

# Ezekiel 8:1-9 Commentary

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Michelangelo's Ezekiel on the Sistine Chapel

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## CHRONOLOGY OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES

PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT <i>The LORD is not there</i>		PROPHECY OF RESTORATION The LORD is There	
FATE OF JUDAH Before the Siege	FOES OF JUDAH During the Siege	FUTURE OF JUDAH After the Siege	
593-588 BC	587-586	586-571	
7 YEARS OF PROPHESYING HORROR & NO HOPE		15 YEARS OF PROPHESYING HOPE	
Ezekiel 1:1-3:27 Ezekiel Sees the Glory & Receives the Call	Ezekiel 4:1-24:27 Judgments Against Judah	Ezekiel 25:1-32:32 Judgments Against the Gloating Nations	Ezekiel 33:1-39:29 Restoration of Israel to the LORD
			Ezekiel 40:1-48:35 Visions of the Temple Jehovah Shammah

**Outline of the Book of Ezekiel from Dr John MacArthur** - The book can be largely divided into sections about condemnation/retribution and then consolation/restoration. A more detailed look divides the book into 4 sections. First, are prophecies on the ruin of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 1:1–24:27). Second, are prophecies of retribution on nearby nations (Ezekiel 25:1–32:32), with a glimpse at God’s future restoration of Israel (Ezekiel 28:25,26). Thirdly, there is a transition chapter (Ezekiel 33:1-33) which gives instruction concerning a last call for Israel to repent. Finally, the fourth division includes rich expectations involving God’s future restoration of Israel (Ezekiel 34:1–48:35). ([Reference](#))

### I. Prophecies of Jerusalem’s Ruin (Ezekiel 1:1–24:27)

#### A. Preparation and Commission of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1–3:27)

- 1. Divine appearance to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1–28)|
- 2. Divine assignment to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:1–3:27)

#### B. Proclamation of Jerusalem’s Condemnation (Ezekiel 4:1–24:27)

- 1. Signs of coming judgment (Ezekiel 4:1–5:4)
- 2. Messages concerning judgment (Ezekiel 5:5–7:27)
- 3. Visions concerning abomination in the city and temple (Ezekiel 8:1–11:25)
- 4. Explanations of judgment (Ezekiel 12:1–24:27)

### II. Prophecies of Retribution to the Nations (Ezekiel 25:1–32:32)

- A. Ammon (Ezekiel 25:1–7)
- B. Moab (Ezekiel 25:8–11)
- C. Edom (Ezekiel 25:12–14)

- D. Philistia (Ezekiel 25:15–17)
- E. Tyre (Ezekiel 26:1–28:19)
- F. Sidon (Ezekiel 28:20–24)
- Excursus: The Restoration of Israel (Ezekiel 28:25, 26)
- G. Egypt (Ezekiel 29:1–32:32)

### III. Provision for Israel's Repentance (Ezekiel 33:1–33)

### IV. Prophecies of Israel's Restoration (Ezekiel 34:1–48:35)

#### A. Regathering of Israel to the Land (Ezekiel 34:1–37:28)

1. Promise of a True Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:1–31)
2. Punishment of the nations (Ezekiel 35:1–36:7)
3. Purposes of restoration (Ezekiel 36:8–38)
4. Pictures of restoration—dry bones and two sticks (Ezekiel 37:1–28)

#### B. Removal of Israel's Enemies from the Land (Ezekiel 38:1–39:29)

1. Invasion of Gog to plunder Israel (Ezekiel 38:1–16)
2. Intervention of God to protect Israel (Ezekiel 38:17–39:29)

#### C. Reinstatement of True Worship in Israel (Ezekiel 40:1–46:24)

1. New temple (Ezekiel 40:1–43:12)
2. New worship (Ezekiel 43:13–46:24)

#### D. Redistribution of the Land in Israel (Ezekiel 47:1–48:35)

1. Position of the river (Ezekiel 47:1–12)
2. Portions for the tribes (Ezekiel 47:13–48:35)

Ezekiel 8:1 It **came** about in the **sixth year**, on the **fifth** day of the **sixth month**, as I was **sitting** in my **house** with the **elders** of **Judah sitting before** me, that the **hand** of the **Lord GOD fell** on me **there**.

Young's Literal: And it cometh to pass, in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth of the month, I am sitting in my house, and elders of Judah are sitting before me, and fall on me there doth a hand of the Lord Jehovah

GWT: On the fifth day of the sixth month in the sixth year, I was sitting in my home. Judah's leaders were sitting in front of me. The power of the Almighty LORD came over me.

WBC: In the sixth year, on the fifth of the sixth month, I was sitting at home with the Judean elders sitting down in front of me, when Yahweh's hand descended on me there.

