

Ezekiel 6:1-7 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

Michelangelo's Ezekiel on the Sistine Chapel

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[Ezekiel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

[Another Ezekiel Chart](#)

CHRONOLOGY OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES

PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT <i>The LORD is not there</i>			PROPHECY OF RESTORATION The LORD is There	
FATE OF JUDAH Before the Siege		FOES OF JUDAH During the Siege	FUTURE OF JUDAH After the Siege	
593-588 BC		587-586	586-571	
7 YEARS OF PROPHECYING HORROR & NO HOPE			15 YEARS OF PROPHECYING HOPE	
Ezekiel 1:1-3:27 Ezekiel Sees the Glory & Receives the Call	Ezekiel 4:1-24:27 Judgments Against Judah	Ezekiel 25:1-32:32 Judgments Against the Gloating Nations	Ezekiel 33:1-39:29 Restoration of Israel to the LORD	Ezekiel 40:1-48:35 Visions of the Temple Jehovah Shammah

Hannah's Bible Outlines.

The condemnation of Judah and Jerusalem (4:1-24:27)

- A. The prediction of Jerusalem's overthrow (Ezekiel 4:1-7:27)
 1. The symbolic actions against Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4:1-5:17)
 - a. The symbols presented (Ezekiel 4:1-5:4)
 1. The symbol of the brick (Ezekiel 4:1-3)
 2. The symbol of the prophet's position (Ezekiel 4:4-8)
 3. The symbol of famine (Ezekiel 4:9-17)
 4. The symbol of shaved head and divided hair (Ezekiel 5:1-4)
 - b. The symbols explained (Ezekiel 5:5-17)
 1. The cause of judgment (Ezekiel 5:5-7)
 2. The surety of judgment (Ezekiel 5:8-11)
 3. The description of judgment (Ezekiel 5:12-17)
 2. The judgments upon the mountains (Ezekiel 6:1-14)
 - a. The fate of the high places (Ezekiel 6:1-7)
 - b. The sparing of a remnant (Ezekiel 6:8-10)
 - c. The desolation of the land (Ezekiel 6:11-14)
 3. The dirge over Judah's doom (Ezekiel 7:1-27)

- a. The wrath of the Lord (Ezekiel 7:1-4)
 - b. The imminence of the judgment (Ezekiel 7:5-9)
 - c. The inescapability of the judgment (Ezekiel 7:10-13)
 - d. The horrors of the judgment (Ezekiel 7:14-27)
- B. The transgression and fall of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8:1-11:25)
- 1. The vision of abominations in the temple (Ezekiel 8:1-18)
 - a. The introduction (Ezekiel 8:1-4)
 - b. The image of jealousy (Ezekiel 8:5-6)
 - c. The idolatry of the elders (Ezekiel 8:7-13)
 - d. The worship of Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14-15)
 - e. The worship of the sun (Ezekiel 8:16-17)
 - f. The wrath of the Lord (Ezekiel 8:18)
 - 2. The vision of the slain by divine avengers (Ezekiel 9:1-11)
 - a. The summons of the executioners (Ezekiel 9:1-2)
 - b. The command to mark and destroy (Ezekiel 9:3-7)
 - c. The consternation of the prophet (Ezekiel 9:8-10)
 - d. The completion of the task (Ezekiel 9:11)
 - 3. The vision of the coals of fire (Ezekiel 10:1-22)
 - a. The instruction to the man clothed in linen (Ezekiel 10:1-2)
 - b. The movement of God's glory to the threshold (Ezekiel 10:3-5)
 - c. The action of the cherub (Ezekiel 10:6-8)
 - d. The description of the cherubim (Ezekiel 10:9-17)
 - e. The movement of God's glory to the east gate (Ezekiel 10:18-19)
 - f. The identification of the cherubim (Ezekiel 10:20-22)
 - 4. The vision of the destruction and restoration of the city (Ezekiel 11:1-25)
 - a. The condemnation of the leaders (Ezekiel 11:1-12)
 - 1. Ezekiel's departure to the leaders (Ezekiel 11:1)
 - 2. Ezekiel's instruction to prophesy (Ezekiel 11:2-3)
 - 3. Ezekiel's warning of judgment (Ezekiel 11:4-12)
 - b. The consternation of the prophet (Ezekiel 11:13)
 - c. The restoration of the nation (Ezekiel 11:14-21)
 - d. The departure of God's glory (Ezekiel 11:22-23)
 - e. The transportation of the prophet (Ezekiel 11:24-25)
- C. The cause of Judah's destruction (Ezekiel 12:1-19:14)

Ezekiel 6:1 And the **word** of the **LORD** came to me **saying**, (**NASB: Lockman**)

GWT: The LORD spoke his word to me. He said,

NKJV: Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

WBC: I received the following communication from Yahweh:

Young's Literal: And there is a word of Jehovah unto me, saying:

AND THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ME SAYING:

The word of the LORD - This phrase occurs 49x in Ezekiel ([click here](#))

When is this occurring? While one cannot state with absolute certainty it is most likely following the 430 days on his sides in chapter 4, which would place this prophecy somewhere around 592BC or still about 6+ years prior to the fall of Jerusalem.

Where? In exile in Babylon

To Whom? the exiles are "not be willing to listen to" to Ezekiel's message "since they are not willing to listen to" God because "the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate" (3:7)

Charles Ryrie ([The Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Translation: 1995. Moody Publishers](#)) entitles this section in summary fashion as:

Ezekiel 6	The CAUSE of coming judgment	IDOLATRY
Ezekiel 7	The CHARACTER of coming judgment	SEVERE
Ezekiel 4 & 5	Prophecies Through Symbols	
Ezekiel 6 & 7	Prophecies Through Sermons	
Ezekiel 8 - 11	Prophecies Through Visions	

You may be wondering "Why is Ezekiel speaking all of these prophecies to the exiles"?

After all, they have already suffered some of the judgment Ezekiel is predicting for those who remained in Jerusalem. Furthermore, God had informed the prophet that

"the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate." ([Ezek 3:7](#))

The answer at least in part is that the purpose of Ezekiel's ministry is to keep before the generation born in exile the national sins which had brought Israel so low and to sustain the faith of the exiles by predictions of national restoration and the execution of justice upon their Gentile oppressors, and finally to remind them of the future national glory for Israel under the Davidic monarchy.

POSB - Introduction: false worship is a terrible sin, a horrible affront to God. Yet most people are guilty of being false worshippers. Every human being worships some person or thing. We either worship the Lord or we worship self, another person, some possession, or perhaps our profession or ambition. Whatever we put first in our lives—whatever consumes our thoughts, energy, or the passion of our heart—is the god of our life. Whatever we pay the most attention to is what rules our life. To God, an idol is any person or thing that we put first in our life, and a false worshipper is any person who puts anything or anyone before Him. God is to have first place. We are to give ourselves to Him first and then to one another and the affairs of this world.

