

The end is come
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Bible Text: Ezekiel 7:6
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Let us hear the word of God in the Old Testament in the prophecy of Ezekiel 7. We'll read at verse 1.

1 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. 3 Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. 4 And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. 5 Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. 6 An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. 7 The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains. 8 Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. 9 And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth. 10 Behold the day, behold, it is come: the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded. 11 Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness: none of them shall remain, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither shall there be wailing for them. 12 The time is come, the day draweth near: let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. 13 For the seller shall not return to that which is sold, although they were yet alive: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return; neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life. 14 They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready; but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof. 15 The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him. 16 But they that

escape of them shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity. 17 All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water. 18 They shall also gird themselves with sackcloth, and horror shall cover them; and shame shall be upon all faces, and baldness upon all their heads. 19 They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity. 20 As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty: but they made the images of their abominations and of their detestable things therein: therefore have I set it far from them. 21 And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; and they shall pollute it. 22 My face will I turn also from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it. 23 Make a chain: for the land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. 24 Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled. 25 Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and there shall be none. 26 Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. 27 The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Amen. May God bless that reading of his holy word to each one of us.

Let us turn to Ezekiel 7:6, "An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come." When we read the Bible, we sometimes come across the message that the end will come. Sometimes we hear prophets and apostles saying the end is coming, other times we can hear even the end is nigh, but here we have a message, the end is come. This phrase "this end" is really the key word of this passage. It occurs five times in just a few verses: twice in verse 2, "An end, the end is come; verse 3, "Now is the end come upon thee"; and again in verse 6 twice, "An end is come, the end is come."

We'd like to fast-forward tonight to the end and consider what that is going to be like for each one of us. But before we do so, I'd like to try and understand the setting of these words when they were originally spoken. As you know, God chose Israel out of all the nations to be a special people and to worship him alone. As you also know, sadly the history of Israel was one of gross idolatry. God sent many prophets to call them away from their idols to serve him alone and they refused. He sent warnings and they refused until eventually God sent the Assyrian army and about 700 BC, 700 years before Christ, to carry away to Assyria the northern part of Israel and then sent more prophets to the

south of Israel that remained, prophets like Isaiah, to tell them, "South Israel, Judah, you're going to follow them into exile unless you repent."

And did they listen? Sadly, no. And so about 100 years after, northern Israel went into exile. God brought the Babylonians and they carried the rest of Israel, Judah, into captivity in three waves. First of all, they took the king and the most influential leaders and installed a puppet king and in that first wave that was brought to Babylon was Ezekiel. He was obviously one of the influential men of the day of an influential family. So he's carried off in this first wave into Babylon. Back in Israel, Jeremiah is prophesying saying, "Israel, people of God, you're all going into exile unless you repent. Look at what happened to the north. Look at what happened to our leaders. You're going to go too unless you repent." And Ezekiel in Babylon is sending back messages to the same people. It's like a stereo message. Jeremiah on the ground, Ezekiel in captivity saying, "Please, people of God, repent or the nation is finished!" And yet its supreme confidence that the end would never come, that God would never finish with them, that God would never write over their nation, the end. No matter how many warnings, no matter how many prophets, no matter how many judgments, "We're safe. We're fine. It won't happen to us."

So here Ezekiel prophesies a moment when a herald is going to run into the city sent by the Lord, and he's going to cry out these solemn words, "An end is come. The end is come. It watcheth for thee. Behold, it is come." It's no longer future tense, it's present tense. What a declaration this is. It's a divine declaration. The Lord speaks in verse 5, "Thus saith the Lord GOD." This is not some speculative prophet, some man who's trying to scare people. This is a God-sent man. This is the word of God and it covers the whole land. He's sent, we're told, into the four corners of the land in verse 2. He's saying this is going to come on everyone here. And he's told to declare the justice of this end because he's told to trace it time and again to what are called abominations, the idolatry. It's because of your idolatry that this just punishment is coming upon you. And this herald is sent and he's breathless and he's abrupt and he's agitated. He is urgent in his message. "The end, the end, the end is come." And yet they are totally unprepared.

