

Ezekiel Part 8 (Ezekiel 8)

1. Ezekiel 8-11 is a single vision Ezekiel receives about 14 months after the previous dated vision in 3:16.
2. As they practiced their idolatry in the temple - the elders in Jerusalem were not concerned with whether or not God knew or not. (Ezekiel 8:12)
3. Thinking that God cannot see you is one thing - but not caring if He does is another. The people in Jerusalem were very wrong. (Psalm 139:11-12)
4. Ezekiel saw a glowing humanlike figure in verse 2 - similar in appearance to the one he reported in his first vision in 1:26-28.
5. The angel put forth his hand, lifted the prophet by a lock of his hair, and brought him to Jerusalem (v. 3).
6. **8:5-6** Ezekiel stated that the figure brought him “in visions of God” to Jerusalem.
7. The trip to Jerusalem was a visionary experience in which his body remained in Babylon seated before the elders (v. 1).
8. Upon his “arrival” at the temple in Jerusalem - Ezekiel saw the first of the four forms of idol worship.
9. He saw an image called an “idol of jealousy” (v. 5) or “the idol that provokes to jealousy” (v. 3). There was no physical description of this image that provoked jealousy.
10. It is obvious from vv. 3-4 that God was the one provoked to jealousy against the image.
11. Ezekiel looked toward the north, the direction of the temple sanctuary, and saw the image of jealousy in the gate of the altar (v. 5).
12. The image was located near the sacrificial altar or perhaps a pagan altar was a part of the shrine of this idol (v. 5).
13. The worship Ezekiel described suggested there was a regular pagan worship in the sanctuary that was to be exclusively for the worship of God Himself.
14. In addition to the image, Ezekiel also saw the glory of God that had appeared in the vision of chapter 1.
15. The things Ezekiel saw were “utterly detestable” to God. (v. 6; cf. vv. 9-10, 13, 15, 17)
16. Nothing could be more serious or devastating than to have one’s behavior judged “detestable” by God.
17. God was alienated from His house of worship by the inclusion of objects and elements of worship that were strictly forbidden.

18. God is a jealous God who accepts no rival. (Exodus 20:5)
19. And to allow idolatry to continue in the temple area was a direct challenge to His authority and word.
20. **8:7-13** The vision had to be devastating to Ezekiel and the leaders in exile with him.
21. The fact that they were involved in such an apostate form of worship bears sober testimony to just how far the people had fallen spiritually.
22. In the midst of the group was Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan. Shaphan may have been the same person who was Josiah's secretary of state.
23. With this kind of corrupt spiritual leadership one can imagine the severe decline of spiritual purity and faithfulness to God.
24. These leaders had lost faith in the God of Israel and concluded that because Judah had been overthrown He had forsaken them.
25. What people do when they think no one else can see them reveals their true character.
26. **8:14-15** Ezekiel then saw the third "detestable" form of idolatry, which was worship of Tammuz.
27. At the door of the north gate of the temple Ezekiel saw women weeping for Tammuz, the Babylonian equivalent of the Sumerian god of vegetation, Dumuzi, known also as Duzu.
28. **8:16-18** The final scene of detestable worship practices occurred in the inner court, the holiest area for worship in the temple.
29. Only the priests could go into this area of the sanctuary. Here Ezekiel saw twenty-five men facing east worshipping the sun and turning their backs on the temple of God.
30. If they were priests, then their sin was all the more reprehensible because they were responsible for guarding the temple against defilement.
31. Second, they were practicing idolatrous sun worship in one of the holiest precincts of the temple complex.
32. Their location between the porch and the altar would have placed them directly in front of the entrance of the temple sanctuary (v. 16). Worship of the sun was one of the evil practices introduced by Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:5).
33. According to v. 17, God was angered not only by the idolatries in the temple but also by the violence that was rampant in Judah (cf. 9:9).
34. The justice of God demands chastening for such a breach of faith.
35. Therefore God declared that he would deal with Judah in severe judgment and would show no mercy (v. 18).