The message of the present Scripture focuses upon false worshippers. The day is coming when God's hand of judgment will fall upon all the idolaters on earth, upon all false worshippers who have put the things of this world, whether persons or possessions, before Him.

Remember that Ezekiel was in exile in the land of Babylon and that his primary audience was his fellow exiles. However, his message was also for the Jews remaining in Jerusalem. The Northern Kingdom had fallen to the Assyrians in 722 B.C., but the Southern Kingdom of Judah was still a nation, although it was a vassal state under Babylonian control. Now, due to the people's horrible sin, Judah was also to be utterly destroyed, including its capital, Jerusalem.

Obviously, the exiles wanted nothing to do with a message that predicted the utter destruction of their nation. Many of them still had the great hope of being set free and returning to their homeland. Thus they had great difficulty accepting the fact that they were guilty of sin and that God's judgment would soon fall upon them. Nevertheless, God loved His people and longed for them to repent. Because of this, He sent Ezekiel, as well as other prophets, to preach message after message in the hope that some people would repent. Note that each of the six points of this particular message ends by giving the purpose of God's judgment: that the people would come to know that the Lord is the only living and true God (Ezek 6:7, 10, 14; 7:4, 9, 27).

1. God's pronouncement of judgment upon false worshippers (Ezek 6:1-7).
2. God's promise to have mercy upon some false worshippers (Ezek 6:8-10).
3. God's reasons for executing judgment upon false worshippers (Ezek 6:11-14).
4. God's warning to false worshippers (Ezek 7:1-4).
5. God's purposes for executing judgment on false worshippers (Ezek 7:5-9).
6. God's description of the coming judgment upon false worshippers (Ezek 7:10-27)

Wiersbe - Ruin (6:1–7, 11–14). The signs were over; now the prophet gave two sermons. Judgment was coming to the mountains and valleys where the people carried on their idolatrous worship. The whole system would be destroyed and the people with it. It was the end! (Borrow copy of [With the Word](#))

GWT: "Son of man, look toward the mountains of Israel, and prophecy against them.

NKJV: Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophecy against them,

WBC: Human one, look in the direction of the mountains of Israel and issue a prophecy againsta them.

Young's Literal: Son of man, set thy face unto mountains of Israel, and prophecy concerning them:

SON OF MAN, SET YOUR FACE TOWARD THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL AND PROPHECY AGAINST THEM

- "mountains of Israel" [15X in Ezekiel](#) Josh11:21; Mic6:1 6:2
- [Torrey's Topic provides an excellent "crash course" in a Scriptural analysis of idolatry](#)

Set your face toward as in Ezekiel's first prophetic message in the form of actions or symbols in which he was instructed to

Set your face toward (the model of Jerusalem inscribed on the brick tile) so that it is under siege, and besiege it" (Ezek 4:3) and later to "**set your face toward** the siege of Jerusalem with your arm bared, and prophecy against it." (Ezek 4:7)

Set your face an instruction given only to Ezekiel, where it is found 11 times...

Ezek. 4:3; Ezek. 4:7; Ezek. 6:2; Ezek. 13:17; Ezek. 20:46; Ezek. 21:2; Ezek. 25:2; Ezek. 28:21; Ezek. 29:2; Ezek. 35:2; Ezek. 38:2

The mountains of Israel had been holy mountains, but now that they had become defiled polluted by the idolatrous high places, God **set his face** against them and therefore Ezekiel must do likewise.

Mountains of Israel (all 15 uses in Ezekiel) a phrase used only in Ezekiel in the Scriptures.

Ezek. 6:2; Ezek. 19:9; Ezek. 33:28; Ezek. 34:13; Ezek. 34:14; Ezek. 35:12; Ezek. 36:1; Ezek. 37:22; Ezek. 38:8; Ezek. 39:2; Ezek. 39:4; Ezek. 39:17

Israel here refers to Judea not the ten tribes, who had long before been carried captive. As the mountains received this message of condemnation here, they would receive a message of blessing later (Ezek 36:1–15-note, especially v 4) that would apply to all Israel. The mountains were especially centers of idolatrous worship, representing Israel's apostasy and perversion of the good and holy things of God (cf. Ezek 6:13; 18:6, 11; 22:9)

In the previous chapter God had condemned Israel because they had

defiled (His) sanctuary with all (their) detestable idols and with all your abominations" and He passed the horrible sentence that He would "withdraw, and (His) eye (would) have no pity and (He would) not spare." (Ezek 5:11)

Now He says that they are not restricting their abominations to the sanctuary which would be justification enough to condemn them, but also of committing abominations throughout the land on the mountains and the hills and in the ravines and the valleys worshipping creation (nature) rather than the Creator.

They were guilty not only of defiling the "sanctuary" in Jerusalem with "detestable things" (5:11, 15; cf. ch. 8; 2 K 21:7) but also of committing abominations throughout the land on the mountains and the hills and in the ravines and the valleys. Here they worshiped the forces of nature rather than the Creator. The punishment will fit the crime. The slain idolators will be found strewn among the ruins of the cities and the incense altars.

Ezekiel 6:3 and [say](#), '[Mountains of Israel](#), [listen to the word of the Lord GOD](#)! [Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains](#), the [hills](#), the [ravines](#) and the [valleys](#): "[Behold](#), [I Myself](#) am going to [bring a sword](#) on you, and I will [destroy your high places](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

GWT: Say this, 'You mountains of Israel, listen to the word of the Almighty LORD! This is what the Almighty LORD says to the mountains and hills and to the ravines and valleys: I am going to attack you with a sword and destroy your worship sites.

NKJV: "and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD!' Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys: "Indeed I, even I, will bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places.

WBC: Mountains of Israel, you are to say, listen to the declaration of Yahweh. Here is a message from the Lord Yahweh to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys. I am going to order a sword to invade you, and I will destroy your local shrines.

Young's Literal: And thou hast said: Mountains of Israel, Hear ye a word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus said the Lord Jehovah To the mountains, and to the hills, To the streams, and to the valleys, Lo, I, I am bringing in against you a sword, And I have destroyed your high places.

AND SAY, 'MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL, LISTEN TO THE WORD OF THE LORD GOD!

- Ezek 36:1-4,8; Jer 22:29

Matthew Henry writes that although in exile in Babylon, Ezekiel could not

see so far off as the land of Israel, the mountains of that land would be first and furthest seen; towards them therefore he must look, and look boldly and steadfastly, as the judge looks at the prisoner, and directs his speech to him, when he passes sentence upon him....The prophets might as soon gain attention from the mountains as from that rebellious and gainsaying people, to whom they all day long stretched out their hands in vain...That which is threatened in this prophecy is the utter destruction of the idols and the idolaters, and both by the sword of war. God Himself is commander-in-chief of this expedition against the mountains of Israel..(for) the sword of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) is at God's command, goes where He sends it, comes where He brings it, and lights as He directs it...God sometimes ruins idolatries even by the hands of idolaters, for such the Chaldeans themselves were... It is just with God to make that a desolation which we make an idol of; for he is a jealous God and will not bear a rival. If men do not, as they ought, destroy idolatry, God will, first or last, find out a way to do it. When Josiah had destroyed the high places, altars, and images, with the sword of justice, they set them up again; but God will now destroy them with the sword of war, and let us see who dares re-establish them."

THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD TO THE MOUNTAINS, THE HILLS, THE RAVINES AND THE VALLEYS:

- Jer 3:6 3:23

The same words are used in Ezek 36:4 to describe the devastation of Israel's pagan shrines.

God accuses Judah of harlotry on the hills declaring

long ago I broke your yoke and tore off your bonds; but you said, 'I will not serve!' for on every high hill and under every green tree you have lain down as a harlot." (Jer2:20)

The prophet Micah speaks to the mountains in another context calling on them to serve as judges while the Lord (the Prosecutor) states His case against Israel (the defendant)

Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, because the LORD has a case against His people; even with Israel He will dispute." (Mic 6:2)

BEHOLD, I MYSELF AM GOING TO BRING A SWORD ON YOU, AND I WILL DESTROY YOUR HIGH PLACES

- Lev 26:30; Isa 27:9

High places (Heb = **bamah** which is used literally in Ezek 20:29 Study the uses of **bamah** in [1 Kings](#), [2 Kings](#) [Jeremiah](#) [Ezekiel](#)) were associated with at least six activities--the burning of incense (Jer 48:35), sacrificing (2Ki 16:4), the eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, and child sacrifice (Jer 7:31 Jer 19:5 Jer 32:35)!

High places (01116)(see study of **bamah**) Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. bama in the valley, Je7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of bamah are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places**." Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 - NET Note = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp Isa 58:14) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in Ps 78:58 = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images."

High places - sadly this phrase occurs 80x in 72 OT verses -

Lev. 26:30; Num. 22:41; Num. 33:52; Deut. 32:13; Deut. 33:29; Jdg. 5:18; 2 Sam. 1:19; 2 Sam. 1:25; 2 Sam. 22:34; 1 Ki. 3:2; 1 Ki. 3:3; 1 Ki. 12:31; 1 Ki. 12:32; 1 Ki. 13:2; 1 Ki. 13:32; 1 Ki. 13:33; 1 Ki. 14:23; 1 Ki. 15:14; 1 Ki. 22:43; 2 Ki. 12:3; 2 Ki. 14:4; 2 Ki. 15:4; 2 Ki. 15:35; 2 Ki. 16:4; 2 Ki. 17:9; 2 Ki. 17:11; 2 Ki. 17:29; 2 Ki. 17:32; 2 Ki. 18:4; 2 Ki. 18:22; 2 Ki. 21:3; 2 Ki. 23:5; 2 Ki. 23:8; 2 Ki. 23:9; 2 Ki. 23:13; 2 Ki. 23:19; 2 Ki. 23:20; 2 Chr. 11:15; 2 Chr. 14:3; 2 Chr. 14:5; 2 Chr. 15:17; 2 Chr. 17:6; 2 Chr. 20:33; 2 Chr. 21:11; 2 Chr. 28:4; 2 Chr. 28:25; 2 Chr. 31:1; 2 Chr. 32:12; 2 Chr. 33:3; 2 Chr. 33:17; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 34:3; Ps. 18:33; Ps. 78:58; Prov. 9:14; Isa. 15:2; Isa. 36:7; Jer. 7:31; Jer. 17:3; Jer. 19:5; Jer. 26:18; Jer. 32:35; Ezek. 6:3; Ezek. 6:6; Ezek. 16:16; Ezek. 16:39; Hos. 10:8; Amos 4:13; Amos 7:9; Mic. 1:3; Mic. 3:12; Hab. 3:19

The **high places** consisted of several basic elements: an altar for offering sacrifices usually built of stone or mud brick, a wooden pole to represent the female goddess of fertility called Asherah, at least one stone pillar called a maššebâ to represent the male deity Baal and a smaller incense altar with a tent for use in eating sacrificial meals, practicing sacred prostitution (1Ki 14:23; 2Ki 21:3), and storage of cultic vessels.

The sad refrain which is repeated over and over in 2 Kings is **only the high places were not taken away** ([click for all 7 occurrences of this phrase in OT](#)) so that these sites of spiritual harlotry and spiritual adultery continued to be a snare for Israel all her days until God says as here in Ezekiel that "enough is enough". If Israel and Judah would not destroy the high places, the high places would destroy them and God Himself would destroy the high places!

During the period of the Judges the Israelites adopted the Canaanite custom of offering sacrifices **at high places**. These were on hilltops and other elevations. The pagan Canaanites felt that the closer they got to heaven the more likely was the possibility that their prayers and offerings would reach their gods. Offering sacrifices at places other than the tabernacle was prohibited in the Law (Lev 17:3, 17:4-note). Nevertheless this practice was commonly observed in Israel at this time, even by Solomon. Even Solomon fell prey to these evil places for Scripture records that

Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, **EXCEPT** he sacrificed and burned incense on the **high places**. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the **great high place**; (the tabernacle was there so this was not inappropriate but note the preceding verse = "high places" plural!) Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar." (1Ki 3:3 3:4)

This weak point of Solomon's for **high places**" was exploited (and exploded) in 1Kings 11 for

King Solomon loved many foreign women...from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, neither shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love...and his wives turned his heart away...after other gods and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been for Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites and Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab (associated with sacrifice of children as a burnt offering!), **on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem**, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon (also associated with sacrifice of children). (1Ki 11:7) Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded." (1Kings 11:1-10).

Then some 300 years later (ca 621BC) godly King Josiah's reform (which obviously was only transient as shown by resurgence of high places within less than 30 years) after reading the book of the Law included **the defilement of**

"the high places which were before (east of) Jerusalem, which were on the right of (south of) **the mount of**

destruction (of corruption ~ the Mt of Olives!) which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom (Molech) the abomination of the sons of Ammon." (2Ki 23:13)

During the reign of Jeroboam, the wicked king of the northern kingdom of Israel, was offering incense at the altar in Bethel and God sent His man from Judah to denounce the idolatrous altar, predicting that a king named Josiah would arise in Judah and would burn the idolatrous priests on the altar. The man of God cried out

against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD, 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the **high places** who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" (1Ki 13:2)

Over 300 years later Josiah fulfilled this prophecy to the letter, coming to

the altar that was at Bethel and the **high place** which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he broke down. Then he demolished its stones, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah. Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that were there on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the graves and burned them on the altar and **defiled** it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things." (2Ki 23:15-16)

Whose life are you emulating...King Solomon or King Josiah?

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. (Ro 6:12-14-see notes Romans 6:12; 6:13; 6:14) (**What does Sin desire to do even in believers? Don't miss it. Read the passage again**).

