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### **Idolatry Within the Inner Court from Ezekiel 8**

By Dave DeWitt

**Verses 7-13 — Dig through the wall.** God brought Ezekiel to the entrance to the court, probably the inner court. He told Ezekiel to dig *through the wall*. And when he *entered and looked, ... every form of creeping things and beasts and detestable things* [perhaps meaning unclean animals— Leviticus 11] *were carved on the wall all around* (see Deuteronomy 4:15-19). *Standing in front of them* [indicating worship] *were seventy elders of the house of Israel*. When Moses appointed assistants to help him in leading the people, the number God consecrated was 70 (Numbers 11:16-17). So this number must have continued. These are the official leadership of the people in Jerusalem.

*With Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them.* Shaphan's forefather, Shaphan found the book of the Law in Josiah's time, which resulted in nationwide reform (2 Kings 22:3-13). So Ezekiel seems surprised to see *Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan* worshipping the idols because he came from a godly family. The significant point is that specific bad leaders are mentioned by name.

**Today we might say of our churches and para-church groups:**

- Dig through the wall and you will see they justify divorce
- Dig through the wall and you will see women clergy
- Dig through the wall and you will see they justify their children being homosexuals
- Dig through the wall and you will see them practicing karate and yoga
- Dig through the wall and you will see them reading their horoscope
- Dig through the wall and you will see them cohabitating outside of marriage
- Dig through the wall and you will see them lying to their customers
- Dig through the wall and you will find them having their own visions
- Dig through the wall and you will find them ignorant about the Word of God

**Verses 14-15—Women worshiping Tammuz.** *Then He brought me to the entrance of the gate of the LORD's house—we're moving toward the Temple, which you would expect would be in a direction toward God. But not so.* Here we see the paganism is not hidden but overt. *Women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.* I don't know what they were weeping about, but this is a Babylonian idol/god being worshipped on Judean soil!!!

**Verse 16— Men worshiping the sun.** *In the inner court ... at the entrance to the Temple...between the porch and the altar—the area near the bronze altar, on which sacrifices were offered, were about twenty-five men—they could be the same as the ones that were called “elders” in 9:6.* The front door of the Temple faced east, toward the rising of the sun (worship condemned in Deuteronomy 4:19).

**Verses 17-18— My eye will have no pity.** The abominations were not just in the Temple area but *they have filled the land*. So God said they *provoked Me* repeatedly. The last phrase of verse 17, *For behold, they are putting the twig to their nose* is not clearly understood. Several interpretations have been suggested, but there is no way to be conclusive.

**Verse 18 is the point or key verse of chapter 8.** This is by several prophets: “*And just as He called and they would not listen, so,*” says the LORD of hosts (Zechariah 7:13; see also Jeremiah 11:11; Micah 3:4; Malachi 1:9).

**A Take-Home Point from Chapter 8—**I get my take-home point from the last verse of the chapter (verse 18). We should not expect to continue in sin and have God answer our prayers. **There is no end to the love of God, but there is an end to an application of the mercy of God.** At a certain point, God just gives up on people.

**Application—**Don't mix Christianity and demonic religious practices – like tai kwon do, karate and yoga or astrology. **What ended God's patience with Israel was when they brought the idols of the religions of the world into His temple.** Beware of doing this in our churches and with our Christian congregations!