NLT: Then on September 17, during the sixth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, while the leaders of Judah were in my home, the Sovereign LORD took hold of me.

**AND IT CAME ABOUT IN THE SIXTH YEAR ON THE FIFTH DAY OF THE SIXTH MONTH, AS I WAS SITTING IN MY HOUSE WITH THE ELDERS OF JUDAH SITTING BEFORE ME:**

- Ezek 1:2; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1,17; 31:1; 32:17; 40:1) (Ezek 14:1,4; 20:1; 33:31; Malachi 2:7; Acts 20:33

"and in the sixth year [of the captivity of King Jehoiachin]" (Amplified)

The date is approximately Sept 17, 592 B.C, 14 months after the first vision described in the Ezekiel 1:1ff. What is the significance of this specific dating? This date introduces the next segment of Ezekiel's ministry which spans four chapters (Ezekiel 8-11) describing a series of visions which are all related. Thus Ezekiel 8-11 should be studied as a "unit".

**Wiersbe** - Ezekiel 8–11 constitute a vision God gave to Ezekiel of the defilement of the temple (Ezek 8), the destruction of the people (Ezek 9), and the departure of God's glory from His house (Ezekiel 10–11). The vision burdened Ezekiel to pray (Ezek 9:8) and prepared him to preach the Word (Ezek 11:25). God will one day judge our evil world. Knowing this, what does it motivate you to do? What happened in the temple was indicative of what was happening in the nation: it was given over to the worship of idols.

There was an image at the door, and there were idolatrous pictures in the inner chamber. Men and women worshiped idols openly, and others did it "in the dark" (Ezek 8:12); but all were guilty. When sin comes in at the door of a person's life, it eventually moves to the inner chambers and takes over. Ponder Proverbs 4:23. This sin brought violence to the land (Ezek 8:17) and removed God's glory from His house (Ezek 8:6). What a price to pay for sin! (Borrow copy of [With the Word](#))

Recall that in general, Ezekiel is written chronologically so that the series of visions described in Ezekiel 8-11, follow Ezekiel's **initial call to minister as a prophet** ([Ezekiel 1](#)), the **empowerment** by the Spirit and the Word ([Ezekiel 2](#)), the charge to be a **watchman** ([Ezekiel 3](#)), Ezekiel's initial prophesying to the exiles with a series of **signs** ([Ezekiel 4](#) and [Ezekiel 5](#)), then prophesying with **spoken words** beginning in ([Ezekiel 5:5-17](#)) and continuing in ([Ezekiel 6](#) and [Ezekiel 7](#)). Recall that in ([Ezek 5:1ff](#)) Ezekiel had shaved his head with a sharp sword and divided it into thirds to prophesy in picture what would happen to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. From verse 3 below, clearly enough time had passed for his hair to have grown back.

"**I was sitting**" indicating that the time of lying on his right and left side (430 days) had passed. Why did the elders come to his house? Earlier Ezekiel informed us that "The Spirit then entered me and made me stand on my feet, and He spoke with me and said to me, "Go, shut yourself up in your house." (Ezek 3:24) suggesting that his ministry was limited in where he could "prophesy"... so they came to him. Why did they come? One cannot be dogmatic but from the signs and spoken words they had seen and heard (in [Ezekiel 4-7](#)), they had come to recognize that a prophet was in their midst (cf Ezek33:33), even if they would refuse to listen to him, for God had warned him that "the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate." (Ezek3:7)

In it he was transported to Jerusalem to relate to the exiles in Babylon the utter degradation of Jerusalem so that they might understand why God would judge the city so severely.

#### THAT THE HAND OF THE LORD GOD FELL ON ME THERE

- 7 uses of ["hand of the LORD"](#) in Ezekiel, 2Ki3:15

"**Hand of the LORD**" in the Old Testament often refers to "power" ([Click here](#) and study in context the 37 uses of this exact phrase in NASB). When the hand of God came upon Elijah he received supernatural strength and direction (1Ki 18:46). "**Hand of the LORD**" is found **7 times** in Ezekiel ([Click here](#) to study these 7 uses).

#### SYNOPSIS OF THE CANAANITE "RELIGION"

To help one comprehend the implications of the message of Ezekiel 8 below is a synopsis of Canaanite religion.

