

EZEKIEL 8 (John Tamuts)

This chapter deals with the immortality of Jerusalem. Which, in this instance, pictures all those who claim to be the LORD'S people. For all practical purposes, this would include just about everyone in the world (YAHWEH'S true people excluded). As we progress through this chapter we will see the extent of their hypocrisy and abominable conduct.

We will begin with verse 1, using the *Revised Standard Version* translation throughout the chapter, unless otherwise noted.

Verse 1:

In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me.

Ezekiel begins by describing the time and place of his vision, adding that he was with the elders of Judah. These "elders," as they were known, numbered seventy and had the responsibility of judging YAHWEH'S organization. The use of elder's was instituted in the time of Moses when men of understanding and wisdom were employed to help Moses in judging the people of Israel. The term "elder" was appropriate as older men, men of experience, were the most qualified for that position. Continuing with verse 2:

Then I beheld, and, lo, a form that had the appearance of a man; below what appeared to be his loins it was fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze.

The clue to this verse is in the term bronze, which is a metal associated with the first heavens (Ezekiel 1). The fire seen symbolizes enlightenment, for in days of old this was the only source of illuminating the darkness. With illumination, or light, one can see and understand. Since the angelic host resides in the first heavens, and their function is that of messengers (the Hebrew word *malak* meaning "messenger"), Ezekiel has unquestionably described an angel assigned the specific task of enlightening him to a situation before unknown.

Verse 3 reads:

He put fourth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy.

In reality, this was a vision. Ezekiel didn't have to be picked up by the hair, but this is what he felt. All this lead to his being transported to Jerusalem. The exact location was the entrance of the inner gate on the north side (see "A" on illustration). Near the entrance to the inner court was an idol which provoked YAHWEH to jealousy, as all forms of idol worship were expressly forbidden (Exodus 20:3-5). Its placement was particularly insulting as those entering and exiting the temple area, from that side, had to pass by it.

From the beginning of YAHWEH'S dealing with Israel as a nation, HE instructed them in this manner: "And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you." Exodus 23:31-33.) Also in Exodus 34:12-16 the thought is furthered: "Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it become a

snare in the midst of you. You shall tear down their alters, and break their pillars, and cut down their Asherim¹ (for you shall worship no 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 when they play the harlot after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and one invites you, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods and make your sons play the harlot after their gods."

The warning was given in an explicit manner. They were lovingly, but sternly told what to do, what not to do, and the result should they choose to disobey. One instance, in a history of disobedience, is recorded in 2 Kings 21:5-9 when under the reign of Manasseh these events are described: And he built alters for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he burned his son as an offering, and practiced soothsaying and augury, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. And the graven image of Asherah² that he had made he set in the house of which the LORD said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever; and I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land which I gave to their fathers, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them." But they did not listen, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations had done whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.

The heathen nations were a mess, beyond correction, looked upon as an incorrigible element that would pervert YAHWEH'S nation should they be allowed to associate. They had to be driven out, destroyed. How did Israel respond to YAHWEH'S driving the heathen out before them? They did more evil than the heathen.

One element of their downfall should be further explored so that we may learn the proper course. This is the association of the Restored Israel of YAHWEH with the people of the world. We have just seen how YAHWEH forbade Israel to have any ties with the heathen ("make no covenant with them")—especially intermarriage. The popular interpretation of Paul's instruction not to be mismatched with unbelievers, is mistakenly limited to forbidding intermarriage. It's much more involved. When taken in context, and compared with the verses quoted earlier, the complete picture is seen.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 reads:

Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? [Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?] What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

This certainly encompasses more than just marriage. We do not wish to belabor the point, but the whole focal point of this chapter rests here, so we must continue to its resolution.

The typical Israel was commanded not to touch anything that was dead (Leviticus 5:2; 21:1-4, 11; Numbers 5:2,3; 9:6-11; 19:11-22). If they did, they were considered "unclean" for seven days (Numbers 19:11). Now this was kind of strict as they could have washed their hands and been physically cleansed. YAHWEH, however, was actually stressing, through the law which foreshadowed greater things to come (Hebrews 10:1), to have nothing to do with that which was unclean.

In actuality, the living people in this world, who do not have the truth, are considered the "living dead." For example, Yahshua told a disciple: "...Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead (Matthew 8:22)." Now this does not mean that a husband of wife who comes into the truth should leave their mate. As long as their is no compromising in the service of YAHWEH, the instructions given in 1st Corinthians 7:12-16 apply. But to seek such a relationship with an unbeliever is wrong. What could you have in common with one who cares nothing for YAHWEH, or is in darkness? Your

1 The plural form of the canaanite goddess Asherah.

2 A canaanite goddess.

hopes and goals are different, your beliefs and actions are different. What remains is little more than a physical attraction.

The same would apply to seeking friends in the world. It's not the exact situation as the Israel of old, who was commanded to separate altogether. Israel isn't afraid, as we do make contact with them. However, the association is not for them to influence and conquer us. We must enlighten and bring them to YAHWEH.

As we progress through this chapter you will see more and more how important this knowledge is to understanding YAHWEH'S will.