What are the "**high places**" in your life that you have refused to destroy because you like the wisest man that ever lived, King Solomon, have made them an "exception clause" and you have underestimated the deceptive power of sin (Heb 3:13-note). Be assured that God reads the "fine print" and He desires that we be wholly holy as He is holy. Remember that...

Sin...

Will take you farther than you ever meant to stray
Keep you longer than you ever meant to stay &
Cost you more than you ever thought you'd have to pay!

Ezekiel 6:4 "So your **altars** will **become desolate** and your **incense altars** will be **smashed**; and I will make your **slain fall** in front of your **idols**. (NASB: Lockman)

GWT: Your altars will be destroyed, and your incense burners will be smashed. I will kill people in front of your idols.

NKJV: Then your altars shall be desolate, your incense altars shall be broken and I will cast down your slain men before your idols.

WBC: Your altars will be reduced to ruins, and your incense burners smashed. I will cause your slain to fall in front of your idols

Young's Literal: And desolated have been your altars, And broken your images, And I have caused your wounded to fall before your idols,

SO YOUR ALTARS WILL BECOME DESOLATE AND YOUR INCENSE ALTARS WILL BE SMASHED:

- [2 Chr14:5; 34:4; Jer 43:13](#)
- [Naves Topic on Altar](#)
- [ISBE Article on Altar](#)

Your altars will become desolate - It is fascinating but tragic to note that when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they were

given clear commands to

"tear down their altars (of the Canaanites) and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire (Dt 7:5), "destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places" (Nu 33:52), "and...obliterate their name from that place." (Dt 12:3)

Altars (mizbe'ah from a word meaning "to slay") means literally the "place of slaughter or sacrifice," and refers to any structure of earth (Ex 20:24) or unwrought stone (Ex 20:25) on which sacrifices were offered.

Altars were generally erected in conspicuous places (Ge 22:9; 2Ki 23:12; 16:4; 23:8; Acts 14:13). In the tabernacle (Ex 27:1-8), and the temple, two altars were erected. The **altar of burnt offering** (Ex 30:28), also called the "brazen altar" (Ex 39:39) and "the table of the Lord" (Mal 1:7). The second was the **altar of incense** (Ex 30:1-10), called also "the golden altar" (Ex 39:38; Nu 4:11) which stood in the holy place "before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony."

On this altar sweet spices were continually burned with fire taken from the brazen altar. The morning and the evening services were commenced by the high priest offering incense on this altar. The burning of the incense was a type of prayer (Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8; 8:3 8:4)

AND I WILL MAKE YOUR SLAIN FALL IN FRONT OF YOUR IDOLS:

- Ezek 5 13; Lev 26:30; 1 Ki 13:2; 2 Ki 23:14 2 Ki 23:16-20; 2 Chr 34:5; Jer 8:1 8:2
- [Nave's Topic on Idolatry](#)
- [ISBE Article](#)
- [Torrey's Topic provides an excellent "crash course" in a Scriptural analysis of idolatry](#)

Slain fall in front of your idols - From 588 to 586 BC, the Babylonian army besieged Jerusalem. Judah's ally, Egypt, had been defeated, and Jeremiah's repeated warnings to the Jews had been rejected. As Babylon's stranglehold on Jerusalem tightened, people were starving, yet they continued to turn to idols for deliverance. So in this verse there is a bitter irony when God says that the very idols which you have bowed before to save you, will be the place where you shall be slain. God gives a clear indication that these empty, lifeless figures are impotent and devoid of saving power.

SPIRITUAL IDOLATRY

Idolatry is spiritual whoredom and is the breach of the marriage-covenant with Jehovah God (for Israel) and with the Lord Jesus Christ (bridegroom of the Church). Idolatry is the setting of the affections upon whatever is a rival with our affection for our Lord, and it implies and often entails the indulgence of a base lust, which deceives and defiles the soul, and is a great wrong to God in His honor.

"Little children, guard yourselves from idols."

As God declared in **Jeremiah**

My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jer 2:13)

As discussed further below Paul explains how such tragedy could occur to God's chosen people who had all the "religious" advantages, declaring that

even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Ro 1:21-25)

Idols (gilluwl) Regarding the meaning of this Hebrew word, the NIV Study Bible has an interesting note commenting that

"The Hebrew for this word (**gilluwl**) is a derisive term (lit. "**dung pellets**"), used especially by Ezekiel (38 times, as opposed to only 9 times elsewhere in the OT)." The Wycliffe Bible commentary adds that **gilluwl** is derived from **galal**, "to roll," and was "a term of derision, which referred to the objects worshiped as "blocks" or

"clouds. ([Pfeiffer, C F: Wycliffe Bible Commentary. 1981. Moody](#))

The Hebrew word for "dung" is **gelel**, derived from **galal** and thus related to the word **gilluwl**. probably explaining the origin of the derisive term "**dung pellets**", a very apt name for worthless and empty idols.

Idols (01544)([gillul/gillulim](#) latter is the plural form = all OT uses are plural) means logs, blocks, shapeless things. This word describes "an object (not necessarily three dimensional) which has been formed to resemble a person, god, animal." (Louw-Nida).

Gillul - 45v - most in Ezekiel!

Lev. 26:30; Deut. 29:17; 1 Ki. 15:12; 1 Ki. 21:26; 2 Ki. 17:12; 2 Ki. 21:11; 2 Ki. 21:21; 2 Ki. 23:24; Jer. 50:2; Ezek. 6:4; Ezek. 6:5; Ezek. 6:6; Ezek. 6:9; Ezek. 6:13; Ezek. 8:10; Ezek. 14:3; Ezek. 14:4; Ezek. 14:5; Ezek. 14:6; Ezek. 14:7; Ezek. 16:36; Ezek. 18:6; Ezek. 18:12; Ezek. 18:15; Ezek. 20:7; Ezek. 20:8; Ezek. 20:16; Ezek. 20:18; Ezek. 20:24; Ezek. 20:31; Ezek. 20:39; Ezek. 22:3; Ezek. 22:4; Ezek. 23:7; Ezek. 23:30; Ezek. 23:37; Ezek. 23:39; Ezek. 23:49; Ezek. 30:13; Ezek. 33:25; Ezek. 36:18; Ezek. 36:25; Ezek. 37:23; Ezek. 44:10; Ezek. 44:12

[Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#) - Of the main words for idol, this term always occurs in the plural form. Of the forty-seven occurrences, thirty-eight are in Ezekiel. The basic meaning of this word is "logs," "blocks" or "shapeless things." It is used to mock the pagan gods, and it always views idols as contemptuous things (1 Ki. 15:12; Deut. 29:17; Ezek. 6:4). Idols are always an **abomination**, and they pollute the people and the land. The word is often used by Ezekiel parallel to the noun *tāmfi*, "to be unclean," "to defile oneself", thus strengthening the etymological argument to associate the noun with dung. The prime indictment of Judah communicated by Ezekiel was idolatry (see ch. 16). This defilement forced the Spirit of Yahweh to depart from the Temple (chs. 9-11), as the Temple itself was defiled by idolatry (Ezek 8:9f). Idolatry was a serious offense for the individual, as Yahweh promises those who fall down before idols in worship will fall down before them dead (Ezek 6:4). The usages of the noun outside of Ezekiel also point out that idols defile the individual and society causing judgment to fall.

