

Ezekiel Notes Chapters 7-8

7:1-4. God continues to express His condemnation of Israel through Ezekiel, He states, “⁷“And you, son of man, thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel, ‘An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land. … ⁴For My eye will have no pity on you, nor will I spare *you*, but I will bring your ways upon you, and your abominations will be among you; then you will know that I am the Lord!’” (Ezek. 7:2, 4).

7:5-9. ⁵“Thus says the Lord God, ‘A disaster, unique disaster, behold it is coming! ⁶ An end is coming; the end has come! It has awakened against you; behold, it has come! ⁷ Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land. The time has come, the day is near—tumult rather than joyful shouting on the mountains. ⁸ Now I will shortly pour out My wrath on you and spend My anger against you; judge you according to your ways and bring on you all your abominations [Lev. 26; Deut. 28-29]. ⁹ My eye will show no pity nor will I spare. I will repay you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst; then you will know that I, the Lord, do the smiting (Ezek. 7:5-9).

7:10-13. The judgment would be so severe that any wealth, position, or land would be lost to the people because they would not return. This judgment is certain.

7:14-22. Judah will try to respond when the Babylonian army arrives, but God’s wrath is what is being manifest through this foreign army toward Judah. Those who are outside the city will be put down. Those inside the city will eventually die of starvation and disease. If some do escape and survive, they will hide in the mountains and mourn over their sin. They will be weak from fear. They will wear sackcloth as they shake with fear, experience shame, and shave their heads in mourning. They will realize all their wealth cannot protect them from God’s wrath. They cannot even buy food. Money is worthless in buying sustenance when there is no food.

Since silver and gold were used to create the idols that Israel was worshipping, God will now give these precious metals to the enemy as the spoils of war. Even the temple treasures would be profaned by being taken by the invaders back to their temple. Alexander writes, “These treasures must refer to the Temple treasures which were taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar (cf. 2 Kings 25:13-17; 2 Chron. 36:18).¹

B. The vision of the departure of Yahweh’s glory chs. 8–11

1. The idolatry of the house of Israel ch. 8

Ezekiel was taken into captivity to Babylon in 597 BC in the second deportation from Judah. Four years later, on July 31, 593 BC, Ezekiel received the spectacular vision of God’s glory, he was also called and commissioned as a prophet by Yahweh on that day (chapters 1-3). Then, seven days later on August 7, 587 BC, he received the prophecies of the last section 3:16-7:27 which condemned and told of the judgment God was sending on Judah and Jerusalem. Now, a year and two months

¹ Alexander, *ibid.*, 28.

later on September 17, 592 BC, while Ezekiel was lying on his right side, he received the prophecies of chapters 8 through 11.

8:1-13. This section opens with Ezekiel sitting in his house and the elders of Judah sitting before him. Ezekiel saw in a vision the humanlike appearance of the “glory of God” as he had seen previously (Ezek. 1:26-28). “The hand of the Lord fell on” him, picked him up by his hair, and the Spirit lifted him between heaven and earth and gave him visions of what was happening in Jerusalem. He appeared before entrance of the north gate that led into the inner court of the temple. And there, just outside the gate in the outer court, he saw what God calls, “**the seat of the idol of jealousy, which provokes [God] to jealousy**” to the north of the [bronze] altar (v. 3, 5). The glory of God was there also (v. 4; 1:4-28). In verse 6, God says to Ezekiel, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations which the house of Israel are committing?” As Ezekiel looked north from the altar Gate he saw the “**the idol of jealousy.**” Although scholars don’t know exactly what this idol was it is possible that it was an Asherah, “the Canaanite goddess ... which Manasseh, the king of Judah, had placed in the sanctuary; later it was removed (cf. 2 Chron. 33:7, 15), and then it was reestablished after Josiah’s reform.”²

He was then taken to the entrance of the court and he dug a hole in the northern wall making his way into the inner court. When he made it through the hole, he entered and saw the abomination of the **70 elders of Israel worshipping “every form of creeping things and beasts and detestable things, with all the idols of the house of Israel [which were] carved on the wall all around”** (8:10). These leaders believed that Yahweh, because He had not protected them in 605 BC and 597 BC had forsaken them and didn’t see them in their pagan worship. All the elders had censured in their hands and the cloud of incense was rising. The “glory of the Lord” said to him, “Yet you shall see greater abominations which they are committing” (9:13).

8:14-18. Then, when Ezekiel was taken to the entrance of the gate of the temple there were **women sitting there “weeping for Tammuz.”** But even that wasn’t as abominable as what he would see next. Tammuz was an “**Akkadian god of vegetation and fertility and was another of the many manifestations of the fertility gods.** The people thought that, like Baal and Hadad, Tammuz brought rain to the earth and the refreshment of lush vegetation in the spring.”³

Finally, inside the inner court gate, **between the porch and the altar were about 25 men with their backs to the temple with their faces toward the east. “...they were prostrating themselves (worshipping) eastward toward the sun.”**

This was also an old religion, forbidden in the Mosaic code (Deut. 4:19). Josiah had removed this ritual from Judah in his reformation (2 Kings 23:5, 11). But once again it had been revived, this time by the priests. **These twenty-five men were probably priests, since the Scripture indicates that only priests were permitted into the inner court of the Temple (cf. 2 Chron. 4:9; Joel 2:17). They had transferred their service to the sun-god (Shamash of the Babylonians, most likely) and turned their backs on their true Temple service (2 Chron. 29:6-7).**

² Alexander, *ibid.*, 30.

³ *Ibid.*, 34.

With these abominable things that Judah was involved in the temple complex, of all places, God says “they have filled the land with violence and provoked Me repeatedly.” His verdict is, “...I indeed with deal in wrath. My eye will have no pity nor will I spare; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I will not listen to them” (v. 18).