Canaanite worship first became a problem for the Hebrews after the Egyptian bondage and years of wilderness wandering just prior to the conquest. As the Hebrews approached the land after the forty years in the wilderness, they advanced toward Canaan on the east side of the Dead Sea. As they neared the land of Moab, Balak the king became concerned. He heard how God miraculously had protected and cared for the Hebrews in the wilderness. He also heard the stories of how God had driven out their enemies before them, and he wanted to avert a similar fate (Num 22:1ff). Balak sent representatives to employ the services of a young man named Balaam, noted as a seer and well known for his ability to pronounce imprecations or curses (Nu 22:5ff). Balak employed the young man to ascend high places of Baal worship that overlooked the camp of the Israelites. From that vantage point he was to pronounce a curse on the Hebrews. But each time Balaam opened his mouth to curse Israel, he blessed them instead. He made several such attempts, and each time the results were the same. Numbers 24 contains a lengthy blessing that angered Balak (Nu 24:10). But Balaam explained he could not go beyond the will of the Lord in this matter (Nu 24:13). So after finishing the blessing, he returned home (Nu 24:25).

Numbers 25 reports Balak's ultimate success. Having failed in his attempt to curse the Hebrews, Balak invited them to dwell among his people. Not until later do we learn the complete details. Numbers 31:16 says that Balaam advised the women to seduce the Hebrews and bring the judgment of God upon them. What Balaam failed to accomplish directly he almost succeeded at indirectly. The judgment of God fell upon Israel, and Balak was spared. The real tragedy of this story is that Israel took this tendency toward Baal worship with them when they entered the land of Canaan.

God originally intended that there be no Canaanites left in the land after the conquest (see Ex 23:31, 32, 33; Ex 34:12, 13, 14, 15, 16 ; Nu 32:20, 21, 22, 23; 33:51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 ; Deut 1:30, 31, 32 ; Dt 6:16, 17, 18, 19; Dt 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ; Dt 8:11-20 ; Dt 11:29-12:3). His motive was to preserve the spiritual integrity of the Hebrews. When the Hebrews entered the land, they were deceived into believing that the Canaanites were no threat. So rather than ridding the land of them as the Lord had instructed, Israel found ways to coexist with the Canaanites (Jdg 1:27-36), for which they were punished.

Furthermore, the Canaanites would trouble them throughout their history (Jdg 2:1, 2, 3, 20, 21, 22, 23). The combination of sexual immorality and the supposed benefits of worshiping an agricultural god like Baal proved a constant temptation once introduced to the people of Israel. From these early days in the history of Israel onward, Baal worship continued to plague the nation until after the exile in Babylon.

**Baal** is a Semitic word that literally means "lord," "ownership," "husband", "authority," or "control." Local deities were called Baal and were associated with portions of land as the gods of the earth. The attraction of Baal worship for the Hebrews went beyond immorality. It also included the promise of agricultural, animal, and human fertility. These fertility cults used sacred prostitutes, sexual activity, and imitative magic to insure fertility in every area of life.

### **Three basic elements of the theology of Baal worship enhanced its attractiveness.**

#### **Relation to Cycles of Nature.**

Canaanite worship was closely linked with the cycle of the seasons. The people had observed that the seasons of the year followed a predictable pattern. In the fall vegetation became dormant and withered, then died in the winter months. Each spring vegetation revived, and in the summer it flourished. Also during the dormant winter months rains came and watered the earth. The rain was associated with the fertility of the land and the resurrection of vegetation in the spring. Rituals were performed to entreat Baal to send rain and restore the fertility of the land. These involved the dying and rising of their god with appropriate laments and rejoicing (cf. Ezek 8:14). Thus the fertility cult, with its sacred prostitutes, was employed to insure the fertility of the land for another year. Such foreign practices in the name of religion and worship appealed to the young Hebrew men when the Moabite girls first introduced them to it, and it continued when they entered Canaan.

#### **Immorality**

Baal worship not only approved of but also encouraged immorality. The rituals of Baal worship included sexual intercourse, considered an imitative act that invited the rain to fertilize the ground. The Book of Hosea is an example of the evils and tragedy of Baal worship. Hosea, a devout man, married Gomer, a woman from a background of Baal worship (Hos 1:1-11 ). Soon Gomer returned to her old ways and left Hosea and their children for a life of prostitution ( Hos 3:1ff ). Like Gomer, the people of Israel exhibited only a token commitment to Yahweh ( Hos 4-7 ). They worshiped Baal, believing that sexual acts with sacred prostitutes would insure fruitfulness and productivity. Israel, like Gomer, had forsaken its true lover and faithful husband. As a consequence of Israel's adultery, God promised judgment (Hos 8-11). Ezekiel soundly condemned the physical and spiritual adultery of his day (see Ezek 8:1-9:11; Ezek 22:1-31 ).

#### **Polytheism**

Israel's neighbors were polytheistic. This was a constant encouragement for the Hebrews to adopt a more syncretistic approach to religious faith and practice. Hosea stressed God's demand for exclusive worship: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me" ( Hos 13:4 ). Ezekiel's emphasis on the exclusiveness of worshiping Yahweh and no other gods came in a constantly recurring phrase, "Then you shall know the LORD your God." 27 This phrase was used in association with judgment passages to warn that God would make himself known through the chastening and judgment of the exile.

