corrupted offspring**

**and children will eat their parents. Plus the offspring will cannibalize their corrupted moms and dads**

**I will punish you I, the Eternal One will make you pay for your adultery**

**and scatter to the winds the few who survive. As well as blow those still alive after the siege like chaff in all directions**

11 The sentence continues with a stunning contrast: **"As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I will cut you off completely."** The linking words **"as surely as,"** sets up the contrast, at the same time it strongly affirms the certainty of what the LORD is about to say. Based on the undeniable truth that He is the living God, the rebels will be "cut off," as good as dead. The expression "cut off," basically means, "cut off at the root and completely destroyed" as in permanently interrupting a family bloodline, bringing it to an end. In a lesser sense it describes cutting out or removing, like taking out a tumor, or culling a steer from a herd. At its weakest, it means

to exclude, as in excommunicating someone from the sacraments or services of a church. The obvious contrast with the Eternal One, underscored by the word “completely” emphasizes the idea of extermination, consistent with the LORD’s guarantee to destroy all of Israel’s rebellious descendants in the same fire that burned up those who died from the siege (Ezek. 5:4). Only the remnant that puts its faith in the Suffering Servant and returns to the Mighty God (Isa. 10:21) may escape this sentence of death.

To underscore that “cut off completely” means “absolutely exterminate” the LORD adds the merciless expression, “**I will show you no pity at all**”. To justify annihilating the rebels, the LORD identifies the crime they have committed, a crime so heinous it indisputably deserves such a harsh sentence. If there is anything worse than death to an Israelite, it’s ending his family’s participation in the promises. So, for example, God purged Achan’s greedy ways from Israel by terminating the thief’s entire family for passing on unwanted character traits to its children (Josh. 7:24-26). Returning to His promise in v.9 to punish the rebels for idolatry, the LORD explains why He will deal so severely with the rebels: “**because you have defiled my Temple with your vile images and detestable sins.**” Besides turning to idols instead of the true God, the rebels had the audacity to set up images of their idols in the sacred precincts of the holy sanctuary. And, because they did not respect God enough to truly repent, their sins remained unforgiven despite sacrifices made for them. The blood of their offerings were just stains on the veil separating the Holy and Most Holy Places, that needed cleansing (cf. Dan. 8:13, 14).

**As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, Based on the fact I, the Eternal covenant LORD will live forever**

**I will cut you off completely.** I, who will definitely outlive everyone, will surely wipe out you rebels

**I will show you no pity at all** I, your covenant LORD will not extend one shred of mercy to you rebels when I dissolve our partnership and end our marriage

**because you have defiled my Temple with your vile images** since you rebels have polluted my sacred earthly headquarters with likenesses of your false-god lovers

**and detestable sins.** As well as unforgiven behavior I cannot stand

12 The LORD now explains the symbolic actions in verse 2. The first third of Ezekiel’s shaven hair, represented Ezekiel’s fellow Israelites who “**will die in the city from** [the] **disease and famine** [caused by the siege].” The second third represented those who “**will be slaughtered by the enemy** [as they try to escape the hardships inside the city] **outside the city walls.**” The final third represented those who will manage to get through the enemy lines, running in all directions, “**scattered to the winds,**” with Babylonian soldiers in hot pursuit. Even then, the angry LORD who led the siege will still be after them like a bloodthirsty warrior, “**chasing them with my sword.**” Every one of the rebels deserved to die for their sins and only their death will satisfy God’s wrath.

**A third of your people will die in the city from disease and famine.** The third burned within the city represented those who died from the hardships of the siege

**A third of them will be slaughtered by the enemy outside the city walls.** The third cut down outside the city represented those killed by the Babylonians blocking their path of escape

**And I will scatter a third to the winds, chasing them with my sword.** Plus, the final third blown like chaff in all directions represented those pursued by God seeking their death

13 Only “**then,**” after He has destroyed the city, inflicting on its population the death penalty for their deliberate sins, will the LORD’s “**anger be spent,**” or, used up and exhausted. At the same time, with no more wrath to vent, the LORD “**will be satisfied,**” repaid for the debt the rebels owed and could never settle on their own – a bill they could have settled by faith, but tragically refused to let the Suffering Servant pay for them. “**At last,**” at that catastrophic point, “**when my fury against them has subsided,**” the LORD says “**all Israel** [without exception] **will know that I, the LORD, have spoken to them in my jealous anger**”, as the husband they have cheated on for the last time. Left without any excuse, they will finally recognize that I filed this lawsuit to

get a divorce, because they dishonored our marriage vows by breaking the covenant. And, because their idols represent lovers who don't really exist, every ounce of my wrath will fall upon them.

**Then at last my anger will be spent,** Eventually, my wrath will be exhausted, or completely used up **and I will be satisfied.** So that, I, your exasperated partner/jilted husband will finally be appeased

**And when my fury against them has subsided,** At that time, after my wrath has let up

**all** [the rebellious descendants of Jacob, turned] **Israel will know that I, the LORD,** Every generation descended from Israel will recognize that, I, the Eternal One, their ex-partner/jilted husband

**have spoken to them in my jealous anger.** Said these things as the injured party in our marriage suing my adulterous wife for divorce.



## A Tastier CuppaJ

*Let Jesus pour you a fuller bodied, more flavorful CuppaJ from today's brew*

Well, we hope you enjoyed this morning's CuppaJ for the Day, brewed verse-by-verse to bring out the full-flavor of the text. Now it's your turn to explore the passage for yourself—to make this study good to the last drop. Remember, you haven't really studied the Bible, God's *Written Word*—until it connects you with Jesus, God's *Living Word*. Then Jesus, the true Teacher can customize the text, so every word comes across written just for you. This morning's CuppaJ is just a taste of what's in the text—the starting point for a deeper learning experience with Jesus. So, go ahead; spend time alone with Him to go over this passage together. Let Jesus pour a tastier CuppaJ from the same brew, for you, today. Use the following form to jot down whatever Jesus shares with you.



## Bible Study

1. Open your Bible to today's passage and **review** today's brew.
2. **Savor** the passage, one verse at a time, **listening** for God's still small voice.
3. **Follow** the trail you marked in each verse, **pause** to look up the terms you flagged for further consideration, and **write** whatever the Spirit brings to mind.

v.5 \_\_\_\_\_

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v.6 \_\_\_\_\_

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