

## Ezekiel Part 14 (Ezekiel 14)

1. **14:1-5** A group of elders or leaders of Israel came to Ezekiel for instruction (v. 1). These leaders already had demonstrated a halfhearted piety.
2. They prayed for deliverance from Babylon but were not ready to give God his rightful place in their hearts.
3. They had adopted Babylonian values, goals, and standards but still considered themselves worshipers of Yahweh.
4. So God asked, "Should I let them inquire of me at all?" (v. 3).
5. These leaders served the worst idols, the idols of their minds (v. 4). Their thoughts were under pagan control, so they were open to all forms of apostate practices.
6. Such sin was grounds for excluding a person from the community of worship because it was a spiritual "stumbling block" (v. 4).
7. **14:6-11** The language of personal responsibility used in v. 4 continues in v. 7.
8. Any Israelite, or "any stranger," was admonished to turn back to God.
9. Those who inquired of false prophets and followed their advice would be punished personally by God. Their judgment would become an example to everyone.
10. The false prophets were not exempt from judgment about to fall on the land. God warned them also of impending judgment (v. 9).
11. This verse clearly states that the deception of these false prophets was allowed by and even encouraged by God as a part of the judgment process.
12. But this was to be judgment with a purpose (Ezekiel 14:11). It was to purge idolatry from the lives and minds of the people and to renew their covenant relationship and fidelity to the Lord.
13. The second prophecy of this chapter continues the same judgment theme by explaining the fourfold judgment to befall Jerusalem and the irrevocable nature of that judgment.
14. The fourfold judgment of Jerusalem was introduced in Ezekiel 5:1-17 and is again reviewed here: famine (14:12-14), wild beasts (14:15-16), the sword (14:17-18), and pestilence (14:19-21).
15. The chapter concludes with an assurance that such devastation was just and necessary. (14:22-23).
16. These four devastations were among the most feared threats to life in the ancient Near East. They also were part of divine judgment associated with the end time in Rev 6:1-8.

17. **14:12-14** The point of the passage is that Israel was under a divine judgment that was irreversible in its very nature.
18. Ezekiel portrayed a severe famine that resulted in the loss of life for humans and animals.
19. The famine would be so serious that its effect would not be averted though righteous men of the quality of Noah, Job, and Daniel were found in the midst (Ezekiel 14:14).
20. **14:15-16** The second judgment mentioned was the visitation of wild beasts. This judgment pointed to the utter desolation of the land.
21. Wild beasts would leave the country childless so that it was robbed of further hope of renewal.
22. Neither sons nor daughters would be delivered (Ezekiel 14:16).
23. **14:17-18** The third judgment was the “sword” that obviously represented warfare (v. 17).
24. Though righteous men such as Noah, Job, or Daniel were found in the land, their cumulative righteousness could not prevent the inevitability of judgment to come.
25. The certainty of their peril was assured by God’s personal oath, “as surely as I live,” accompanying each of the last three devastations (vv. 16, 18, 20).
26. This type of oath is found sixteen times in Ezekiel and only six times elsewhere.
27. **14:19-21** The fourth judgment was plague or disease, especially epidemics. These were considered acts of divine judgment.
28. This time the warning of the judgment by plague was aimed at Judah and Jerusalem.
29. Therefore God promised a bloody death in which no son or daughter would be spared. Ezekiel’s message closely resembled the message of Amos 9:1-10, which warned that God’s judgments are inescapable (see also Amos 5:18-19).
30. This mention of the deterrent power of the righteous is an obvious allusion to Gen 18:22-33. There Abraham sought to intercede on behalf of Sodom, and God agreed to spare the cities if ten righteous were found. Yet Yahweh would not spare Jerusalem though the three outstanding examples of righteousness and integrity in the face of wickedness were found in it (v. 20).
31. The plague was used as an illustration of coming judgment as had been done in the prophecy of 5:1-17.
32. What a tragedy when the heathen invite God’s punishment. What an unthinkable tragedy when God’s own people, who should know better, incur greater judgment.
33. **14:22-23** Ezekiel, like Jeremiah (Jer 44:27ff.) and Amos (Amos 9:8, 11-15), spoke of total annihilation but also predicted the survival of a small remnant (Ezekiel 14:22).
34. The comfort would not come “in the midst” of judgment but “out of” (v. 22) or “by” it.