Baal worship was popular and difficult to eradicate from Israel because it fed on the people's lust, fear, and the desire to conform to their neighbors. It was encouraged by natural concerns for food, farms, families, and flocks, believing that Baal could help them insure the best in each of these areas. By embracing polytheistic forms of worship, the Hebrews conformed to the standards and life-style of their neighbors and thus created the social, moral, and spiritual problems that brought about their judgment.

Ezekiel 8:2 Then I **looked**, and **behold**, a **likeness** as the **appearance** of a **man**; from His **loins** and **downward** there was the **appearance** of **fire**, and from His **loins** and **upward** the **appearance** of **brightness**, like the **appearance** of **glowing metal**.

Young's Literal: and I look, and lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire, from the appearance of His loins and downward—fire, and from His loins and upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of copper.

GWT: As I looked, I saw something that looked like a human. From the waist down its body looked like fire, and from the waist up its body looked like glowing metal.

WBC: I had a visionary sighting of a figure that looked human. From his waist down there was fire, while from the waist up there was a sort of shining glow, like gleaming amber.

NLT: I saw a figure that appeared to be a man. From the waist down he looked like a burning flame. From the waist up he looked like gleaming amber.

**THEN I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A LIKENESS AS THE APPEARANCE OF A MAN FROM HIS LOINS AND DOWNWARD THERE WAS THE APPEARANCE OF FIRE, AND FROM HIS LOINS AND UPWARD THE APPEARANCE OF BRIGHTNESS, LIKE THE APPEARANCE OF GLOWING METAL:**

- Ezek 1:4,26,27; Da7:9,10; Rev1:14,15

The vision opens with a theophany similar to Ezekiel 1:4 (especially Ezekiel 1:26, 27) but here, as there, Ezekiel is careful in his choice of words writing that he saw "the appearance of a man", which emphasizes the fact that what he had seen was but a "likeness" of the ineffable glory, an image of the Unseen.

Ezekiel's description in his first vision was similar but had additional details "Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking." (Ezek 1:27-28)

In the Revelation John describes the Risen Lord in somewhat similar terms "His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters." (Rev 1:14,15-[note](#))

**Ezekiel 8:3 He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock of my head and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy, was located.**

Young's Literal: And He putteth forth a form of a hand, and taketh me by a lock of my head, and lift me up doth a spirit between the earth and the heavens, and it bringeth me in to Jerusalem in visions of God, unto the opening of the inner gate that is facing the north, where is the seat of the figure of jealousy that is making jealous,

GWT: It stretched out what looked like a hand and grabbed me by the hair on my head. In these visions from God, the Spirit carried me between heaven and earth. He took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner courtyard of the temple. That was where an idol that stirs up <God's> anger was located.

WBC: He stretched out what looked like a hand and grasped my hair by the forelock. Then the spirit lifted me up into the air and brought me in a divine vision to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north-facing gateway, where there was situated the outrageous image, which invokes divine outrage.

NLT: He put out what seemed to be a hand and took me by the hair. Then the Spirit lifted me up into the sky and transported me in a vision of God to Jerusalem. I was taken to the north gate of the inner courtyard of the Temple, where there is a large idol that has made the LORD very angry.

Message: Right before me was the Glory of the God of Israel, exactly like the vision I had seen out on the plain.

**AND HE STRETCHED OUT THE FORM OF A HAND AND CAUGHT ME BY A LOCK OF MY HEAD**

- Ezek 2:9; Da 5:5; 10:10,18

Note once again Ezekiel's description is deliberately vague, lest he be accused of picturing God as just a glorified man and God did not extend an actual human hand down to Ezekiel but "**the form of a hand**".

## AND THE SPIRIT LIFTED ME UP BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN

- 1Ki18:12; 2Ki2:16; Ac 8:39; 2Cor 12:2-4; Rev 1:10-20; 4:2-11

"The Spirit lifted me up" as in

Ezekiel 3:14-note So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the LORD was strong on me.

Ezekiel 11:1-note Moreover, the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the LORD'S house which faced eastward. And behold, there were twenty-five men at the entrance of the gate, and among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people.

Ezekiel 11:11-note "This city will not be a pot for you, nor will you be flesh in the midst of it, but I will judge you to the border of Israel.

Ezekiel 40:2 In the visions of God He brought me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, and on it to the south there was a structure like a city.