Verse 4:

And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

Now to keep all of this in perspective, Ezekiel is having a vision. In this vision he is transported to the temple area in Jerusalem where YAHWEH'S worship and service was supposed to be taking place. What he will see, however, is a heathen idol in front of him. Quite an unexpected sight to say the least. It is at this point in the vision that the glory of YAHWEH appears to him, as in the vision recorded in the first chapter of Ezekiel.

Verse 5:

Then he said to me, "Son of man, lift up your eyes now in the direction of the north." So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the alter gate, in the entrance, was this image of jealousy.

On instruction from YAHWEH, Ezekiel looks toward the north gate. There, sure enough, was the image which had provoked YAHWEH standing contemptuously at the entrance. It is also evident by the wording in verse five, that it is at this point that Ezekiel first sees the image. Its mention in verse three is due to Ezekiel's writing in retrospect. In other words, because he wrote the account after he had the vision, he knew the location of the idol.

Now although the idol was not in the gate itself, it was certainly close enough that anyone entering had to maneuver around it. Still, this was only the tip of the iceberg, but it was evident even at this point that an area reserved solely for the worship of YAHWEH, was now being used for idol worship.

Verse 6 continues:

And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations."

was not just a question of poorly serving YAHWEH, the things done were of the type that would drive YAHWEH off altogether. You would think that this was bad enough, but the worst was yet to come.

Verse 7:

And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall.

To understand the location of this hole in the wall, and the events to follow, we must first understand a little about the construction of the temple area. Referring to the illustration, we see the temple, which is located in the inner or upper court. Surrounding this was the outer or great courtyard. Little is known of the exact dimensions of these courts as nothing was recorded or excavated from the site to give any clue. However, the most important detail to the understanding of this prophecy is known.

Jeremiah 36:10 tells us that the inner court was higher than the outer court.

The weight of the materials used for the building of the temple, with its massive pillars, precluded the use of "fill" in which to raise the area, as this would settle in time causing unevenness, cracks, etc.. No, the temple, of necessity, would need a foundation that went down to virgin, or undisturbed soil. The inner, or "upper" court, would need a similar foundation, but remember, the entire court was higher than the outer court. Since the use of fill was impractical, this leaves only one other reasonable method of construction. The inner courtyard must have been a large platform affair. Massive stones were needed for its outer foundation and huge timbers spanned to make the deck. Along this span there could have also been stone pilasters for support. Bear in mind that this platform could not, and did not support the weight of the temple which needed its own massive foundation of stone.

The manpower needed for such a construction was enormous, but the scriptures do give us an account of the work force employed. From Israel alone a crew of 10,000 men were employed (1st Kings 5:13,14). Aside from these, 70,000 as burden bearers, and 80,000 as woodcutters were conscripted from other nations (1st Kings 5:15; 9:20,21 & 2nd Chronicles 2).

So they would not lack the massive stones and timbers needed to construct a huge platform affair for the inner court. This type of construction would have left an open area under the court, similar to one of the boardwalks, or a basement, but made of much larger materials. The main point to bear in mind is that there was an open area under the inner (or upper) court.

This brings us to the hole in the wall described in verse seven. YAHWEH'S spirit guided Ezekiel to the door of the court. They must have passed through the north gate (or door), down the steps past the idol, and around where they now faced the foundation, or wall which supported the inner court's platform. The text does not specify whether the hole in the wall was to the right of left of the north gate, nor is it really important or YAHWEH certainly would have elaborated.

Verse 8 continues:

Then said he to me. "Son of man, dig in the wall"; and when I dug in the wall, lo, there was a door.

Obviously some smaller stones had been removed from the foundation which, from the outer court facing in, served as a wall. Although they did not use mortar in this construction, the actual method of removing these stones, or how and what Ezekiel "dug" is unimportant as this is only a vision. YAHWEH is giving us enough to make HIS point, and that is all that really matters.

The hole in the wall must have been only large enough to crawl through initially, and upon Ezekiel's digging was enlarged to allow enough light to see a door. This door led to a compartment built under the inner court. The height of this is not mentioned, but by the account which follows, it must have been high enough for a man to stand in.

In verse 9, YAHWEH continues HIS instructions to Ezekiel:

And he said to me, "Go in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here.

This verse needs little explanation. YAHWEH knows what is going on inside and expresses HIS opinion pointedly.

Verse 10:

So I went in and saw; and there, portrayed upon the wall round about, were all kinds of creeping things, and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel.

Now the walls of Solomon's temple were covered with carvings of cherubim, which symbolized the contact between the heavens and the earth. They also gave the temple the form of a heavenly scene. Along with the cherubim, there were carved figures of palm leaves, which were symbolic of peace, and open flowers which represented beauty (Kings 6:29). All in all, a beautiful and holy sight to behold.

But below in this compartment under the court, the leaders of Israel had put drawings, or paintings on the walls of all kinds of creeping things and loathsome beasts. The fact that these were "unclean" animals further showed their contempt for YAHWEH. The idols showed who they were really serving when no one else was watching. Bear in mind at all times that the whole purpose of portraying these people in a hidden area is to show that they were doing this in a deceitful manner, or on-the-sly.

Continuing with verse 11, And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, with Ja-azaniah the son of Shushan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up.