The wording of verse 6, "it watcheth for thee," it's literally, "it wakens up for thee." And what is pictured here really is a people that are fast asleep. God, as it were, has been shouting in their ears at the top of his voice, in fact he's been turning up the volume louder, louder, louder. Fast asleep. But this wakes them up, though too late.

And that's the pattern, isn't it? You look at Noah and his time. Noah is predicting judgment, everyone laughs. You look at Sodom and Gomorrah, God is going to rain fire and brimstone, few believed. This judgment on Israel in the Old Testament, few believed until it happened. And the judgment on Israel again in the New Testament at the hands of the Romans after they rejected Christ, again despite clear, vivid, repeated warnings, they were totally unprepared.

And this is why we can say that this is such a prophesy of the final judgment. All judgments of God are, as it were, shadows that tell us that there is a bigger judgment coming round the corner. He shows us the judgment of Noah's time. He shows us the

judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. He shows us the judgment here on Israel and on Israel in the New Testament. The prophets, the apostles and Christ himself, warned people using these judgments saying, "Look. Look what happened to these people. These are just shadow judgments, many judgments compared with what's going to happen." So we can use this shadow judgment to prepare for the final judgment.

The end is come. You've had many preachers, parents, loved ones, tell you again and again and again the end is coming. The end is coming. And it might be that your end comes before the end. Much of what is said here will apply to you is your end comes before the end, if you die before this happens. But we'd like to really focus tonight on the end of the end, the end of time. We'd like to look, first of all, at this in general terms and sort of worldwide terms and then look at it more personally, what it will mean for us as individuals.

Think, first of all, of the worldwide consequences, the end of planet earth. If you could view it from space, you would see God had stamped around it, "The end," on all the planets and all the stars. We are told in Psalm 102 that they will all wax old as doth a garment and as a vesture God will fold them up. That's what's going to happen at the end. God's going to take this huge universe, the earth and the sun and the moon and Mars and Jupiter and Venus and all these constellations, this galaxy, other galaxies, all the bright spots, all the black holes and it's going to be as simple to him as just folding up a shirt for putting away into storage. This huge system, God is going to just fold it up. The end.

Then time itself will be ended and such a focus this week, wasn't there, on 09, 09, 09. Everyone is looking at their watches at 9:09:09 on the ninth of the ninth of the ninth. Everyone has put their eyes on their watches to catch this special moment. Everyone will remember it, maybe. A memorable date. Well, one day that's going to stop. All watches, all clocks are going to stop. The batteries will pulse no longer. The ticks will tock no longer. The end of time. What a moment that will be. And you know, God knows the exact time he's going to stop time. He knows exactly the day, the month, the year, the second, the minute, the hour, and when that comes, not one second will ever pass again and it won't be one second late. The end of time. The end of all that time means for us. The end of diaries and planners. Over all our diaries and calendars and personal organizers is going to be written, "The end." As it were, every watch will flash up, "The end." It's over. The end of time.

And it will be the end of all history. When we look at history, we see nations rising and nations falling, empires rising and empires falling, and so it will continue until the end of time. We don't know what nations will be left then, whether this nation will be left in its present form or not. The Romans, they thought they would be there until the end of time. So did the Greek empire. So did the Persian empire. So did the Babylonian empire. So did the British empire. Empires come and empires go. That's history.

And no matter what nation is still standing at the end of time, it's the end of all nations. And if America is still standing, it will say "USA, the end. UK, the end." And whatever superpower is super at that time, it will say "the end." No more national anthems. No

more national flags. No more national emblems and symbols and songs. The end. God is going to end history.

And every movement that there's ever been. We think of all the ideologies and all the philosophies and all the false religions and written over all of them no matter how many books, no matter how many devotees and followers, will be written, "The end." Whether it's Islam or Roman Catholicism or Hinduism or formal Protestantism. Written over it all is, "The end." Speculative philosophy, Kantian philosophy, all the great names that people still read and follow, "The end."

The monarchies, the administrations, the presidents, the queens, the kings, the prime ministers, the lords, the ladies, the senators, the representatives, all political parties and all their ideologies and all their manifestos with all their power and all their influence and all the attention that is focused on them, "The end." It's over. Finished. Complete. No more chapters.