## AND BROUGHT ME IN THE VISIONS OF GOD:

- Ezek 11:24; Ge15:1; 46:2; Nu 12:6; Isa1:1; Da 8:1 8:2; Ho 12:10; Joel 2:28; Mt 17:9; Acts 9:10, 11, 12; 10:3; 2Co12:1
- [Torrey's Topic "Visions"](#)

"**Brought me**" describes a supernatural "flight" which touched down not in Tel Aviv Airport like El Al arrivals do today, but in the Temple Mount itself! I would call this a "first class" ticket! The details of Ezekiel's visions recorded in chapters 8-11 were seen only by the prophet, not the elders (cf Ezek 11:24-25). Note also that Ezekiel's visions are not a description of Judah's past sins but are representative of her spiritual condition that existed at that time

**Visions of God** here includes visions given by God and visions in which God was seen and is always in the plural and always with the word "**God**" (not "**LORD**"). This exact phrase "**Visions of God**" occurs only three times in the NASB, all in Ezekiel,` ([click here for all three](#)), this verse, 1:1 and 40:2 and its occurrence is a marker in a sense, as it divides Ezekiel's prophecy into three sections. .

## TO JERUSALEM, TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE NORTH GATE OF THE INNER COURT, WHERE THE SEAT OF THE IDOL OF JEALOUSY, WHICH PROVOKES TO JEALOUSY, WAS LOCATED.

- Ezek 8:5; 2Ki 16:14) (Ezek 5:11; 7:20; 2Ki 21:7; Jer 7:30; 32:34
- Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:16,21; Josh 24:19; Ps 78:58; 1Co10:21,22

(For orientation [click here](#) for schematic diagram of Solomon's Temple below)

"**Entrance of the North Gate**" describes one of three gates that opened from the outer court to the inner court (the gates are **not** shown in the Temple schematic below), the other two being located on the east and south sides.

This visionary experience continues throughout Ezekiel 8-11 terminating in Ezekiel 11 with Ezekiel's return from Jerusalem to Babylon. In chapter 11, Ezekiel records that "the Spirit lifted me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God to the exiles in Chaldea. So the vision that I had seen left me. Then I told the exiles all the things that the Lord had shown me." (Ezek 11:24-25)

"**Idol of jealousy which provokes to jealousy**" Although many commentaries speculate as to the identity of the idol, the important principle is the effect of the idol regardless of its identity. It makes the omnipotent God jealous! Matthew Henry adds that "the

prophet, instead of telling us what image it was, which might gratify our curiosity, tells us that it was the image of jealousy, to convince our consciences that, whatever image it was, it was in the highest degree offensive to God and provoked him to jealousy. he resented it as a husband would resent the whoredoms of his wife, and would certainly revenge it; for God is jealous, and the Lord revenges"

About 100 years earlier the Manasseh, the most evil king in Judah's history had "set the carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the Lord said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever." (2Ki 21:7)

Many commentators feel this event may be related to the "idol of jealousy" but we cannot be dogmatic. This image was subsequently destroyed by Josiah (circa 622BC) as recorded in 2 Kings "And he brought out the Asherah **from the house of the LORD** outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground it to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people." (2Ki 23:6)

God commanded Israel "You shall not worship them or serve them (an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth) for I, the LORD your God, am a **jealous** (**qanna** - all 6 uses in OT refer to God) God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me" (Ex 20:5)

Israel was instructed "you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is **Jealous**, is a **jealous** God-- lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods... " (Ex 34:14, 15)

His name **Jehovah Qanna** does not refer to a somewhat shallow and childish human emotion but is intended to emphasize that God will not tolerate a divided loyalty in those who claim to be "His possession." We must honor Him with our lives (our behavior and conduct) as the one true God and not just give Him lip service! Does your life belie your lips? Are you really who you say you are... His possession?

Again Moses warned Israel "So watch yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the LORD your God has commanded you. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a **jealous** God." (Dt 4:23-24)

And again warning Israel of the danger of idolatry, Moses says "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a **jealous** God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me." (Dt5:8-9)

And again "You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a **jealous** God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth." (Dt6:14-15)

In (Dt32:16-18) Moses declares before all heaven and earth that Israel made God **jealous** with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. You neglected the Rock who begot you, and forgot the God Who gave you birth."

One last time in Deuteronomy God says that the children of Israel "have made **Mejealous** with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them **jealous** with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation, for a fire is kindled in My anger, and burns to the lowest part of Sheol, and consumes the earth with its yield, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains." (Dt32:21)

Ezekiel is describing the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Joshua also made a prophesy to Israel just prior to his death (just prior to the beginning of the 300 year period of Judges when every man did that which was right in his own eyes) declaring "to the people, "You will not be able to serve the LORD, for He is a holy God. He is a **jealous** God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you.." (Josh 24:19, 20)

Indeed the psalmist records that Israel "provoked Him with their high places, And aroused His jealousy with their graven images." (Ps78:58)