Here we have the seventy, the elders, the ones who are in authority over Israel to guide them in the paths of righteousness. Imagine Ezekiel's horror as he saw them in this underground hidden area serving satan.

Ja-azaniah has no known history, but it is evident from the wording that he was a man of prestige in Israel, one whom would never be suspected of any wrongdoing by the people. In other words, his outward appearance to the people was that of an upright godly man, but his inward motivations were corrupt. Such is the case today where there are many people who appear to be godly, but when their actions are examined, with an understanding of the truth, the true motivations and whom they are really serving is uncovered.

Notice that each had a censer which held burning incense. In the typical Israel, incense was to be offered to YAHWEH in a holy manner. As the incense burned its aroma would rise to the heavens pleasing YAHWEH. But in this prophecy, the efforts of these people went to serve the demons.

As stated at the beginning, Jerusalem, in this instance, is symbolic of those who claim to be the LORD'S people, which for all practical purposes, would include all the people of the world. To avoid confusion, let us clarify the use of Jerusalem as a symbol. This city had many characteristics. For example, it was the ruling city in YAHWEH'S nation of Israel, and as such foreshadowed the ruling "city," or organization in the heavens (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 3:12; 21:2,10). On the other side of the coin, as in this chapter, it was shown to be a completely disobedient and rebellious city serving false gods and disobeying YAHWEH in every way possible. To compound YAHWEH'S wrath, the attitude Israel had toward others (when they were doing worse than the heathen) was totally abominable. One such example is recorded in Isaiah 65:5, N.A.S.:

"Who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!' These are a smoke in my nostrils, A fire that burns all the day."

Ezekiel sees in this vision of Jerusalem, a class of people who have kept the temple and its architecture, and are seen by the outsiders going into the temple, presumably to serve YAHWEH in the proper manner. This means that they have a form of godliness, but in actual worshipping practices, are serving satan. The idols, or images on the wall picture the mixture, the compromise, the fallen-from-grace condition of these people. Concerning these, christianity must be held among the most guilty. They have mixed the teachings and traditions of men with the scriptures, confusing every issue; and have sided with the enemies of YAHWEH, which are the nations of the world (Isaiah 34:2). Furthermore, for the most part, they are in control. Where the scriptures plainly tell us to separate from this system of confusion (Revelation 18:4), we find christians (along with others who claim to be serving GOD) right in its midst; and deceiving others to do likewise. These people will go down with this system if they do not take the proper steps to separate from this world and become a part of YAHWEH'S organization.

Verse 12:

Then he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, every man in his room of pictures? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'"

At first it may seem that each man is now in a separate room with pictures. But remember the original scene when Ezekiel went through the door catching them red-handed. There were pictures portrayed upon the wall round about, and before them stood the elders of Israel. In other words, he

sees them all at once, not running from one room to the next. Furthermore, it would serve no purpose for them to separate, as they know very well what the other is doing. So when it refers to "every man in his room," it is referring to the one common room that this secret group is using to serve satan.

It also speaks of them being in the dark, furthering the thought that what they are doing is secretive, or that they are attempting to hide their deeds to outsiders. They are protective of their scam believing they can keep it going indefinitely. When one is threatened with exposure, others (who are doing the same thing) will come to his (or her) defense. An example of this was seen in the court case against "reverend" Moon where he was charged with keeping church funds in a personal account. Well since many other religionists practice this, they came to his defense stating that it was a perfectly normal, legal procedure.

In any event, their attitude is that they can hide their actions from everyone, including YAHWEH. They go so far as to conduct themselves as if YAHWEH had left town altogether. Look at the practices of christian holidays such as christmas and easter. They are thoroughly saturated with pagan customs to the point where there is little left of the original thought. Were their first love really the service of YAHWEH, they would zealously ferret out the truth and reject all else, no matter how unpopular it would make them with the world. They would not seek a religion of convenience, putting men first and YAHWEH in the background.

The vision continues to unfold as verse 13 states:

He said also to me, "You will see still greater abominations which they commit."

Just when you thought you've seen it all, you find out the worst is yet to come.

These begin with verse 14:

Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

Tammuz was a Babylonian deity, the particulars of which are not important. The thought being expressed is that they are totally overcome emotionally because of this pagan god, and when this is the case there is no room in their mind or hearts for YAHWEH. In religions of the world emotions play a great part. For example, the pentecostals will keep clapping their hands and chanting "Jesus" until they work themselves into a frenzy, froth at the mouth and fall down. Can you imagine the apostles doing this? Or would they conduct themselves with a quiet Godly dignity.

But the abominations do not end here, as verse 15 reads: Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? You will see still greater abominations than these."

All the preceding actions were bad. We have seen where all seventy elders were practicing idolatry and making a complete mockery of YAHWEH and HIS laws. This pictured the total disobedience of Jerusalem which, again, pictures those claiming to serve GOD, but in reality are serving satan.

At this point, it should be noted that idolatry need not be restricted to the serving of literal idols. Anything that becomes more important than the service of YAHWEH becomes an "idol." (Refer to Romans 16:18 & Philippians 3:18,19.) Money or riches can become an idol to others as Yahshua stated: "...You cannot serve God and mammon."³ (Matthew 6:24.)