The end has come. It's going to be the end of every speech, every book and every magazine and every newspaper. You see, sometimes these newspapers, they're going out of business so rapidly today, written over them is, "Last edition." Well, over every newspaper there is going to be written, as it were, a last edition. People are going to get up that morning, they're going to read their newspapers, they're going to read this headline, that headline, what it will be we know not, but there will be no more headlines the next day because there will be no more news apart from this, "The end has come."

No more commerce. No more business. No more multi-national multi-billion companies. No little companies. Nothing. The Fortune 100 is no more. The New York Stock Exchange is no more. It's gone. The end has come. The millions and the billions stored up in accounts and banks and pensions and stocks and shares, worthless. The end has come.

Schools, seminaries, universities, colleges. They have had their last semester. They've had their last school day. They've had their last lesson. The end is come.

This is cosmic. It's universal. The end is coming and one day it will be said, "It's here."

What does that mean for you on a personal level? I'd like to speak especially this evening to unbelievers, to those who are without Christ, without hope, who are unsaved, are not born again. You know, for the Christian the end is come should not hold any terrors. I don't believe when that last trump sounds and the heavens open and Christ is revealed with his holy angels, that one of God's people will have the least tremor of fear. With that great opening of the heavens will come tremendous comfort to God's people. All their fears are over. All their fears. That's why he's coming for them, to end their fears. And he's not going to come and make them terrified one last time, is he? Grace will be given so that when these heavens open, the trumpet sounds and the shout reverberates throughout all the earth, it will be to the Lord's people the sound of joy and gladness.

For them too the end has come but it's the end of a totally different nature. It's the end of sin. It's the end of temptation. It's the end of persecution. It's the end of mocking. It's the end of misrepresentation. It's the end of laughter. It's the end of jokes at their expense. It's the end of every comedian who makes fun of Christ and his people. It's the end of every cartoonist who mocks Christ and his people. It's the end of temptation. The end of any desire ever to sin again. The end of doubt. The end of unbelief. The end of discomfort. The end of tears. The end of pain. The end of loss. The end of bereavement. The end of a sense of abandonment. The end of depression. The end of all mental illnesses. The end of all bodily ailments.

The end has come, hallelujah, shouts the Christian! The end of the devil. Brought down for the last time never to be seen again. Never to be heard again. His whisperings no more. His tormenting no more. I'll never know what it feels like to feel guilty again. I'll never know a hard heart again. I'll never wonder in prayer again. I'll never sing a Psalm and come to the end of it and think I never sang a word of it. I'll never have a disappointment. I'll never have a frustration. I'll never have a sadness. I'll never see a loved one die. I'll never see a loved one weep. I'll never see a loved one mocking and blaspheming the name of my Savior again.

For the Christian, for the believer, the end is come. It's the beginning of life as life is to be truly lived. But for the unbeliever, for the unbeliever, what will it be the end of for you? It will be the end of church. Did you have an instinctive, "That will be quite good" when I said that? "The end of church, great." You won't say that at the end. When it's the end of sermons and the end of worship, the end of prayer, it's the end of hope. There is no church in hell. There is no Gospel minister in hell. There's no one that's ever going to come to you and tell you about a loving heavenly Father like we heard this morning. No one is ever going to come and tell you about Christ as a Savior. No one is going to pray for you in hell. There are no godly pastors in hell who pray for you and weep over you in private; who look into your eyes with such compassion and love and longing for you to be saved. There is no worship which enlarges and edifies the soul. The church has ended and with it goes your last hope of salvation and you will remember that night your heart instinctively leapt when the minister said, "No more church," and that didn't concern you and worry you about your spiritual state.

It will be the end of family. There are no families in hell. No mother. No father. No opa, no oma. No brothers or sisters. Oh, they may be there as well. There won't be a family anymore. There won't be a family. Won't be a loving family. There is no love in hell. No love in hell. There will never be a family dinner table. There will never be a family worship. There will never be family gatherings. There are only individuals in hell. There are no bonds. No relationships. The family is over.