Earlier in Ezekiel (Ezek 5:13) God had declared "Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself. And they shall know that I am the LORD--that I have spoken in my **jealousy**--when I spend my fury upon them." (Eng Std Version)

Just before entering the land of Canaan (filled with a plethora of abominable gods and associated licentious rites) Moses warned the



children of Israel about "images" and "idols" declaring

"So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make a **graven image** for yourselves in the form of any figure, the **likeness** of male or female, the **likeness** of any animal that is on the earth, the **likeness** of any winged bird that flies in the sky, the **likeness** of anything that creeps on the ground, the **likeness** of any fish that is in the water below the earth. "And beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the **sun** and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven." And why was God so adamant about this requirement? Moses goes on to remind Israel "But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, **to be a people for His own possession**, as today." (Deut 4:15-20)

As indicated by her subsequent actions, Israel and her Kings paid little heed to Moses' warnings. For example, King Ahaz (king of Judah after the nation was divided) traveled to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser III, saw a large altar and sent a sketch of the altar to Uriah the High-Priest in Jerusalem, and the High-Priest in turn built an altar just like it. The serious iniquity was like building an idol in the temple, and it would make Jehovah jealous. (read this account in 2Ki16:10ff)

All of this Old Testament truth is reflected in Paul's warning to the Corinthians "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to **jealousy** (the root word in Greek is **zeo** = to boil or be hot)? We are not stronger than He, are we?" (1Co10:21,22)

Ezekiel 8:4 And **behold**, the **glory** of the **God** of **Israel** was **there**, like the **appearance which I saw in the plain**.

Young's Literal: and lo, there the honour of the God of Israel, as the appearance that I saw in the valley.

GWT: There I saw the glory of Israel's God as I did in the vision that I saw in the valley.

WBC: There too was to be found the manifestation of the presence of the God of Israel, just as it had been revealed to me in the plain.

NLT: Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel was there, just as I had seen it before in the valley. |

**AND BEHOLD, THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS THERE, LIKE THE APPEARANCE WHICH I SAW IN THE PLAIN**

- Ezek 1:26, 27, 28; 3:22,23; 9:3; 10:1, 2, 3, 4; 11:22,23; 43:2, 3, 4; Ex 25:22; 40:34,35; 2Co 3:18; 4:4, 5, 6; Heb 1:3

#### Related Resource:

- Glory of the LORD: Past, Present, Future

The picture in this verse is almost impossible to imagine! Out of one eye a Jewish worshipper could see this **idol of jealousy** and out of the other eye, the glory of God, undoubtedly manifest as the Shekinah cloud. The dead false god next to the living and true God. And they chose the false over the true (that is why He was jealous). There is another play on words here that is fascinating. "**God... was there**" but would soon depart only to return in Ezekiel 40-48 as **LORD... is there**" (Ezek 48:35)!

This juxtaposition of **no** god and **the** God was unacceptable to the Most High God Who declares "I am the Lord, that is My name. I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images." (Is 42:8)

Reiterating the earlier thought of God's jealousy God Moses declares that "you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex34:14)

There was not room for both and if the idol was to stay, God's glory would depart which is a major theme of Ezekiel 8-11.

Ezekiel 8:5 Then He **said** to me, "**Son of man, raise your eyes now toward the north**." So I **raised** my **eyes toward the north**, and **behold**, to the **north** of the **altar gate** was **this idol of jealousy** at the **entrance**.

Young's Literal: And He saith unto me, 'Son of man, lift up, I pray thee, thine eyes the way of the north.' And I



lift up mine eyes the way of the north, and lo, on the north of the gate of the altar this figure of jealousy, at the entrance.

GWT: God said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked toward the north, and there in the entrance to the north gate beside the altar, I saw the idol that stirs up <God's> anger.

WBC: Human one," he told me, "look north." When I did so, I noticed on the north side of the gate the altar of that outrageous image, at the point of entry.

NLT: Then the LORD said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked, and there to the north, beside the entrance to the gate of the altar, stood the idol that had made the LORD so angry.

#### THEN HE SAID TO ME, "SON OF MAN, RAISE YOUR EYES, NOW, TOWARD THE NORTH

- Jer 3:2; Zech 5:5-11

#### SO I RAISED MY EYES TOWARD THE NORTH, AND BEHOLD, TO THE NORTH OF THE ALTAR GATE WAS THIS IDOL OF JEALOUSY AT THE ENTRANCE:

- Ps 48:2

For orientation see schematic diagram of Solomon's Temple from The Bible knowledge commentary, Vol 1, Page 500

NORTH

EAST

Toward Mt of Olives  
& the Rising Sun

Ezekiel 8:6 And He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations which the house of Israel are committing here, so that I would be far from My sanctuary? But yet you will see still greater abominations."