But the verses of this chapter are leading to more. A greater disobedience than what has already been described.

This leads to verse 16:

And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD; and behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the alter, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east, worshipping the sun toward the east.

3 A Semitic word for money or riches

From this point on HE mentions no other greater abominations. You may ask, why is worshipping the sun any worse than the other forms of idolatry? Certainly one form would be as bad as another. But the greatest sin is not in the worshipping of the sun. You will notice that these twenty-five men have their backs to the temple. This pictures the ultimate sin--the total rejection of YAHWEH.

This symbol of rejection is shown to the disobedient in Jeremiah 18:17. "Like the east wind I will scatter them before the enemy. I will show them my back, not my face, in the day of their calamity."

YAHWEH has been rejected by these people after they have heard the truth, seen evidence, and had more than ample opportunity to respond. They reject the truth because they don't want it.

You will also notice that there are about twenty-five in number with their backs to the temple. This represents about one third of the original seventy. As you may remember, the seventy, or all the elders, pictures the total disobedience of Jerusalem, which for all practical purposes, pictures the entire world. What all this means is that out of all humankind ever born, one third will die an everlasting death. For example, if ten billion people were born on this earth, from Adam till the final war, two thirds would live, and one third would die. This number would include those who died and were resurrected in the kingdom (John 5:28,29), and also those who follow satan in death at the end of Yahshua's thousand year reign (Revelation 20:7-9).

As to the rest of the symbolic seventy; what they were doing was wrong, and were they to continue in that course they would die eternally. But there are different circumstances surrounding these remaining two-thirds. These are correctable. They have not received YAHWEH'S spirit to understand the truth, nor have they had ample evidence in hearing the truth and seeing at least a portion of the fulfillment. Therefore, although their past "work is burned up" (1st Corinthians 3:15), if they correct themselves, they can live. "For I have no pleasure in the death of any one, says the lord GOD; so turn, and live." (Ezekiel 18:32.)

For example, if a man claiming to be religious is involved in politics, but corrects himself and makes the proper separation, his past efforts or work is "burned up," or done in vain. But if he does not correct himself and come out of this system, he will be held accountable for its sin and go down with it. (Refer to Revelation 18:4.)

But like the case of the one-third, if a person is in their right mind, has had ample warning, that is, heard the truth over a period of time, seen fulfillment of what was prophesied, and then rejected all, they will die without hope of resurrection. This judgment is outlined in 2nd Thessalonians 1:8,9. "to inflict punishment on those who ignore God, even on those who refuse obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus, men who will pay the penalty of being destroyed eternally from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might," Moffatt's translation.

There is also the case of those who were once in the truth, and then left. Hebrews 6:4-6, *New American Standard* describes this class of people:

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

These also will die without hope of resurrection. This is known as "the second death" (Revelation 20:14; 21:8), where a person can die two deaths at once. The first because of inherited sin, and the second for willful disobedience after being enlightened.

We continue with verse 17:

Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too slight a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they should fill the land with violence, and provoke me further to anger? Lo, they put the branch to their nose."

When a person doesn't believe in, or care about YAHWEH, there are no restraints, or no conscience

to hold them back from doing whatever they please. The result is chaos (Psalms 10:3-11; 14:1), which describes the condition of the world today.

The meaning behind this custom of "putting the branch to their nose" is somewhat obscure. But whether it was done hypocritically to appease YAHWEH, or done as a direct insult; the result is the same.

Verse 18:

Therefore I will deal in my wrath; my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; and though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.

Those who believe that no one sees their actions and think they can continue on indefinitely have a big surprise coming. YAHWEH has not left town, nor is HE dead. HE has seen the oppression and injustice committed by these people, and HE is not going to let them get away with it.

This doesn't mean that YAHWEH is a wicked or merciless GOD. For a period of almost ten years HE pleads with all humankind giving instruction and evidence. There will not be the excuse of "I didn't know." Even then, as the scriptures plainly bear out, it the wicked who destroy themselves.

Again, the greatest guilt lies with the leaders of christendom. James 3:1 mentions that those who teach will be judged with greater strictness. Isaiah 52:11 says, "Depart, depart, go out thence, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD."

This means that anyone who is carrying the message of YAHWEH, symbolized by carrying the vessels of the LORD, must purify themselves and not carry a message that is contaminated with tradition, worldly religion, and other man-made beliefs. The LORD'S people must speak a pure language. When YAHWEH told Jeremiah that he must separate the precious from the vile (Jeremiah 15:19), the indication was that there was a lot of "vile," or error. This was the message being preached by Jehovah's Witnesses. When the truth was separated from the error, then Jeremiah would be as HIS mouth, or it would be like YAHWEH speaking.