Idols is translated in this verse in the LXX with the Greek word **eidolon**. What effect do **idols** have on our hands and heart? (God's solution = 2Cor 7:1-[note](#)).

TWOT comments that...

Ezekiel who has thirty-eight of the forty-seven occurrences of *gillūlim* denounces idolatry as infidelity and prostitution (Ezek 16:36; 37:23). Good Israelites have not "lifted up their eyes to idols," while the wicked have done so (Ezek 18:6, 12, 15). Ezekiel reminds the people that God told them not to defile themselves "with the idols of Egypt." Nevertheless "their heart went after" them (Ezek 20:7, 8, 16, 18, 24). They were not to "pollute themselves" with idols (Ezek 20:31). In dramatic irony the prophet says: "Go ye, serve ye everyone his idols" (Ezek 20:39). Again he declares that Israel works against herself by idolatry and defiles herself (Ezek 22:3, 4; 23:7). They are polluted with idols of Babylonia and Assyria (Ezek 23:30) and have followed heathen idolatry to the extent of killing their children in sacrifice to idols and so they will "bear the sins of their idols" (Ezek 23:39, 49), but the Lord will destroy the idols of Egypt (Ezek 30:13).

When Ezekiel hears that Jerusalem is destroyed, he says that the people do not possess the land because of their idolatry (Ezek 33:25; 36:18, 25). Only twice more does Ezekiel refer to idols and in quite a different vein. He predicts that Judah and Israel will be united in their land and will not defile themselves any more with idols (Ezek 37:23). In the restoration the priests and Levites who went astray will be punished by a lowering of rank and given a less important activity in the new sanctuary. Only the Zadokite priests who remained true to the Lord will serve in the high office of priest (Ezek 44:10, 12). ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press](#))

IDOLATRY

Easton's Dictionary defines "**Idolatry**" as "Image-worship or divine honour paid to any created object. Paul describes the origin of idolatry in Ro 1:21-25-[note](#): men forsook God, and sank into ignorance and moral corruption (Ro 1:28-[note](#)). The forms of **idolatry** are,

- Fetishism or the worship of trees, rivers, hills, stones, etc.
- Nature worship, the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, as the supposed powers of nature.
- Hero worship, the worship of deceased ancestors, or of heroes.

In Scripture, **idolatry** is regarded as of heathen origin, and as being imported among the Hebrews through contact with heathen

nations. The first allusion to **idolatry** is in the account of Rachel stealing her father's teraphim (**Ge 31:19**), which were the relics of the worship of other gods by Laban's progenitors "on the other side of the river in old time" (**Josh 24:2**). During their long residence in Egypt the Hebrews fell into **idolatry**, and it was long before they were delivered from it (**Josh 24:14; Ezek 20:7**). Many a token of God's displeasure fell upon them because of this sin.

Smith's Dictionary summarizes Israel's history regarding **idolatry**, which began in earnest when "**In the wilderness** they clamored for some visible shape in which they might worship the God who had brought them out of Egypt. (Ex32:1) ... until Aaron made the calf, the embodiment of Apis and emblem of the productive power of nature. During the lives of Joshua and the elders who outlived him they kept true to their allegiance; but the generation following who knew not Jehovah nor the works he had done for Israel, swerved from the plain path of their fathers and were caught in the toils of the foreigner. (Jdg 2:1) From this time forth their history becomes little more than a chronicle of the inevitable sequence of offence and punishment. (Jdg2:12,14) By turns each conquering nation strove to establish the worship of its national God. In later times the practice of secret idolatry was carried to greater lengths. Images were set up on the corn-floors, in the wine-vats, and behind the doors of private houses, (Isa 57:8; Hos 9:1,2) and to check this tendency the statute (LAW) in (Deut 27:15) was originally promulgated. Under Samuel's administration idolatry was publicly renounced, (1Sa7:3-6) but in the reign of Solomon all this was forgotten, even Solomon's own heart being turned after other gods. (1 Ki11:14) (the result being division of the kingdom in 931BC) Rehoboam perpetuated the worst features of Solomon's idolatry and (1 Ki14:22-24) erected golden calves at Beth-el and at Dan, and by this crafty state's policy severed forever the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. (1 Ki12:26-33) The successors of Jeroboam followed in his steps, till Ahab. The conquest of the (northern) ten tribes by Shalmaneser (the Assyrian in 722BC) was for them the last scene of the drama of abominations which had been enacted uninterruptedly for upwards of 250 years. Under Hezekiah a great reform was inaugurated, that was not confined to Judah and Benjamin, but spread throughout Ephraim and Manasseh. (2 Chr 31:1) and to all external appearances idolatry was extirpated. But the reform extended little below the surface. (Isa 29:13) With the death of Josiah ended the last effort to revive among the people a purer ritual. If not a purer faith. The lamp of David, which had long shed but a struggling ray, flickered for a while and then went out in the darkness of Babylonian Captivity. Though the conquests of Alexander caused Greek influence to be felt, yet after the captivity better condition of things prevailed, and the Jews never again fell into idolatry. The erection of synagogues had been assigned as a reason for the comparative purity of the Jewish worship after the captivity, while another cause has been discovered in the hatred for images acquired by the Jews in their intercourse with the Persians.

Objects of idolatry-- The **sun** and **moon** were early selected as outward symbols of all-pervading power, and the **worship of the heavenly bodies** was not only the most ancient but the most prevalent system of idolatry. Taking its rise in the plains of Chaldea, it spread through Egypt, Greece, Scythia, and even Mexico and Ceylon. (Deut 4:19; 17:3; Job 31:20-28) In the later times of the monarchy, the **planets** or the **zodiacal signs** received, next to the sun and moon, their share of popular adoration. (2 Ki 23:5) **Beast-worship**, as exemplified in the calves of Jeroboam, has already been alluded to but of pure hero-worship among the Semitic races we find no trace.

Mountains and high places were chosen spots for offering sacrifice and incense to idols, (1 Ki 11:7; 14:23) and the **retirement of gardens and the thick shade of woods offered great attractions to their worshippers**. (2 Ki16:4; Is1:29; Ho4:13)

The **host of heaven** was worshipped on the house-top. (2 Ki23:12; Jer19:3; 32:29; Zeph1:5)

The modern objects of idolatry are less gross than the ancient, but are none the less idols. **Whatever of wealth or honor or pleasure is loved and sought before God and righteousness becomes an object of idolatry**. In the **New Testament** the term **idolatry** is used to designate **covetousness** (Mt 6:24; Lu16:13; Col 3:5; Eph 5:5).

