

## Reading Guide for Ezekiel 14:12-15:8

This unit centers around the theme of the inevitability and necessity of the coming judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem because of its great sin before Yahweh. The two oracles that make up this unit continue to confront the exilic community with the reality of this judgment.

In addition to both oracles looking ahead to the fall of Jerusalem, they share other similarities. They both move from a general statement about judgment to a specific oracle against Jerusalem, linked by the phrase “how much more/less when...” (14:21, 15:5). Also, the crime of “acting faithlessly” appears in both (14:13, 15:8).

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### **The Inevitability of Judgment Upon Jerusalem (14:12-23)**

*This oracle begins with a general decree concerning the Lord's judgment upon any land that sins against Him. There are four hypothetical cases that each focus on a specific covenant curse and conclude with a statement that eliminates the possibility of salvation through intercession (regardless of who prays!).*

*In verse 21, the oracle then moves from a hypothetical statement regarding judgment to specific judgment on a specific place, Jerusalem. If the exiles were in fact holding on to hope that the presence of a few righteous in the city would be enough to save it, this oracle dispels that notion. God's righteousness necessitates what must be inflicted upon Jerusalem, just like it would any other land.*

*Message-reception formula (14:12)*

*Hypothetical Cases Regarding Judgment Upon Any Land that Sins (14:13-20)*

*Punishment by Famine (14:13-14)*

*Punishment by Wild Beasts (14:15-16)*

*Punishment by Sword (14:17-18)*

*Punishment by Pestilence (14:19-20)*

*Judgment Upon Jerusalem (14:21-23)*

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### **A Metaphor of the Necessity of Judgment on Jerusalem's Residents (15:1-8)**

*The first half of this oracle (vv. 2-5) speaks metaphorically about the fate of the useless wood of the grapevine, which on account of what it is, must be burned. Like in the previous oracle, the message shifts emphasis from a general statement to its specific application to the residents of Jerusalem.*

*The exiles believed that the reason the Lord would not destroy Jerusalem was because the Lord saw them as having inherent value; yet they are confronted with the hard reality that He sees them as having no more usefulness than the wood of the vine.*

*Message-reception formula (15:1)*

*Metaphor of the Grapevine: What is Useless is Burned Up (15:2-5)*

*Judgment Upon the Residents of Jerusalem (15:6-8)*