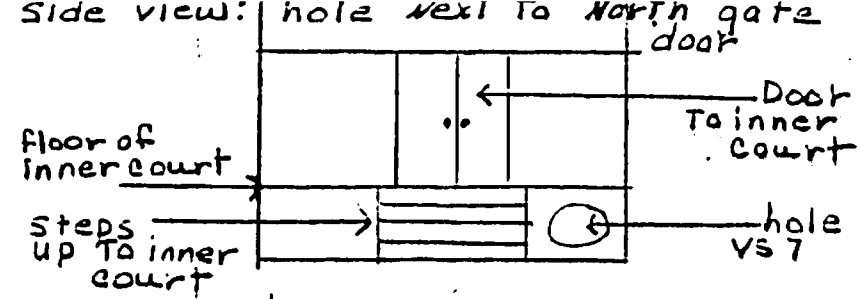
Those who would claim that they have GOD'S spirit, and teach as if they were sent by YAHWEH, stand on shaky ground to say the least. But when they oppose those whom YAHWEH has truly inspired to understand the scriptures, and try to prevent others from understanding, the sin multiplies. At that point they not only have their own blood on their hands, but the blood of others as well.

It seems inconceivable that a person would put their own selfish ambitions and desires above serving YAHWEH, but these people do exist and flourish in this satanic system. Concerning them, the writer of Hebrews says this: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31.)

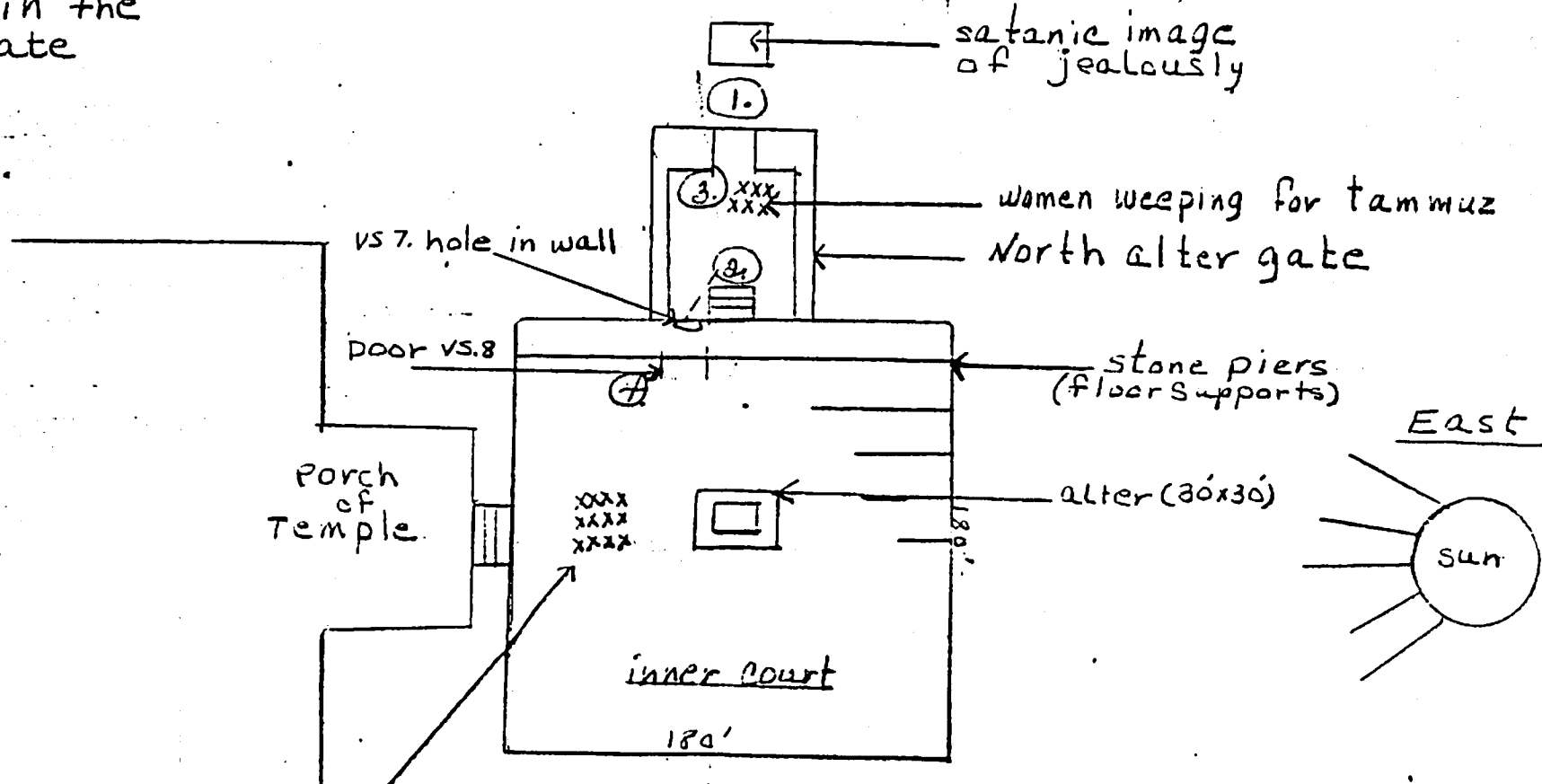
EZEKIEL 8 Vision
 Dave Ray 3/11/88

sacrifices are brought in the North gate

North



West



South

1. vs. 3. 1st place Ezekiel was taken.
2. vs. 7. 2nd place Ezekiel was taken.
3. vs. 14. Ezekiel sees women weeping
4. vs. 16. Ezekiel sees 25 men worshipping The sun.