Punishment of idolatry - Idolatry to an Israelite was a state offence, (1 Sa 15:23) a political crime of the greatest character, high treason against the majesty of his king for Jehovah was the theocratic King of Israel, the civil Head of the commonwealth. The first and second commandments are directed against idolatry of every form. Individuals and communities were equally amenable to the rigorous code. The individual offender was devoted to destruction, (Ex22:20) his nearest relatives were not only bound to denounce him and deliver him up to punishment, (Deut 13:2-10) but their hands were to strike the first blow, when, on the evidence of two witnesses at least, he was stoned. (Deut 17:2-5) To attempt to seduce others to false worship was a crime of equal enormity. (Deut 13:6-10)

No facts are more strongly declared in the Old Testament than that the extermination of the Canaanites was the punishment of their idolatry (Ex 34:15,16; Deut 7; 12:29-31; 20:17), and that the calamities of the Israelites were due to the same cause (Jer 2:17). "A city guilty of idolatry was looked upon as a cancer in the state; it was considered to be in rebellion, and treated according to the laws of war. Its inhabitants and all their cattle were put to death." On taking possession of the land, the Jews were commanded to destroy all traces of every kind of the existing idolatry of the Canaanites (Ex 23:24,32; 34:13; Deut 7:5,25; 12:1-3).

Attractions of idolatry Many have wondered why the Israelites were so easily led away from the true God, into the worship of idols. (1) Visible, outward signs, with shows, pageants, parades, have an attraction to the natural heart, which often fail to perceive the

unseen spiritual realities. (2) But the greatest attraction seems to have been in licentious revelries and obscene orgies with which the worship of the Oriental idols was observed. This worship, appealing to every sensual passion, joined with the attractions of wealth and fashion and luxury, naturally was a great temptation to a simple, restrained, agricultural people, whose worship and law demands the greatest purity of heart and of life.--ED.)

[R A Torrey](#) adds that idolatry is changing the glory of God into an image (Ro 1:23; Acts 17:29), exchanging the truth of God for a lie (Ro 1:25; Isa 44:20), is a work of the flesh (Gal 5:19,20) and is incompatible with the service of God (Ge 35:2,3; Josh 24:23; 1 Sa 7:3; 1 Ki 18:21; 2Co 6:15,16)

See [Gotquestions](#) on questions related to idolatry

- [Why is idol worship such a powerful temptation?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about eating food/meat that has been sacrificed to idols?](#)
- [What is the definition of idolatry?](#)
- [What is a graven image?](#)
- [What are some modern forms of idolatry?](#)
- [Why did people keep family idols?](#)
- [What is the true meaning of the second commandment?](#)
- [What sort of pagan revelry did the Israelites indulge in \(Exodus 32:6\)?](#)
- [What should we learn from the golden calf incident in Exodus 32?](#)

Related Resources:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Idol](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Idol](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Food Offered to Idols](#), [Shrine of His Own Idol](#), [Meat to Idols](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Idol](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Idol](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Idol](#) [Idols](#)
- Wilson's Bible Types [Idol](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Idol](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Idolatry and Idols](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary • [Food Offered to Idols](#) • [Shrine of His Own Idol](#) • [Idol](#) • [Meat to Idols](#)
- American Tract Society • [Idol](#), [Idolatry](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary • [Idol](#), [idolatry](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary • [Idol](#), [Idolatry](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary • [Idolatry](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary • [Idol](#), [idolatry](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary • [Idolatry](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary • [Idolatry](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary • [Idolatry](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible • [Idolatry](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT • [Idolatry](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary • [Idolatry](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary • [Idolatry](#)
- Webster Dictionary • [Idolatries](#) • [Idolatrical](#) • [Idolatry](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary • [Idolatry](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica • [Idolatry](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia • [Idolatry](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia • [Idolatry](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia • [Idolatry](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia • [Idolatry](#)

Ezekiel 6:5 "I will also [lay](#) the [dead bodies](#) of the [sons](#) of [Israel](#) in [front](#) of their [idols](#); and I will [scatter](#) your [bones around](#) your [altars](#). (NASB: Lockman)

GWT: I will lay the dead bodies of the people of Israel in front of your idols, and I will scatter their bones around your altars.

NKJV: "And I will lay the corpses of the children of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones all around your altars.

WBC: ...and scatter your bones round your altars.

Young's Literal: And put the carcasses of the sons of Israel before their idols, And scattered your bones round about your altars.

I WILL ALSO LAY THE DEAD BODIES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL IN FRONT OF THEIR IDOLS:

I will lay dead bodies... - This would be equivalent of defiling the shrines by the presence of dead bodies (Ezek 9:7; Nu 19:16-19:18). Dead men in front of dead idols. The sentence fits the crime. In Isaiah God contrasted the way of death with the way of life declaring

When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you. But the wind will carry all of them up, and a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in Me shall inherit the land, and shall possess My holy mountain." (Isa 57:13)

As New Testament believers how we all need to heed John's warning

Little children, **guard** (aorist imperative) = Don't delay. Do this now. Do this every time you are tempted to "worship" an idol, whatever it might be that is stealing your affection and devotion from the Almighty, Holy God) yourselves from idols. (1Jn 5:21-[note](#))

AND I WILL SCATTER YOUR BONES AROUND YOUR ALTARS:

Scatter your bones - These shrines would become desecrated by the scattering of bones of the dead around them. (cf 2Ki 23:15-16) Later God instructed His destroyers to

"Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" Thus they went out and struck down the people in the city." (Ezek 9:7)

The slain as well as their bones would defile the altars.

Matthew Henry adds

Thus their idols should be polluted, and those places profaned by the dead bodies which they had had in veneration. If they will not defile the covering of their graven images, God will, (Isa 30:22). The throwing of the carcasses among them, as upon the **dunghill**, intimates that they were but **dunghill-deities**. Thus it was intimated that they were but dead things, unfit to be rivals with the living God; for the carcasses of dead men, that, like them, have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, were the fittest company for them. Thus the idols were upbraided (criticized severely & justifiably) with their inability to help their worshippers, and idolaters were upbraided with the folly of trusting in them; for (the implication of this verse is that the Jews) fell by the sword of the enemy when they were actually before their idols imploring their aid and putting themselves under their protection. (This is not without precedent in Scripture for we find that) Sennacherib was slain by his sons when he was worshipping in the house of his god...(Another reason) the slain men are cast before the idols (could be) to show that (the very reason that) they were slain was because they had worshipped those idols... (Therefore) let the survivors observe and take warning not to worship images...and know that God is the Lord, that the Lord He is God and He alone.

