

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

ON THE TEXT OF EZEKIEL 7 5-14

JULIUS A. BEWER
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN this notoriously difficult chapter there are a number of passages which have baffled the ingenuity of textual critics and exegetes. Some of the most perplexing ones are in vv. 7, 10, 11, 13, 14. An attempt at a fresh solution of them will be made in the following notes.

1. Ezek. 7 7 b, 11 b. For the reconstruction of the text of the first part of the chapter it is important to keep in mind that vv. 3-7 and vv. 8-12 a are doublets. Not only vv. 3-4 and vv. 8-9 are doublets, but also vv. 5-7 and vv. 10-12 a.

3 עתה הקץ עליך ושלחתי אפי בך ושפמתיך כדרכיך ונתתי עליך את כל-תועבותיך ולא-תחוס עיני עליך ולא אחמול כי דרכיך עליך אתן ותועבותיך בתוכך תהיין וידעתם כי אני יהוה כה אמר יהוה	8 עתה מקרוב אשפך חמתי עליך וכליתי אפי בך ושפמתיך כדרכיך ונתתי עליך את כל-תועבותיך ולא-תחוס עיני ולא אחמול כדרכיך עליך אתן ותועבותיך בתוכך תהיין וידעתם כי אני יהוה מכה
4	9
5 רעה אתת רעה הנה באה 6 קץ בא בא הקץ הקיץ אליך הנה באה 7 באה הצפידה אליך ישב הארץ	10 הנה היום הנה באה יצאה הצפידה
בא העת קרוב היום מהומה ולא-יהד הרים	11 צץ המטה פרח החרון החמס קם למטה-הרשע לא מהם ולא מהמונם ולא מהמדם ולא נה בהם 12 בא העת הגיע היום

This gives us the clue for the solution of the impossible reading קָרוֹב הַיָּמִים מְהֵמָה וְלֹא הָיָה הַרְרִים in v. 7 b, which AV translates, "the day of trouble [!] is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains;" RV, "the day is near, a day of tumult, and not of joyful shouting upon the mountains." The difficulties of this text need not be enumerated here. There are variant readings of it in v. 11,

לֹא מֵהֶמָּה וְלֹא מִהַמְּנוֹם
וְלֹא מִהֵמָה וְלֹא נָה בָהֶם

Unfortunately, these are also corrupt. AV translates them, "none of them *shall remain*, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs: neither *shall there be* wailing for them"; RV, "none of them *shall remain*, nor of their multitude, nor of their wealth: neither shall there be eminency among them"; RV margin, "not from them, nor from their multitude, nor from their wealth, neither shall there be wailing for them." The parallel in v. 7 as well as 6 there and here show that there was originally only one pair of negative statements, not two. We have therefore in וְלֹא מִהַמְּנוֹם a variant of the preceding וְלֹא מֵהֶמָּה and in וְלֹא נָה בָהֶם a variant of וְלֹא מִהֵמָה. It is true, they all look so much alike that one might think at first that they are all variants of one single phrase. But we shall see that that would be a mistake. The pity of it is that they are all corrupt. The ancient Versions were also based on corrupt Hebrew texts, but in spite of this 6 and Σ point the way to the original. The context speaks of the coming of the end, "the time is come, the day is near." 6 translates the continuation in v. 7 οὐ μετὰ θορύβων οὐδὲ μετὰ ὀδύνων, in v. 11 οὐ μετὰ θορύβου οὐδὲ μετὰ σπουδῆς. The second is the important reading for us, "not with tumult nor with haste." In both cases 6 has the negative with "tumult" and this is sustained by MT in v. 11. Οὐδὲ μετὰ σπουδῆς points to וְלֹא מִהֵמָה as the Hebrew text instead of וְלֹא הָיָה הַרְרִים in v. 7 and its variants in v. 11. But that does not fit here either, surely not with the negative, because the whole stress lies on the announcement that the day is near at hand. Σ omits quite logically the negative and reads, according to the translation

of Jerome, "festinationis." But this is due to the intelligence of the translator and not to be followed. Σ suggests the solution when he proceeds, "et non recrastinationis." This gives us the clue for the original reading of **מְהֵמָה** in v. 7 and of its variants in v. 11. It was **לֹא מְתַמְהָמָה** "it does not tarry," as is at once clear from a comparison of

לֹא מְהֵמָה

and

לֹא מְתַמְהָמָה.