Ezekiel Eight

Transcribed from the tape of Jeremiah using the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible.

Now this has to do with the immorality of jerusalem, and the jerusalem of old actually pictured those who claim to be the LORD'S People, and we will see some of the hypocrisy and abominable conduct of those who claim to be the LORD'S People.

Verse 1:

In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me.

This is Ezekiel speaking. He was "sitting with the elders of Judah." The elders of Judah were the ones who had responsibility over the organization, in fact, in the beginning they were chosen by Moses as elders, as men who had a reasonable understanding, and were employed to help them in judgement of the entire house of Israel.

Verse 2:

Then I beheld, and, lo, a form that had the appearance of a man; below what appeared to be his loins it was fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze.

The clue here, of the "bronze", is that it belongs to the first heavens, thus indicating that it is an angel or a messenger. The "fire" symbolizes the enlightenment and the "bronze" tells of his position.

Verse 3:

He put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy.

This was a vision. He didn't necessarily have to be picked up by the hair, but this is what he felt, that he was actually in space, and he saw this vision where he was transported "to Jerusalem to the gateway of the inner court." The tabernacle of old, it simply had the tabernacle itself, and the court around it; but the one that was rebuilt has a lower court, an outer court, and an inner court; and then the temple in the highest position.

Now Ezekiel was placed by "the entrance of the inner court." He was placed here:

Ezekiel Eight

Now all of this, the temple and the courts, had to do with the worship of YAHWEH. The inner court, which was actually "eight steps higher than the lower court." would indicate those of the heavenly class, and the "lower court." would represent earthly Israel. But of course at this time Israel did not understand these things and all it was used for then was the worship of YAHWEH. They were just "types and examples of greater things to come." (Heb. 10:1)

"..and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy which provokes to jealousy."

Verse 4:

And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

The vision that he saw in the plain was recorded in the first chapter where he saw "a vision of YAHWEH'S organization, where the four living creatures" love, justice, wisdom, and power "were moving in unison, where he saw the glory of YAHWEH; and the glory of HIS Organization." (Ezk. 1) 2nd Kings 21:5-8 (R.S.V.) says:

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 And he burned his son as an offering, and practiced soothsaying and augury, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

7 And the graven image of asherah that he had made he set in the house of which the LORD said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name for ever;

8 and I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander any more out of the land which I gave to their fathers, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them."

"And he burned his son as an offering, and practiced soothsaying and augury." This is divination.

"..and the graven image of asherah." This was the goddess of the canaanites.

"..and I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander any more." This is what Manasseh did, he cause the israelites to return to idol worship.

Verse 5:

Then he said to me, "Son of man, lift up your eyes now in the direction of the north." So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance, was this image of jealousy.

Ezekiel was facing here: Facing north means it faced this altar, and it was there that this image that provoked YAHWEH to jealousy. So they had

taken over YAHWEH'S temple and HIS grounds for the worship of idol worship. Exodus 23:31-33 (R.S.V.) has this to say:

31 And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.

32 You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods.

33 They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me, for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

YAHWEH had told them originally, that HE wanted them to have nothing to do with the heathen, the surrounding heathen; that HE wanted them to "separate themselves completely from the heathen lest they copy their ways." Exodus 34:12-16 (R.V.S.) says:

12 Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go, lest it become a snare in the midst of you.

13 You shall tear down their altars, and break their pillars, and cut down their asherim (this is the canaanite goddess.)

14 (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.),

15 lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they play the harlot after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and one invites you, you eat of his sacrifice,

16 and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters play the harlot after their gods and make your sons play the harlot after their gods.

In other words, have nothing to do with them because you are going to mingle with them, the first thing you know there will be inter-marriage, and naturally the ones that they marry, if they are heathen and they have their own form of worship, they will influence the ones that they are living with. In other words, Paul brought out "not to be unequally yoked with unbeliever." (2nd Cor. 6:14-18) Now in the first place, if any one really loves his GOD, and has any truth, he could not possibly have that kind of association anyway. What is there in the association of a worldly person who doesn't understand the truth at all, there is really nothing there. So if anybody would seek that kind of association, he can't be a true Israelite. But the israelites of the flesh, for the most part proved that they were not true Israel because YAHWEH had to even mention these things; telling them over and over again and instead of going forward, they went backward. We find that the true Israel, the Israel of Promise, the less you say the better they are. They think for themselves, and they go forward. Each and everyone is striving for YAHWEH'S blessing and they don't have to be carried, they aren't babies.

Ezekiel Eight

Verse 6:

And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations."

In other words, they were actually driving the worship of YAHWEH out, they were putting everything else in. They kept the house, they kept all the designs, the architectural work. But inside of it was full of abominations. In other words, they had an outward appearance of true GODliness, but they did as they pleased.

Verses 7 and 8:

7 And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, there was a hole in the wall.

8 Then said he to me, "Son of man, dig in the wall"; and when I dug in the wall, lo, there was a door.

Other translations say "when I dug I broke through." It wasn't necessarily a door. He broke through the wall of the inner court and he was able to see inside.