How does this apply to New Testament believers? Paul answers that

these things happened as **examples** for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. And do not be **idolaters** as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY" (1Cor 10:6-7)

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Cor 10:11)

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, **flee** from idolatry. (1 Cor 10:13-14-[note](#))

Ezekiel 6:6 "In **all** your **dwelling**s, **cities** will **become waste** and the **high places** will be **desolate**, that your **altars** may **become waste** and **desolate**, your **idols** may be **broken** and **brought** to an **end**, your **incense altars** may be **cut down**, and your **works** may be **blotted** out. (NASB: Lockman)

GWT: Wherever people live, the cities will be ruined, and the worship sites will be wrecked. Your altars will be ruined and demolished. Your idols will be smashed and completely destroyed. Your incense burners will be cut down, and everything you have done will be wiped out.

NKJV: "In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate, so that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, your idols may be broken and made to cease, your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.

WBC: Wherever you live, towns will be devastated and local shrines reduced to ruins, with the result that your altars will be devastated and ruined and your idols smashed and demolished, while your incense burners will be knocked down and your artifacts obliterated;

Young's Literal: In all your dwellings the cities are laid waste, And the high places are desolate, So that waste and desolate are your altars, And broken and ceased have your idols, And cut down have been your images, And blotted out have been your works.

IN ALL YOUR DWELLINGS, CITIES WILL BECOME WASTE:

- Is 6:11; Jer 9:19; Zeph 3:7
- Cities - Ezek 5:14; Isa 24:1-12; 32:13 32:14; Jer 2:15; ; Mic 3:12; Zeph 1:2-6 1:18; 3:6

All...will become waste (root idea of Hebrew word for **waste** is dried up and so made desolate, devastated, destitute, ravaged, ruined, deserted, in a destroyed and ruined state, implying the object or area destroyed is now abandoned from all help)

In Jeremiah God describes what a "**waste**" will look like, declaring

I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without inhabitant." (Jer 9:11 cf Jer 10:22 34:22)

After the devastation of all the dwelling and cities of Israel, Isaiah foretells of a righteous **remnant** (see Ezek 6:9 discussion) who will cry out to God to rend the heavens and come down, reminding God that

Thy holy cities have become a wilderness, Zion has become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, has been burned by fire; and all our precious things have become a ruin. Wilt Thou restrain Thyself at these things, O LORD? Wilt Thou keep silent and afflict us beyond measure?" ([Isa 64:10-12](#))

AND THE HIGH PLACES WILL BE DESOLATE:

- Lev 26:30; Jer 17:3; Hos 10:8

High places ([click here](#)) **will be desolate** - Because of Judah's wickedness and harlotry God decreed

shall also give you into the hands of your lovers, and they will tear down your shrines, demolish your **high places**, strip you of your clothing, take away your jewels, and will leave you naked and bare." (Ezek 16:39)

Matthew Henry writes

"As all their **high places** shall be laid waste, so shall all their **dwelling-places** too, even all their cities. Those

that profane God's dwelling-place as they had done can expect no other than that he should abandon theirs, (Ezek 5:11). If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy, (1Cor 3:17)."

THAT YOUR ALTARS MAY BECOME WASTE AND DESOLATE YOUR IDOLS MAY BE BROKEN AND BROUGHT TO AN END, YOUR INCENSE ALTARS MAY BE CUT DOWN, AND YOUR WORKS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT:

- **Your altars** - Ezek 30:13; Is 2:18 2:20; 27:9; Ho 10:2; Mic 1:7; 5:13; Zeph 1:3 1:4; Zech 13:2

You works may be blotted out - Habakkuk asks a question each of us should contemplate --What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork when he fashions speechless idols." (Hab 2:18-[note](#))

The psalmist declares that "Those who make (idols) will become like them (read Ps 115 for what **them** are like), everyone who trusts in them." (Ps 115:8) ([Spurgeon's comment](#))

Isaiah prophesying against Judah and Jerusalem adds that "the strong man will become tinder, **his work** also a spark. Thus they shall both burn together, and there will be none to quench them." (Isa 1:31-[note](#))

This unquenchable burning refers not just to the destruction by the Babylonian army but also the eternal judgment in the lake of fire.

Blotted out (wipe)([04229](#))([machah](#)) means to twipe, to wipe out and is often connected with divine judgment as with God wiping out all life in the flood (Ge 6:7, Ge 7:23); Amalek (Ex 17:14+), destroying Jerusalem (2 Ki 21:13); threatening to wipe out Israel's name (Dt. 9:14). Ps. 51:1 = "blot out my transgressions"; Ps. 51:9 = "blot out all my iniquities." Ps 69:28 = "May they **be blotted out** of the book of life."

The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **machah** most often (all reference below that are in **bold font**) with the verb [exaleipho](#) means literally to completely wipe off. Literally exaleipho means to remove by wiping off, as when a blackboard is erased. The word was applied to the process of obliterating writing on any material. Some of the uses in Scripture retain this literal meaning but most uses speak of a figurative blotting out or wiping off. The idea in all the uses is to cause something to cease by obliterating or eliminating any evidence. Twice in the Revelation God promises He will **wipe away** every tear. A number of uses in both OT (Septuagint) and the NT use this verb to describe the blotting out or wiping away of sins. **Exaleipho** was used by Thucydides of whitewashing a wall.

Machah - 33x in 30v - blot(12), blotted(11), destroys(1), utterly blot(1), wash off(1), wipe(1), wipe...away(1), wiped(1), wipes(3), wiping(1).

Gen. 6:7; **Gen. 7:4**; **Gen. 7:23**; **Ex. 17:14**; **Ex. 32:32**; **Ex 32:33**; **Nu 5:23**; **Dt. 9:14**; **Dt. 25:6**; **Dt. 25:19**; **Dt. 29:20**; **Jdg. 21:17**; **2 Ki. 14:27**; 2 Ki. 21:13; Neh. 4:5; **Neh. 13:14**; **Ps. 9:5**; **Ps. 51:1**; **Ps. 51:9**; **Ps. 69:28**; **Ps. 109:13**; **Ps. 109:14**; **Prov. 6:33**; Prov. 30:20; Prov. 31:3; Isa. 25:8; **Isa. 43:25**; Isa. 44:22; **Jer. 18:23**; Ezek. 6:6