Young's Literal: And He saith unto me, 'Son of man, art thou seeing what they are doing? the great abominations that the house of Israel are doing here, to keep far off from My sanctuary; and again thou dost turn, thou dost see great abominations.'

GWT: He asked me, "Son of man, do you see what the people of Israel are doing? The people of Israel are doing very disgusting things here, things that will force me to go far away from my holy place. But you will see even more disgusting things."

WBC: "Human one," he told me, "just look at what people are doing! They are engaging here in extremely shocking rites, by functioning as they are away from my sanctuary. But you will go on to observe rites even more shocking."

NLT: Son of man," he said, "do you see what they are doing? Do you see the great sins the people of Israel are doing to drive me from my Temple? But come, and you will see even greater sins than these!"

#### AND HE SAID TO ME, "SON OF MAN, DO YOU SEE WHAT THEY ARE DOING THE GREAT ABOMINATIONS WHICH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL ARE COMMITTING HERE:

- Ezek 8:12,17; Jer 3:6; 7:17
- Ezek 8:9,17; 5:11; 7:20, 21, 22; 23:38,39; 2Ki 23:4, 5, 6; Pr5:14; Jer 7:30; 23:11; Jer32:34

In a parallel passage the LORD spoke to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah the king saying "Have you seen what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and she was a harlot there." (Jer3:6)

Later in a similar passage God says to Jeremiah "Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out libations to other gods in order to spite Me. Do they spite Me?" declares the LORD... " (Jer 7:17-19) adding that "the sons of Judah have done that which is evil in My sight," declares the LORD, "they have set their detestable things (like the **"idol of jealousy"**) in the house which is called by My name, to defile it." (Jer7:30)

Moody's **"Today in the Word"** draws the following interesting analogy "Imagine walking into a church, ahead of you is a cross, to one side is a piano, and to the other side, a small organ. It looks pretty much like any other church you've been in. Suddenly you notice small voodoo dolls along window ledges--above them, crystals hang. Instead of hymnals, you find Tarot cards in the pew racks. A cold chill runs down your spine. Sadly, if people from Ezekiel's day could have traveled in time and space, they probably would have felt right at home in this "church." They go on to make this application "Idolatry is a problem of every human heart--sophisticated idols are still idols. One way to detect an idol is to ask, "What do I think I must have in order for life to be good?" For example, a successful career, a stable family, or a nice home. Or consider a specific element of your life, and ask, "If this item were taken away would I still believe that abundant life was possible?" Now take your answers to the only One who can release us from idols--Jesus Christ!"

#### THAT I SHOULD BE FAR FROM MY SANCTUARY?

- Ezek 10:19; 11:22; Dt 31:16, 17, 18; 2Chr 36:14, 15, 16, 17; Ps 78:60; Jer 26:6; La 2:6,7

The NLT paraphrases this as "Do you see the great sins the people of Israel are doing to drive me from my Temple?"

In 2 Chronicles we read a summary of Judah's spiritual declension, specifically that "all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the LORD which He had sanctified in Jerusalem. And the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until **there was no remedy**. Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand." (2Chr 36:14-17) God had no choice but to "be far from His sanctuary" and to destroy it!

Jeremiah records that the LORD kept His word writing that "He has violently treated His tabernacle like a garden booth; He has destroyed His appointed meeting place. The LORD has caused to be forgotten The appointed feast and sabbath in Zion, and He has despised king and priest In the indignation of His anger. The Lord has rejected His altar. He has abandoned His sanctuary. He has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces. They have made a noise in the house of the LORD as in the day of an appointed feast." (La 2:6,7)

MacArthur comments that "Sin would expel the people from their land and God from His sanctuary."

#### BUT YET YOU WILL SEE STILL GREATER ABOMINATIONS:

- Ezek 11,14,16

**You will see still greater abominations** - Unfortunately this is a key phrase in this chapter (Ezek 8:6, 13, 15) indicating a progressive deterioration of their spiritual condition. Sin almost always begets more sin. What satisfies the flesh at one level, is not sufficient and so the flesh tempts us to commit even greater sin, which we need to see as great **"abominations"** before the eyes of our Holy God!

Proverbs 5:22-note speaks of the "sticky" enslaving nature of sin -

His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin (cf Ps 101:3 where "fasten its grip" = Hebrew [dabaq](#) = "stick like glue!!!)

**James** speaks of the enticing nature of temptation and its ultimate end...

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. **Do not be deceived**, ([present imperative with a negative](#) = Stop being deceived by sin - cf Heb 3:13b-note) my beloved brethren. (James 1:14-16-commentary)

**Are you being deceived by some enticing sin beloved?** Be careful for enticement will soon become entanglement and entanglement will come enslavement! Do not be deceived!

