

## Ezekiel 9:4-7

(4) And the LORD said to him, "Go through in the midst of the city, in the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark on the foreheads of the men who are groaning and are mourning because of all the abominations that are done in her midst." (5) And He said to those in my hearing, "Go through the city after him, and slaughter. Let not your eye spare, nor have pity. (6) Fully destroy old *men*, young men and virgins, and little children and women. But do not come near any man on whom *is* the mark. And begin at My sanctuary." And they began with the old men who *were* before the temple. (7) And He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and slaughtered in the city.

*A Faithful Version*

Ezekiel 9 records the prophet's vision of the marking of those "who [sigh and cry](#) over all the abominations that are done" ([Ezekiel 9:4](#)) and the slaying of all those who do not ([Ezekiel 9:5-7](#)). [God](#) explains to Ezekiel, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!'" ([Ezekiel 9:9](#)). What does it mean to "sigh and cry"?

The Hebrew word for "sigh" is *'ânah*, which means "to sigh, groan, or gasp." The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* comments, "Ezekiel's references point to exercise of heart on the part of those who sighed over Israel's desperate spiritual condition." "Cry" is translated from *'ânaq*, which literally means "to shriek" but is used of crying, groaning, or lamenting. These nearly identical sounding words mean much the same thing. The difference is that sighing is inward, while crying is an outward expressing of our inner grief.

Are we saddened to see what has become of our country and its people? Do we "cry out" against the ravages of [sin](#) among our family and friends? Or, sadly, have we become inured to it, calloused by constant contact with it, or even apathetic about it? If Ezekiel 9 is any indication, it is time to let God know where we stand.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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