Walter Kaiser on **machah** - Almost all of the thirty-three occurrences of this verb are theologically significant. It is first found in the flood narrative. Every living thing on the face of the earth that breathed was blotted out (Genesis 7:22-23) including all human beings, except eight. māḥâ figures prominently in the prayer in which Moses begged God to forgive the sin Israel incurred when they worshiped the golden calf. "If not, blot me out of your book," prays Moses (Ex 32:32-33). It had been God's intention to blot out Israel's name from under heaven (Deut. 9:14) as repeated in Deut. 29:20 (see also Psalm 69:28). Whether he regards it thus as a stain (as in Ps 51:3, 11) or a debt in a ledger (as in Col. 2:14) is not known with certainty. But he was willing, as was the apostle Paul, to be accursed for the sake of his brethren. Note that erasures in ancient leather scrolls were made by washing or sponging off the ink rather than blotting. "Wipe out" is therefore more accurate for the idea of expunge. When God did move in judgment, he wiped Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down (2 Ki 21:13). During the time of the judges, the entire tribe of Benjamin was almost blotted out (Judges 21:17). The sinner prays as David did that God will blot out, i.e. erase his transgressions and iniquities (Psalm 51:1, 9). God does so for his own sake and remembers those sins no longer (Isaiah 43:25). Thus sins which loomed as a thick cloud were blotted out (Isaiah 44:22). While God is omniscient, these sins he deliberately remembers against us no longer. The reverse action can be seen in Psalm 109:14, and Neh. 4:5. māḥâ is also used to describe the lifestyle of an adulterous woman who eats, wipes her mouth, and protestingly claims that she has done no wrong (Proverbs 30:20). Then there is the case of the jealous husband who suspected his wife of adultery. As part of the psychological ordeal to which she was subjected in the presence of the Lord, the woman had to drink bitter water into which curses written on a scroll had been wiped in order to determine her innocence or guilt. (Nu 5:23). Finally, Isaiah 25:8 proclaims that God will wipe away tears from all faces. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Gilbrant - With cognates in Ugaritic, Phoenician, Akkadian, Targumic, Middle Hebrew and perhaps Arabic and Ethiopic, māchāh

occurs about thirty-five times in the Hebrew Bible. It can mean "to erase," in the context of written documents. The type of erased surface is specifically stated in the ritual to detect whether a wife was engaging in adultery, as she was forced to drink the ink of curses erased from a scroll by "bitter water" (Num. 5:23). These curses would cause painful swelling only if the woman were guilty. A cursed fate would involve one being erased from memory, which is tantamount to not only cessation of existence but also denial of life (Deut. 9:14). Moses implored Yahweh either to turn his wrath from the people or to "blot [his name]... from [God's] book" (Exo. 32:32f). Happily, sin can be obliterated from the memory of Yahweh (Isa. 43:25). We may ask to enter into this state of divine forgetfulness (Ps. 51:1). However, the adulterer cannot erase his disgrace among humans (Prov. 6:33). Nehemiah fervently prayed that the disgrace of the returning exiles in Jerusalem would be avenged, and thus begged that Yahweh not erase the guilt or sin of their persecutors (Neh. 4:5). An eschatological promise is that one day, when all peoples worship Yahweh, He will wipe all tears away, as death will forever vanish (Isa. 25:8). The verb is also used in the sense of annihilating humans. All living creatures were obliterated in the course of the Flood (Gen. 7:22f). Benjamin was nearly obliterated because the acts of the males of Gibeah in regard to the Levite's concubine (Jdg. 21:17), implying that the memory of the tribe would also be erased. Yahweh compared his judgment against Jerusalem to the wiping of a basin (2 Ki. 21:13). An admonition of Lemuel to his son declared that immoral women had the power to obliterate kings (Prov. 3:13). Finally, in disgust of the continual idolatry of the Judeans, Yahweh declared that with the coming destruction of all symbols of pagan worship there would no longer be testimony to the works of the Judeans (Ezek. 6:6). Desire to work for Yahweh builds a lasting testimony and is better than pursuing any other route. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

Ezekiel 6:7 "The slain will fall among you, and you will know that I am the LORD. (NASB: Lockman)

GWT: People will be killed, and they will fall among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

NKJV: "The slain shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I am the LORD.

WBC: and people will lie fallen, a slain among you. Then you will realize that I am Yahweh,

Young's Literal: And fallen hath the wounded in your midst, And ye have known that I am Jehovah.

THE SLAIN WILL FALL AMONG YOU AND YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD

- Slain - Jer 14:18; 18:21; 25:33; La2:20 2:21; 4:9
- And you will know that I am the LORD (See all uses below) - Ex 7:5; 14:4 14:18; Da 4:35-37; 6:26 6:27

Know that I am the LORD - This phrase occurs four times in this chapter alone (v7, 10, 13, 14). Ezekiel makes frequent use of this "recognition formula" "The Lord reveals Himself as the Ruler of history by announcing events beforehand." (New Geneva study Bible. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

Know that I am the LORD - 77x in 77v - 63 times in the Prophecy of Ezekiel!

Exod. 6:7; Exod. 7:5; Exod. 7:17; Exod. 10:2; Exod. 14:4; Exod. 14:18; Exod. 16:12; Exod. 29:46; Exod. 31:13; Deut. 29:6; 1 Ki. 20:13; 1 Ki. 20:28; Isa. 49:23; Ezek. 6:7; Ezek. 6:10; Ezek. 6:13; Ezek. 6:14; Ezek. 7:4; Ezek. 7:27; Ezek. 11:10; Ezek. 11:12; Ezek. 12:15; Ezek. 12:16; Ezek. 12:20; Ezek. 13:9; Ezek. 13:14; Ezek. 13:21; Ezek. 13:23; Ezek. 14:8; Ezek. 15:7; Ezek. 16:62; Ezek. 17:24; Ezek. 20:12; Ezek. 20:20; Ezek. 20:26; Ezek. 20:38; Ezek. 20:42; Ezek. 20:44; Ezek. 22:16; Ezek. 23:49; Ezek. 24:24; Ezek. 24:27; Ezek. 25:5; Ezek. 25:7; Ezek. 25:11; Ezek. 25:17; Ezek. 26:6; Ezek. 28:22; Ezek. 28:23; Ezek. 28:24; Ezek. 28:26; Ezek. 29:6; Ezek. 29:9; Ezek. 29:16; Ezek. 29:21; Ezek. 30:8; Ezek. 30:19; Ezek. 30:25; Ezek. 30:26; Ezek. 32:15; Ezek. 33:29; Ezek. 34:27; Ezek. 35:4; Ezek. 35:9; Ezek. 35:15; Ezek. 36:11; Ezek. 36:23; Ezek. 36:38; Ezek. 37:6; Ezek. 37:13; Ezek. 37:28; Ezek. 38:23; Ezek. 39:6; Ezek. 39:7; Ezek. 39:22; Ezek. 39:28; Joel 3:17

Several prayers appeal to God to answer in order that others will know that He is Jehovah. For example, the psalmist Asaph prays

Let them (God's enemies) be ashamed and dismayed forever; and let them be humiliated and perish, that they may **know that Thou alone, Whose Name is the LORD, art the Most High over all the earth**" (Ps 83:17 18) (See Spurgeon's comments [Verse 17 Verse 18](#))

King Hezekiah confronted by Assyrian threats appealed to God

Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. **And now, O LORD our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou alone, O LORD, art God.**" (2 Ki 19:17-19)

The point of the repetition of this phrase in Ezekiel 6 (as well as in the entire book) was that God's people will know Him either through response to His loving attempts of salvation and fellowship or through His righteous and just judgment. God's preference was then as now that men know Him by confession in life rather than after death, when

at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (see notes Philippians 2:10; 2:11)