Now we perceive also that *μετὰ σπουδῆς* in Θ and Σ ($\Theta + \sigma\upsilon\delta\acute{\epsilon}$) points to an original **לֹא מְאָתָר** "nor does it delay" for **וְלֹא הָרַח הָרִים** and its variant in v. 11.

**בֵּא הָעֵת קָרוֹב הַיּוֹם
לֹא מְתַמְהָמָה וְלֹא מְאָתָר**

The time is come, the day is near,
it does not tarry nor delay.

This fits into the context admirably, and it has moreover a fine parallel in Hab. 2 3:

**אִם יִתְמַהְמָה חֲבֵה־לֹו
כִּי־בֹא יִבֹּא לֹא יֵאָתָר**

If it tarry, wait for it,
for it will surely come, it will not delay.

The variant of **לֹא מְאָתָר** in v. 11 is **לֹא מְהֵמָה**, for which **לֹא מְהֵמָה** is an attempted correction. It will be noted that the order differs in v. 11 from that of v. 7, but that is after all a minor matter. Σ has "festinationis et non recrastinationis" in this order in v. 7. The order of vv. 11 b-12 a^c differs also from its parallel v. 7. Read therefore in v. 11 **לֹא מְאָתָר וְלֹא מְתַמְהָמָה**.

2. Ezek. 7 5-7 a. We note again variant readings,

**5 הִגִּיהָ בָּאָה 6 קָץ בָּא בָּא הַקָּץ הַקָּיִץ אֲלֵיךְ
7 בָּאָה הַצְּפִירָה אֲלֵיךְ הִגִּיהָ בָּאָה**

In MT **בָּאָה** in v. 5 is taken with the preceding, but it belongs most probably with v. 6 and read originally, with different separation of the consonants, **הִגִּיהָ בָּא הַקָּץ**. The

reading **קץ בא**, the indeterminate noun with the verb following, is almost certainly wrong; the parallel in v. 2 is not right either. The correct reading follows, **בא הקץ**. One **בא** in v. 6 is due to dittography, and the text must read **הנה בא הקץ הנה בא הקץ**, or rather **הנה בא הקץ**, for the second **בא הקץ** appears to be merely the correction of the first.

In addition, it is significant to observe that **6** has simply **קץ בא הקץ** [הנה] for v. 6b and the first two words of v. 7. This fortifies the belief that

הנה בא הקץ הקץ אלך
הנה באה באה הצפירה אלך

are variants. It appears certain, moreover, that **הקץ** is a variant of **הקץ**, and that it was meant by the insertor not as a verb **הקץ**, as MT takes it — “it awaketh” RV, but as a noun **הקץ** — “the summer” or “the summer harvest.” We find it similarly as a parallel to **הקץ** in Am. 8 1, 2, which passage may have been in the mind of the annotator. If this reading **הקץ** has been recognized correctly, we have gained also the key for unlocking the mystery of **הצפירה**. It is agreed that the various renderings, “thy doom,” “the turn,” “the crowning time” (RV text and margin), “morning” (AV) are untenable. Since the line **הנה באה הצפירה**—one **באה** is to be omitted as due to dittography—is parallel to **הנה בא הקץ**, we are led to believe that in **הצפירה** there was originally an expression directly parallel to **הקץ**, and that can hardly have been anything else than **הבציר** “the vintage,” cf. Jer. 48 32; Mic. 7 1. The text should then be interpreted according to the annotator:

הנה בא הקץ
הנה בא הבציר

Behold, the fruit harvest comes,
behold, the vintage comes!

Of course, this is to be taken in a figurative sense for the final judgment. This is quite interesting and suggestive, but it was not the original meaning of Ezekiel. **6** shows that the original text had nothing else but

הנה בא הקץ.