Verses 9 and 10:

9 And he said to me, "Go in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here.."

10 So I went in and saw; and there, portrayed upon the wall round about, were all kinds of creeping things, and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel.

Now the "walls of Solomon's temple were covered with cherubim." (1st Kings 6:29) The cherubim indicate YAHWEH'S presence because "over the mercy seat were two cherubim in the ark of the covenant." (1st Kings 6:23) "YAHWEH actually spoke through this." It was covered with smoke many times, indicating YAHWEH'S presence. There was also a "mysterious light". So the walls of the temple were covered with "cherubim and palm leaves." The palm leaves were not only extraordinarily large leaves, but the palm tree itself is very large. This would indicate the flourishing of the righteous. In other words, it was a righteous house, with YAHWEH'S presence there signified by the cherubim.

But here the israelites put their own coverings on the wall, their own paintings. They had "all kinds of creeping things, and loathsome beasts, and all, the idols of the house of Israel." They just substituted what YAHWEH had commanded, and did as they pleased again.

Verse 11:

And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up.

Here we have seventy elders, the ones who are in authority over Israel. We might say they are overseers. These are the ones that have the responsibility, that are kind of running the show for Israel. And here they were right in this house with all these israelites who were serving satan. "Each had his censer in his hand" This is something that burns the incense; "and the smoke of the cloud of incense went up."

Verse 12:

Then he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, every man in his room of pictures? For the say, 'The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.'"

The paintings on the wall, and all of these idols picture the mixture, the compromise, the fallen from grace of christendom. They have "a form of GODliness." (2nd Tim. 3:5) They have a form of worship, indicated by "going in to the temple." This would indicate that they are true christians in a way; they have a form of GODliness. But then the actual working practises are altogether and totally heathen. Now they mix the teachings of men with the scriptures, they give their own interpretation, they side up with YAHWEH'S enemy, they confuse all the sincere people, and they are an abomination to YAHWEH. And unless they straighten out, they will go down very shortly.

Verses 13 and 14:

13 He said also to me, "You will see still greater abominations which they commit."

14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

This is a babylonian deity. The assyrians and the phoenecians also worshipped him. And here we see women completely carried away emotionally over the worship of tammuz. What they were saying I don't know, but it possibly some kind of ritual that works on emotions, very similar, you might say, to the pentecostals who just keep saying "Jesus" and clapping their hands until they get into a frenzy and froth at the mouth and fall down. And that has been done because I have witnessed it, I have seen them fall, and froth. There must have been something that worked up their emotions because why should they just cry over a statue, there had to be something to incite them.

Verses 15 and 16:

15 Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? You will see still greater abominations than these."

16 And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD; and behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east.

Ezekiel Eight

This is what they do in the dark when no one sees them. You notice Ezekiel broke through the wall, and he caught them, he saw them doing these things. This was all a vision, but YAHWEH is showing them what is actually going on. This would indicate the true heart of the individuals what they do in the dark. What they do when no one sees them. This is what they are thinking. They think that YAHWEH is not around, they think they are going to get away with something. They actually believe that if they can deceive the people they can deceive YAHWEH. So they are looking for the easy way out in the world of man.

Verse 17:

Then he said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too slight a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they should fill the land with violence, and provoke me further to anger? Lo, they put the branch to their nose.

In other words, isn't this enough that they were reproaching HIS name in HIS worship, but they were actually going around and cheating their fellow man, and stealing, murdering, and doing everything else that they were commanded not to do.

"Lo, they put the branch to their nose." Or, "they put the branch to My nose." This would indicate that they tried to appease HIM.

Verse 18:

Therefore I will deal in wrath; my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; and though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

YAHWEH is bringing out that the time is coming when the definite sentence will be passed and carried out, and there will be no relenting. This does not mean that YAHWEH is a wicked GOD because we know that HE "pleads with all flesh" (Isa. 66:16 A.V.) The message itself is a plea to come out, and to understand, and to live. "HE is not willing that any man should perish, but all should come to repentance." (Ezk. 33:11) How does this world respond to this message, this pleading? They stop us by force, they outlaw us. But YAHWEH still does not stop pleading with them because the things that we say begin to take place. We have told them the abomination would come up, we have told them it would be a union of russia and the u.s. and the vatican. And this very fact that it is fulfilled is a continual plea to show them we are right. And naturally people who do not want to do right will go toward what they understand to be right. Well, they have fulfillment. We have also told them there is going to be a watergate of the vatican. How many times have we said that? When this happens we are not speaking, but YAHWEH is still pleading with them because HE gives them further understanding, then with the five month argument, when they know they are going to destroy one another, this is the final plea before the actual destruction. And they really have no excuse not to understand. So the evidence is fully there and at this time we find that one third of the earth's population will be gathered. However, the love of YAHWEH is past all understanding and even though the people do go down at the final battle, no one dies unless he "sins against the Spirit." (Matt. 12:31)

Final judgement could never be passed as long as there is the force of deceit present on this earth. As long as the devil is here. The only final judgement that will be passed is on those who gain the understanding, and then reject it. These do sin against the Spirit. But anyone else who does not gain the understanding, who still believes we may be wrong, and that since the world has continued for 6,000 years, it may continue another 6,000 years, and goes down fighting, it is still not the final judgement. There is still a judgement on whether he will live through the final battle or not. But the final judgement whether he lives or dies for eternity is not passed until he is resurrected. Isaiah 52:11 says:

Depart, depart, go out thence, touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

This means that anyone who bears the "vessels of the LORD." or anyone who is carrying the message of YAHWEH must purify themselves and must not carry a message that is contaminated with religion and foreign beliefs. The LORD'S People must speak a pure language. When HE tells Jeremiah "you must separate the precious from the vile." (Jer. 15:19), He is indicating that there was a lot of "vile" around at that time. Jehovah's Witnesses were preaching for quite a while at that time, so this order was given when they had been preaching for a long time, indicating that the precious truth was not all clear. So HE says "when you separate the precious from the vile, you will be as my mouth." (Jer. 15:19) Indicating that the truth would be found out, and when the truth was spoken, and it was absolute truth, then it would be like YAHWEH speaking. Paul says "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers, for what partnership have righteousness with iniquity." (2nd Cor. 6:14-18). This doesn't actually mean just marriage is referred to here; marriage is out of the picture altogether. Even palling around with worldly people, and copying their ways, and enjoying yourself with them, and having a deep friendship with someone who cares nothing for YAHWEH, this is wrong. Now you should meet them. It is not like israel of old where YAHWEH said separate yourself altogether; Israel isn't afraid, we will make contact with them. But we must conquer them, they must come over our way. HE tells Jeremiah "Do not go their way, they will come to you." (Jer. 15:19) All of Israel must do the same thing. If there is an association, it is for the honor and glory of YAHWEH, and nothing else. You don't go from bar to bar, or here or there just to enjoy yourself with a worldly person, and give them a foothold. HE says "for what fellowship has light with darkness?" (2nd Cor. 6:14) What fellowship is that there? You understand the truth, they understand nothing. You speak to them about it, and they don't understand you, they speak to you something that you hate, that you have outgrown, there is nothing there. "What accord has Christ with belial." A demon, "...or what has a believer in common with a non-believer? What agreement has the temple of GOD with idols? For we are the temple of the Living GOD as said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from among them and be separate from them." says the Lord." "Touch nothing unclean. Then I will welcome you, and I shall be a Father to you and you shall be my sons and daughters." (2nd Cor.6:15-18) The israel of the flesh was commanded not to touch anything that was dead. If they so much as came near it, and touched any part of it, they were unclean for 7 days. This was kind of strict, you could have washed your hands, and

Ezekiel Eight

cleaned yourself. But YAHWEH was actually felling us not to have anything to do with that which is unclean. Actually the living people in this world who do not have the truth, are considered "living dead." Yahshua says "let the dead bury the dead." (Matt.8:22) And John recorded in Revelation 11:17,18 that the "time had come to judge the dead." How can you judge dead people if they are literally dead? You can't. But what HE meant was the living dead. In other words, the time to judge, to see how they would respond when the truth came out and was presented to them. Now, again, I say this is not the final judgement, but it will show a reaction whether they will accept the truth and live through the final battle. This is the beginning of the judgement. But first HE must remove the "false prophet." (Rev. 16:13) or the ability for the devil to deceive before the final judgement is passed. (study continues on to Ezekiel 9)

QUESTIONS

1: Q: In verse 2, how does the bronze indicate his position?

A: We have a picture of this in the 2nd chapter of Daniel, in the devil's organization. he is a mimic god, and we find that the bronze or brass is not burnished bronze or gleaming bronze, but it is just bronze. The head of gold is the devil, the silver, is his arch demon, and the bronze is the demons that bear rule over all the earth. This gleaming bronze would indicate YAHWEH'S heavenly host, or the angels in the first heavens.

2: Q: Verse 5; could you explain about the image of jealousy?

A: The image of jealousy, in other words, HE says "the house of Israel provokes Him to jealousy." They put a statue there, I think it was a statue of astarte and anything that is put there in place of the worship of YAHWEH He says "I am a jealous GOD." Jealous, with a righteous jealousy over the house of Israel. This is very, very heart rendering to see a people that HE has dealt with degrade themselves to such an extent where they will actually put an image of something else, which will take them away from the Living GOD, and choosing a dead god rather than HIM. In other words, YAHWEH wants to be accepted, HE doesn't want to be rejected. Not that HE needs anyone, but it is altogether right because HE is altogether right, and they choose someone else. This is why the jealousy is brought out here. HE is despised, and someone else is accepted.

3: Q: Why is Ezekiel called the son of man? Isn't this Yahshua?

A: In a sense he was born a man, and being as he was born a man through a woman, he was called "son of man". Anyone who is a man is called "son of man."

4: Q:

A: Ezekiel pictures those whose hearts are right, trying to do the right thing, and YAHWEH showed him what the people were doing that was wrong. And HE also shows Israel today what is wrong in the world, with those who claim to be the LORD'S People. I think the israel of the flesh, I believe they should have known better, they had the commandments, they read on the sabbath, they should have known a lot more. I don't think they were as deceived as much as the world is today because today the devil is a lot more sly. Today he doesn't use idols, or visible paintings, he uses the force of deceit, and he uses the governing powers which claim to be godly.