You remember the rich man who went to hell. Jesus tells us about him and when he went there, what did he plead? "Someone go and tell my brothers lest they too come to this awful place." You think, "That's quite amazing to come out of hell a concern and a compassion for a brother." It's that what you think that prayer is? Do you think that prayer is somebody wanting his brothers to be saved? No. There can never be a good

thought or good desire in hell. Why did he not want his brothers there? It wasn't so that they would go to heaven, it's so that they wouldn't come and add to his torment. No doubt a bad example to his brothers, throwing parties, entertaining them, leading them in the ways of sin and then he looks back on his life from hell and he thinks, "I'm for it. This is bad enough but it's only going to get worse when my brothers die because they're going to come here and they're not going to embrace me and they're not going to welcome me and they're not going to make this awful place better, they're going to make it worse because they're going to come and they're going to point their finger in my face and say, 'It's all your fault! It was your example. It was your urging. It was your money.'"

Families, that will be the exact opposite. There will be antagonism and hatred, torture and therefore there are no friends in hell either, are there? No friends there. You often hear that of people, they say, "Well, if I go to hell, all my friends will be there." Well, they may be there but they won't be friends. There is no friendship in hell. None. You'll never know what it is to see a smiling face again. You'll never hear a laugh, at least a laugh of happiness. There will be laughs of mockery as people take pleasure, sinful, evil, malicious pleasure in one another's pain and agony. Oh, maybe we'll hear devils' laughs and demons' laughs as they rejoice over their triumphs but we will never laugh and no one else will laugh with pleasure or happiness.

There are no friends in hell. Think of every friendship you've got and over it will be written, "The end." Maybe a friendship that's leading you astray. Maybe a boyfriend or a girlfriend that's leading you into sin and you're valuing that relationship above your relationship with God and it will ultimately mean your destruction. How will you face one another there? You will hate one another because you brought one another there.

There will be no communication. No phone calls. No texts. No letters in hell. There's no social networking in hell. There is no Facebook in hell. There is none of that communication and society. All these bonds and relationships are smashed and broken and will only add to condemnation.

One of the old Scottish ministers, John Brown of Haddington, said on his deathbed to his children this, "Avoid as plagues every light, frothy and wicked companion. Never make any your companions with whom you would not wish to appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ and with whom you would not wish to live forever." He's saying, "Go around all your friends, go around all your Facebook friends and ask yourself this question: is this a companion, is this a friend I would be happy to appear before the Judgment Seat with or is about time I unfriended a few people? Is it about time I broke some relationships and contacts in order to make sure I'm in relationship and contact with the Lord? Am I Twittering left, right and center and never praying? Am I blogging this and blogging that and never reading my Bible?" The end of friends.

The end of bodily health. You think of pains that you might have in the odd knuckle or knee or hip, every part of the body will be pained. The end of all health of body and all health of mind. Think of the deepest, dark depression and torment you've had in your mind, that will go on forever. There will never be a moment's peace or quiet out with or

within. Chaos, noise, invasions left, right and center. People intruding, never giving you a moment's rest. You'll never sleep. God himself said through Isaiah, "There is no rest for the wicked." No rest. Every time you go to lie down, "Get up!" Every time you think you've got a moment's quiet, in comes noise and clamor. Every time you think you've got a moment of comfort, in comes somebody to disrupt it and torment it. It's the end of peace, the end of quiet, the end of all comfort.

The end is come. It's the end of everything that makes this life happy. It's the end. It's the end of sinless pleasures. There are pleasures in this world that are not sinful, hobbies, past-times, vacations, skateboarding, snowboarding, hunting, shopping. But what if you've made them your god? Go to every hobby and every past-time, everything you live for that in and of itself is not sinful and to help you keep it in the right place, just keep writing over it, "The end." See it in that light. There is a time coming when this is going to end, when there will be no more vacations and no more ski seasons and no more shops to buy in them. No more of these harmless pleasures that we so easily turn into gods.

