EZEKIEL 9

Marked Before the Sword

> *“The LORD said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.’”*
> EZEKIEL 9:4

Where Ezekiel has brought us

1. Chapters 8 through 11 are one long vision, dated “in the sixth year” of the exile (8:1), about September 592 BC.

2. Chapter 9 opens with God Himself crying out “with a loud voice” (v1) for judgment.



The Executioners Come

God calls six armed men and one man in linen to the bronze altar

EZEKIEL 9:1

Then He cried out in my hearing with a loud voice saying, "Draw near, O executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand."

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik takes the six men as angels.

WHAT IT MEANS

God answers the elders who said "the LORD does not see" by calling for the executioners of the city (v1). They come from the north gate, where the idol of jealousy stood (8:5) and the direction Babylon will come from.

Pequddah (פְּקֻדָּה)
PEQUDDAH · "OVERSIGHT, VISITATION"

The executioners are literally 'those in charge' of the city, from pequddah: oversight, visitation, punishment. It is the word for an official appointed to inspect and to act on what he finds.

The Glory Moves and the Mark Goes Out

The glory steps to the threshold, and the faithful are marked on the forehead

EZEKIEL 9:3

Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed in linen at whose loins was the writing case.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik reads the tav as a protective sign, like the Passover blood (Exod 12:13) and Rahab's scarlet cord (Josh 2:18), and he quotes Block calling it a sign of hope.

WHAT IT MEANS

Two things happen in two verses. First, “the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple” (v3).

Tav (תָּו)

TAV · “MARK”

The word “mark” in v4 is tav, which is also the name of the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the script of Ezekiel's day that letter was written like an X or a cross.

The Tav: God Marks His Own Before Judgment

The Mark on the Forehead (9:4)



tav · H8420

last letter of the alphabet, written like an X or cross

THE SAME PATTERN IN SCRIPTURE

- **Passover blood** on the doorposts · Exod 12:13
- **Rahab's scarlet cord** in the window · Josh 2:18
- **The tav** on the foreheads · Ezek 9:4, 6
- **Servants sealed** on the forehead · Rev 7:3

Who was marked? Not the strongest or most religious: **those who sigh and groan**

The tav was written like an X or a cross in Ezekiel's day, and Scripture repeats the pattern of a protective mark before judgment.

Start From My Sanctuary

Judgment begins with the elders standing before the temple

EZEKIEL 9:5

But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik connects this order with Peter's words that 'it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God' (1 Pet 4:17).

WHAT IT MEANS

The command is terrible: "do not let your eye have pity and do not spare" (v5). No one is exempt by age. Yet in the same breath God says, "but do not touch any man on whom is the mark" (v6).

Miqdash (מִקְדָּשׁ)
MIQDASH · "HOLY PLACE"

Miqdash means a holy place, a sanctuary, a space set apart for God. That is what makes v6 so jarring: "you shall start from My sanctuary."

On His Face, and the Report

Ezekiel pleads for the remnant; the man in linen says the work is done

EZEKIEL 9:8

As they were striking the people and I alone was left, I fell on my face and cried out saying, "Alas, Lord GOD! Are You destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Your wrath on Jerusalem?"

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik cites Taylor that behind his hard message Ezekiel had deep compassion. He cites Block: since the righteous are already marked, the fate of the wicked is sealed.

WHAT IT MEANS

Ezekiel is left alone among the slain and falls on his face: "Alas, Lord GOD!" (v8). He preached judgment, but he did not enjoy it.

She'erith (שְׁאֵרִית)
SHE'ERITH · "REMNANT"

She'erith is the remainder, the survivors, what is left after a disaster. Ezekiel's cry in v8 is about the she'erith: "Are You destroying the whole remnant of Israel by pouring out Your wrath on Jerusalem?"

What to carry from this chapter

1

God answers in the same voice.

Chapter 8 ended with the people crying to God with a loud voice; chapter 9 opens with God crying out with a loud voice for judgment.

2

Mercy arrives with the swords.

Among the six armed men walks a man in linen carrying a scribe's writing case, sent to mark before anyone strikes.

3

The glory steps to the door.

From the cherub to the threshold (v3), then the east gate (10:19), then the mountain (11:23): God leaves slowly.

4

The mark is a tav.

The last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, written in Ezekiel's day like an X or a cross.

More to carry

5

Grief over sin was the mark's reason.

The marked were the men who sigh and groan over the city's abominations, not the powerful or the pious.

6

Judgment begins at God's house.

Guzik links “start from My sanctuary” with Peter's warning that judgment begins with the household of God.

7

Their own words became the charge.

The people said the LORD does not see (8:12), and God quoted it back as the reason for judgment (9:9).

8

The work was finished.

The chapter ends with the man in linen: the marking is done and not one marked man was touched.

Talk it through

1. Why do you think God sent the man in linen to mark before He sent the six to strike?

2. The marked were those who “sigh and groan over all the abominations.” What does grieving over sin look like in a man's life today?

3. Judgment started with the elders before the temple. Why would being closest to God's house make them first, not safest?

4. Ezekiel fell on his face for people under judgment. How should we carry hard truth toward men who reject it?

5. What comfort does the report in v11 give a man who feels forgotten in a crowd, a cell, or a broken home?

CLOSING

Before the sword, the mark. God saw every abomination in His house, and He saw every man who grieved over it. In Christ the mark is the cross, and the One who marks His own has said His work is done.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides and reflection journal: see the Ezekiel study page.