All the rest is secondary. And this must be maintained whether the explanation of the origin of the reading of הַצְפִירָה, which has just been given, is correct or not.

3. Ezek. 7 10, 11 a. The parallel to vv. 5-7 in v. 10 a supports, to my mind, the correctness of the explanation of הַצְפִירָה. It reads

הִנֵּה בָאָה יִצְאָה הַצְפִירָה

That this is corrupt is apparent. Quite apart from הַצְפִירָה, the two unconnected verbs show it. But with the help of vv. 6, 7 we can now restore it:

הִנֵּה בָאָה יִצְאָה הַצְפִירָה
הִנֵּה בָּא הַקֵּץ בָּא הַבְּצִיר

The article of הַקֵּץ had wrongly been joined to בָּא, cf. vv. 5, 6; the *q* of הַקֵּץ had been accidentally omitted, also the *ב* of the following בָּא, and the words have then been joined as well as possible. Moreover, the article of הַבְּצִיר had been written twice, once it was added to בָּא; and הַבְּצִיר had been corrupted to הַצְפִירָה, the final ה belonged originally to the following word, as we shall see below.

Here in v. 10 6 has again as in vv. 6, 7 simply הַקֵּץ בָּא, showing that our reconstruction of בָּאָה יִצְאָה is correct. 6 does not have הַצְפִירָה [בָּאָה הַצְפִירָה] here either, which is a strong witness of its secondary character.

But 6 did have the rest of v. 10 b and v. 11 a and that is very significant, for these verses are connected with the variant reading הַקֵּץ for הַקֵּץ. They speak of the blossoming, budding and growing of violence, pride and wickedness and thus naturally suggest the harvest. The text is here again not certain. For קָץ we should probably read הַצִּיץ (Jahn), since the Hiph'il is the ordinary form of the verb (Ges.-Buhl); the ה had been joined to the preceding when הַבְּצִיר was corrupted to הַצְפִירָה. Since קָרַח הַזֶּהוּן is parallel to הַצִּיץ הַמַּטָּה, it is clear that הַמַּטָּה cannot be pointed correctly in MT as הַמַּטָּה "the rod," for that is not a real parallel. We should probably point הַמַּטָּה as in Ezek. 9 9. הַתְּחִסִּים appears to be secondary from its very position in v. 11. It was originally in the margin, where it was intended to suggest the meaning (and reading) of

המטה, cf. the strict parallel of 9 9 in 7 23 where תָּקַם takes the place of כִּפְּהָה. In קָם לְמִטָּה רָשָׁע the subject must be רָשָׁע, if we are to follow the analogy of the preceding, and this suggests also that the article in הַרָשָׁע was probably omitted by haplography. We should therefore read: קָם לְמִטָּה הַרָשָׁע. This brings it into line with the rest of the passage.

Perverted justice has blossomed,
pride has budded,
wickedness has risen up into a rod.

In the parallel to vv. 10–12 a which we have in v. 7 this whole passage of the blossoming, budding and growing of iniquity is wanting. Was it really an original part of the chapter? We saw that הַקִּיץ and הַבְּצִיר בֹּא הֵנָּה were not original parts of vv. 6, 7, as 6 shows, which has them neither in vv. 6, 7 nor in v. 10. They must have come into vv. 6, 7 in MT from v. 10. V. 11 b connects directly with v. 10 a.

10 a Behold, the day! Behold, the end has come!

10 b Perverted justice has blossomed,
pride has budded,

11 a wickedness has risen up into a rod.

It does not tarry nor delay.

12 a The time has come, the day has drawn near.

It is most likely that vv. 10 b, 11 a are a later insertion which interrupts the context.¹ They are rather unusual, poetic in form and expression, and may be a quotation from somewhere.

4. Ezek. 7 12–14. The same line occurs three times in these verses,

כִּי תָרוּן אֶל־קֵל־הַמּוֹנָה v. 12 b

כִּי תָחוּן אֶל־קֵל־הַמּוֹנָה v. 13 b

כִּי תָרוּנִי אֶל־קֵל־הַמּוֹנָה v. 14 b

They were, of course, originally all alike, and it is obvious that תָּחוּן in v. 13 b must be changed to תָּרוּן. Strangely enough, 6^B omits the sentence in all instances, and that makes its

¹ If the order of v. 11 b and v. 12 a were as in v. 7, this argument would not be so strong.

originality very doubtful. But we shall see below that it is a genuine part of v. 14. There it fits very well, and there even 6 witnesses for it, if we see it aright. From there it was introduced later into vv. 13, 14.