**David** understood this progressive character of the first sin (read to be reminded - 2 Sa 11:1-27) and thus he prayed

Also **keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins**; Let them not rule over me (WHAT WILL PRESUMPTIVE SIN DO?); Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. Ps 19:13

**David** knew he had an "eye problem" (men, can you identify?) writing...

**My eyes are continually toward the LORD**, For He will pluck my feet out of the net. (Ps 25:14)

The **psalmist** prayed

With all my heart I have sought You; **Do not let me wander from Your commandments**. (Ps 119:10)

Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, And revive me in Your ways. Establish Your word to Your servant, As that which produces reverence for You (Ps 119:37-38) (SO WHAT IS OUR PROTECTION? cf Ps 119:9, 11)

Establish my footsteps in Your word, And **do not let any iniquity have dominion over me**. (WHAT WILL INIQUITY DO TO US?) (119:133) :

**Abominations** (detestable, loathsome) ([08441](#))([toebah](#)) refers to an abominable custom or thing. Abomination. Loathsome. Detestable thing. Something or someone who is loathsome and abhorrent. Toebah is translated in the Septuagint with the noun [anomia](#) which describes a general state of wrong lawlessness, wickedness, iniquity.

**Matthew Henry** notes that "Where there is one abomination it will be found that there are many more. Sins do not go alone."

**Ezekiel 8:7** Then He [brought](#) me to the [entrance](#) of the [court](#), and when I [looked](#), [behold](#), a [hole](#) in the [wall](#).

Young's Literal: And He bringeth me in unto an opening of the court, and I look, and lo, a hole in the wall;

GWT:Then he took me to the entrance of the courtyard. As I looked, I saw a hole in the wall.

WBC: He brought me to the entrance to the court, where I saw aa hole in the wall.

NLT: Then he brought me to the door of the Temple courtyard, where I could see an opening in the wall.

**THEN HE BROUGHT ME TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE COURT, AND WHEN I LOOKED, BEHOLD, A HOLE IN THE WALL:**

- 1 Ki 7:12; 2 Kings 21:5

**The entrance of the court** - We see the splendor with which this Temple court began in 1 Kings 7:12 "So the great court all around had three rows of cut stone and a row of cedar beams even as the inner court of the house of the LORD, and the porch of the house." The "great court" had become the site of "Great Sin!"

**Behold** ([02009](#)) ([hinneh](#)) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) Hinneh generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read [Ge 6:13](#))!

**A hole in the wall** - [Desecration](#) of the Temple on the outside and [defilement](#) on the inside. The pervasive, permeating effect of sin - outside and inside. Have you ever sinned presumptively before the LORD and looked at your face in the mirror the next day? The glow is gone. The joy is gone. The eyes are sad. The smile is gone. Sin destroys holistically! You can bank on that truth beloved!

Ezekiel 8:8 He **said** to me, "**Son of man, now dig through the wall.**" So I **dug** through the **wall**, and **behold**, an **entrance**.

Young's Literal: and He saith unto me, 'Son of man, dig, I pray thee, through the wall;' and I dig through the wall, and lo, an opening.

GWT: He said to me, "Son of man, dig through the wall." So I dug through the wall, and I saw a door.

WBC: "Human one," he told me, "break through the wall." When I had done so, there was a means of entry.

NLT: He said to me, "Now, son of man, dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and uncovered a door to a hidden room.

**AND HE SAID TO ME, "SON OF MAN, NOW DIG THROUGH THE WALL." SO I DUG THROUGH THE WALL, AND BEHOLD, AN ENTRANCE:**

- Job 34:22; Isa 29:15; Jer 2:34; Jer 23:24; Am 9:2,3

**Through the wall** - They were practicing their sin in secret! Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven!

Proverbs 15:3-commentary The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

Another use of **Behold** (02009) (**hinneh**)!

Ezekiel 8:9 And He **said** to me, "**Go in and see the wicked abominations that they are committing here.**"

Young's Literal: And He said to me, "Go in and see the wicked abominations that they are committing here."

GWT: He said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked, disgusting things that the people of Israel are doing here."

WBC: "Go through," he told me, "and observe the shocking rites in which people are engaging here."

NLT: "Go in," he said, "and see the unspeakable wickedness going on in there!"

**AND HE SAID TO ME, "GO IN AND SEE THE WICKED ABOMINATIONS THAT THEY ARE COMMITTING HERE."**

- Ezek 20:8

As if abominations was not bad enough, now they are classified as **wicked**!

**Abominations** (detestable, loathsome) (08441)(**toebah**) refers to an abominable custom or thing. Abomination. Loathsome. Detestable thing. Something or someone who is loathsome and abhorrent. Toebah is translated in the Septuagint with the noun **anomia** which describes a general state of wrong lawlessness, wickedness, iniquity.