The end is come. The end of pleasure from sin itself and, you know, sometimes you might hear people say, "There is no pleasure in sin." Well, that's not true, is it? It's just not true. We know it's not true. We do get pleasure from sin, even the Bible tells us that. It talks of Moses that he denied himself the pleasures of sin. The Bible doesn't say there's no pleasure in sin, what the Bible says is these pleasures are short; that they are the pleasures of sin for a season. So you sin and you get pleasure from it, don't you. You enjoy it. It gives you some satisfaction.

But when the end comes, it won't be the end of sin but it will be the end of satisfaction from sin. It will be the end of pleasure from sin whether it's breaking the Lord's day, whether it's hating other people, whether it's lust, whether it's lies, whether it's thieving, whether it's envying. All these sins will continue but the pleasure you get from them will be at an end. You think of hell, think of it as a place of unbridled sin, unbridled lust. Think of the worst perversions and immoralities and evils and they will all be there but not one ounce of pleasure from any of them. The end is come.

We'd like to think of what to do about this. Why did God send Ezekiel with this message, this fearful message? One word: love. This was why God sent the prophets. He sent them with warnings out of love. Rather than take the nation by surprise, unexpected, he sent prophets to stir them up, to awaken them, to show them the horror of what lay ahead and to call them to himself. And we see this so so clearly in all the prophets. You read them, there can be ten chapters of judgment but the last one is full of appeal and love and affection. We see it in Isaiah, 39 chapters of judgment and then 26 of compassion and pleading and beseeching. And we see it in Ezekiel too. He comes, yes, with this note of terrifying judgment to the unbelievers and the unrepentant but only to call them to himself, to God himself.

You notice, for example in Ezekiel 18, the words of the Lord, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" What's God saying here? He's saying, "I'm sending this man, this herald, and he's coming to you and he's got an awful message, and I take no pleasure

in the message or your rejection of it. Why am I sending it?" He's saying, "This is why: that you should return from your ways and live." This is his great motive, his great end. He doesn't just say it once. Again at the end of chapter 18, he says, "Cast away from you all your transgression whereby you have transgressed and make you a new heart and a new spirit for why will you die, O house of Israel?" He's pleading with them. He says again, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Wherefore, turn yourselves and live ye." And again just in case that doesn't get through, later on, chapter 33, again he comes and he says in chapter 33 about the forgiveness that he offers, he says, "Turn from your ways to that which is lawful and right. As I live," here God is swearing, he's lifting up his hand, as it were, and swearing, "As I live, on my life saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

This is why he's sending messengers to you even to this day because he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He has no pleasure in the death of him that dies. He has no pleasure in the fact that some are going to get to the last day unprepared. They have heard the warnings, they have heard the pleadings, they have heard the ministers say, "The end is coming. The end is near." And then the end comes and they are not ready. God says, "I have no pleasure in this. This is not what I want. It's not what I delight in. I'd rather it was the other way. Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?" He's saying, "Give me a reason. Give me one good reason why you should get to the end unready and unprepared. Give me one good reason why you should hold onto your sins. Give me one good reason why you should not believe in Jesus Christ and be saved. Give me one good reason why you should reject the Gospel again."

"Why? Why? Why?" He's pleading with you. Do you not feel it? Do you not sense it? He's grabbing you by the soul and he's shaking you and he's arguing with you and he's beseeching you. He's saying, "Explain this to me if you can, and if you can't, then there's only one thing to do and that's bow and bend and worship and believe in me." And this is what he takes pleasure in. This is what he delights in. In other words, he wants to hear these words, "The end has come," but in a different way. He wants to hear you say of your sins, "The end has come." He wants you to say of your unbelief and your lack of repentance, "The end has come." He wants you to say of your procrastination and your tomorrowism, "The end has come."

He wants you to take every excuse and every obstacle that you keep throwing up and throw them away and say, "The end. The end has come." And he wants you to take faith and Christ as Savior and say, "This is the beginning. This is the start." Will you? Will you say of your past life, "The end. It's over," and by God's grace start life as God means it to be lived?

Young people, some of you planned tomorrow morning in this service, what will you wish you'd done 1,000 years from now? What will you wish you'd done a million years from now? And then another million? And then another? Because if you go to hell, it will

never be said, "The end has come." Hell has no end. Why will you die? Why will you die? Turn and live.