In v. 13 we note two variant readings:

לא ישוב ועוד בחיים חיותם
לא ישוב ואיש בעונו חיותו

6 has only the second, reading however בעינו instead of בעונו. In this MT and 6 are both wrong, for their readings do not make good sense, not even MT "and they shall strengthen themselves each in (or by) his iniquity with respect to his life." As the variant reading shows, בעונו or בעינו was originally בעוד, or if it was בעודני it must have been followed by חי instead of חיו, — "each as long as he lives." That is also the meaning of the variant ועוד בחיים חיותם which originally must have read ועוד בחיים חיותם (Ehrlich) "as long as they are still alive," or בחיים and חיותם must be regarded as variants. So far we have then this:

Let not the buyer rejoice,
nor the seller mourn,
for the seller shall not return to that which is sold,
not² one as long as he lives.

We expect now in the following some elaboration of "let not the buyer rejoice" parallel to the elaboration on the seller. Cornill saw this long ago and suggested הקונה בקנין כספו לא יחזיק "and the buyer shall not keep that which he bought for his money" as the original reading instead of ואיש בעונו חיותו לא יתחזקו. The reading לא יתחזקו for לא יחזיק is that of 6 and is therefore well supported. But to regard הקונה בקנין כספו as the original of ואיש בעונו חיותו is very difficult for graphical reasons. And yet Cornill was on the right track, only he should have looked for the corrupt text in the following תקעו בתקוע and not in the preceding. Strangely enough, Cornill kept this as a sound text. But it seems quite clear

² The force of the negative holds over from the preceding.

that v. 14 as it stands cannot be right, for it does not fit into the context, either in the reading of MT, "they have blown the trumpet, and have made all ready; but none goeth to the battle, for my wrath is upon all the multitude thereof" (RV) or in the reading of Cornill, "Blaset nur und rüstet nur [תִּקְעוּ תִקְעוּ וְהָיִינוּ הַבָּן]—es marschirt doch Niemand zum Gefecht, denn Grimm (lastet) auf all ihrem Gepränge." Cornill could have found here what he was looking for, because תִּקְעוּ בתִּקְעוּ was originally

הַתִּקְעָה בְּתִקְעָן

which together with the preceding וְלֹא יִחְזִיק (6) means, "the buyer shall not keep that which he bought."

In the rest of v. 14 we have again some variant readings. First of all

הַבִּינוּ הַכֵּל

and

וּמֵיז הַלֵּךְ.

6 has only the first. The second is nothing but an attempted correction. Both readings are wrong. They were occasioned by the corrupted תִּקְעוּ בתִּקְעוּ which spoke of the alarm signal for war. The following לַמַּלְחָמָה is also due to this misunderstanding. But what could possibly have been the original reading of the line? It is significant that 6 does not have כִּי חָרוּנִי אֶל־כָּל־הַמּוֹנָה, and yet it does not only fit here very well, but we need it in order to explain the intrusion of the clause in vv. 12, 13. Cornill's intuition was here again quite right, when he called attention to this. But he did not see that it was originally also in the Hebrew text that underlay the text of 6. As one looks more closely at it, one discovers that it is the correct variant reading of the corrupt

הַבִּינוּ הַכֵּל לַמַּלְחָמָה

חָרוֹן אֶל־כָּל־הַמּוֹנָה

6 has only the one (corrupt) reading, MT has also the correct one side by side with the other.

Vv. 12-14 read therefore originally:

Let not the buyer rejoice,
nor the seller mourn,
for the seller shall not return to that which is sold,
not one as long as he lives.
Nor shall the buyer keep that which he bought,
for (my) wrath is upon all its multitude.

The suffix in **וְעַל** refers to the land.