

[Ezekiel 9:4-7](#)

(4) and said to him, "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it." (5) As I listened, he said to the others, "Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. (6) Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple. (7) Then he said to them, "Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain. Go!" So they went out and began killing throughout the city.

New International 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

To learn more, see:

[Inured, Calloused, Apathetic](#)

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