

EZEKIEL 8

In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign LORD came on me there. ² I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. ³ He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. ⁴ And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain.

⁵ Then he said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked, and in the entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy.

⁶ And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the Israelites are doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable."

⁷ Then he brought me to the entrance to the court. I looked, and I saw a hole in the wall. ⁸ He said to me, "Son of man, now dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and saw a doorway there.

⁹ And he said to me, "Go in and see the wicked and detestable things they are doing here." ¹⁰ So I went in and looked, and I saw portrayed all over the walls all kinds of crawling things and unclean animals and all the idols of Israel. ¹¹ In front of them stood seventy elders of Israel, and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan was standing among them. Each had a censer in his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising.

¹² He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They say, 'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land.'" ¹³ Again, he said, "You will see them doing things that are even more detestable."

¹⁴ Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD, and I saw women sitting there, mourning the god Tammuz. ¹⁵ He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see things that are even more detestable than this."

¹⁶ He then brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD, and there at the entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. With their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east.

¹⁷ He said to me, "Have you seen this, son of man? Is it a trivial matter for the people of Judah to do the detestable things they are doing here? Must they also fill the land with violence and continually arouse my anger? Look at them putting the branch to their nose! ¹⁸ Therefore I will deal with them in anger; I will not look on them with pity or spare them. Although they shout in my ears, I will not listen to them."

Today we start a new division of the book of Ezekiel

The storyline is changing in dramatic ways

Previously, we studied how Ezekiel was commissioned and called as a prophet in the midst of Judah's exile • And how the Lord asked Ezekiel to communicate difficult news through pantomime and with strong words

Today, we begin a four-chapter section that explains why and how the glory of God departs from Israel's temple

Chapters 8-9 give the reasons why God's glory must depart

Chapters 10-11 explain His departure in several stages

It's a fascinating account for several reasons, but especially because it illustrates the Lord's patience with His children

For a second time, Ezekiel receives an audience with the glory of God...

What Ezekiel saw was a representation of God, something the Bible calls the Shekinah glory of God...

So having appeared to Ezekiel, the Lord now directs Ezekiel's attention back to Jerusalem to witness events taking place at the temple...

In v.3 the Lord catches hold of Ezekiel by a lock of hair on his head...

This passage shows us clearly the ministry of the Holy Spirit!

First, He calls us into a relationship with Jesus, gifting us to serve our Lord and sealing us for our day of redemption...

The Spirit takes Ezekiel to the north gate of the inner court of the temple in Jerusalem...

2 KINGS 21/ EXODUS 20

The Lord is jealous for His people, and He has every reason to expect us to give Him our affections, our worship and praise, and our faithfulness...

REVELATION 4

That scene describes a future event, a time when you and I will be present in the throne room of God...

God will not share His Glory with anyone...

1 KINGS 8

For now, the Lord wants Ezekiel to see the full extent of Israel's abominations so that when He acts, there can be no doubt that His judgment was justified...

The Lord shows Ezekiel five examples of the sin Israel committed in His presence in the temple...

Beginning with this idol standing by the north gate...

The north gate was the gate through which animal sacrifices entered into the court of the temple...

As a result, the idol has defiled the temple court and the sacrifices that entered into it...

The Lord's glory cannot be united with idolatry... 2 CORINTHIANS 6

- Ezekiel is led through a hole in the wall into a room in the temple compound...

Now the Lord brings Ezekiel one step deeper into the temple, going past the north gate and into the inner court...

At this entrance, women were seated weeping over Tammuz...

Tammuz is an ancient pagan god who goes by various names among different ancient cultures... Tammuz is also known as Adonis among the Greeks...

Worship of Tammuz was essentially worship of nature, something we might call New Age...

He was the god of spring vegetation, so he was known as the dying and rising god...

For just as spring vegetation dies in the fall and rises again in the spring...

This abomination is worse than the previous idolatry because worship of Tammuz involved use of prostitutes in the temple... The women were weeping as part of their act as prostitutes... They wept as a display to invite a man to take them...

So clearly, this perversion is worse than idolatry by itself...

But a worse abomination follows...

