

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—A Vision of the Departure of God's Glory (September 17, 592 BC)**Ezekiel 8–11****Introduction to the Visions**

8:1 In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth of the month, as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting in front of me, the hand of the sovereign LORD seized me.

The Idol of Jealousy

2 As I watched, I noticed a form that appeared to be a man. From his waist downward was something like fire, and from his waist upward something like a brightness, like an amber glow.

3 He stretched out the form of a hand and grabbed me by a lock of hair on my head. Then a wind lifted me up between the earth and sky and brought me to Jerusalem by means of divine visions, to the door of the inner gate which faces north where the statue which provokes to jealousy was located.

4 Then I perceived that the glory of the God of Israel was there, as in the vision I had seen earlier in the valley.

5 He said to me, "Son of man, look up toward the north." So I looked up toward the north, and I noticed to the north of the altar gate was this statue of jealousy at the entrance.

6 He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the great abominations that the people of Israel are practicing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see greater abominations than these!"

Idol Worship by the Elders

7 He brought me to the entrance of the court, and as I watched, I noticed a hole in the wall.

8 He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and discovered a doorway.

9 He said to me, "Go in and see the evil abominations they are practicing here."

10 So I went in and looked. I noticed every figure of creeping thing and beast—detestable images—and every idol of the house of Israel, engraved on the wall all around.

11 Seventy men from the elders of the house of Israel (with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing among them) were standing in front of them, each with a censer in his hand, and fragrant vapors from a cloud of incense were swirling upward.

12 He said to me, "Do you see, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in the chamber of his idolatrous images? For they think, 'The LORD does not see us! The LORD has abandoned the land!'"

13 He said to me, "You will see them practicing even greater abominations!"

Idol Worship by the Women

14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the LORD's house. I noticed women sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

15 He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see even greater abominations than these!"

Worshipping the Sun

16 Then he brought me to the inner court of the LORD's house. Right there at the entrance to the LORD's temple, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the LORD's temple, facing east—they were worshipping the sun toward the east!

17 He said to me, "Do you see, son of man? Is it a trivial thing that the house of Judah commits these abominations they are practicing here? For they have filled the land with violence and provoked me to anger still further. Look, they are putting the branch to their nose!

18 Therefore I will act with fury! My eye will not pity them nor will I spare them. When they have shouted in my ears, I will not listen to them."

The Heavenly Executioners

9:1 Then he shouted in my ears, "Approach, you who are to visit destruction on the city, each with his destructive weapon in his hand!"

2 Next, I noticed six men coming from the direction of the upper gate which faces north, each with his war club in his hand. Among them was a man dressed in linen with a writing kit at his side. They came and stood beside the bronze altar.

3 Then the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub where it had rested to the threshold of the temple. He called to the man dressed in linen who had the writing kit at his side.

4 The LORD said to him, "Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of the people who moan and groan over all the abominations practiced in it."

5 While I listened, he said to the others, "Go through the city after him and strike people down; do not let your eye pity nor spare anyone!"

6 Old men, young men, young women, little children, and women—wipe them out! But do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary!" So they began with the elders who were at the front of the temple.

7 He said to them, "Defile the temple and fill the courtyards with corpses. Go!" So they went out and struck people down

throughout the city.

8 While they were striking them down, I was left alone, and I threw myself face down and cried out, “Ah, sovereign LORD! Will you destroy the entire remnant of Israel when you pour out your fury on Jerusalem?”

9 He said to me, “The sin of the house of Israel and Judah is extremely great; the land is full of murder, and the city is full of corruption, for they say, ‘The LORD has abandoned the land, and the LORD does not see!’

10 But as for me, my eye will not pity them nor will I spare them; I hereby repay them for what they have done.”

11 Next I noticed the man dressed in linen with the writing kit at his side bringing back word: “I have done just as you commanded me.”

God’s Glory Leaves the Most Holy Place

10:1 As I watched, I saw on the platform above the top of the cherubim something like a sapphire, resembling the shape of a throne, appearing above them.

2 The LORD said to the man dressed in linen, “Go between the wheelwork underneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” He went as I watched.

3 (The cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and a cloud filled the inner court.)

4 Then the glory of the LORD arose from the cherub [inside the Most Holy Place] and moved to the threshold of the temple. The temple was filled with the cloud while the court was filled with the brightness of the LORD’s glory. [cf. 9:3]

5 The sound of the wings of the cherubim could be heard from the outer court, like the sound of the sovereign God when he speaks.

6 When the LORD commanded the man dressed in linen, “Take fire from within the wheelwork, from among the cherubim,” the man went in and stood by one of the wheels.

7 Then one of the cherubim stretched out his hand toward the fire which was among the cherubim. He took some and put it into the hands of the man dressed in linen, who took it and left.

8 (The cherubim appeared to have the form of human hands under their wings.)

God’s Glory Leaves the Temple

9 As I watched, I noticed four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel beside each cherub; the wheels gleamed like jasper.

10 As for their appearance, all four of them looked the same, something like a wheel within a wheel.

11 When they moved, they would go in any of the four directions they faced without turning as they moved; in the direction the head would turn they would follow without turning as they moved,

12 along with their entire bodies, their backs, their hands, and their wings. The wheels of the four of them were full of eyes all around.

13 As for their wheels, they were called “the wheelwork” as I listened.

14 Each of the cherubim had four faces: The first was the face of a cherub, the second that of a man, the third that of a lion, and the fourth that of an eagle.

15 The cherubim rose up; these were the living beings I saw at the Kebar River.

16 When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved beside them; when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels did not move from their side.

17 When the cherubim stood still, the wheels stood still, and when they rose up, the wheels rose up with them, for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels.

18 Then the glory of the LORD moved away from the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.

19 The cherubim spread their wings, and they rose up from the earth while I watched (when they went the wheels went alongside them). They stopped at the entrance to the east gate of the LORD’s temple as the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

20 These were the living creatures which I saw at the Kebar River underneath the God of Israel; I knew that they were cherubim.

21 Each had four faces; each had four wings and the form of human hands under the wings.

22 As for the form of their faces, they were the faces whose appearance I had seen at the Kebar River. Each one moved straight ahead.

The Wicked Advice of the Officials

11:1 A wind lifted me up and brought me to the east gate of the Lord’s temple that faces the east. There, at the entrance of the gate, I noticed twenty-five men. Among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, officials of the people.

2 The LORD said to me, “Son of man, these are the men who plot evil and give wicked advice in this city.

3 They say, ‘The time is not near to build houses; the city is a cooking pot and we are the meat in it.’

4 Therefore, prophesy against them! Prophesy, son of man!”

5 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon me and said to me, “Say: This is what the LORD says: ‘This is what you are thinking, O house of Israel; I know what goes through your minds.

6 You have killed many people in this city; you have filled its streets with corpses.’

7 Therefore, this is what the sovereign LORD says: ‘The corpses you have dumped in the midst of the city are the meat, and this city is the cooking pot, but I will take you out of it.

8 You fear the sword, so the sword I will bring against you,' declares the sovereign LORD.

9 'But I will take you out of the city. And I will hand you over to foreigners. I will execute judgments on you.

10 You will die by the sword; I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

11 This city will not be a cooking pot for you, and you will not be meat within it; I will judge you at the border of Israel.

12 Then you will know that I am the LORD, whose statutes you have not followed and whose regulations you have not carried out. Instead you have behaved according to the regulations of the nations around you!"

13 Now, while I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I threw myself face down and cried out with a loud voice, "Alas, sovereign LORD! You are completely wiping out the remnant of Israel!"

A New Heart for the Regathered Remnant

14 Then the word of the LORD came to me:

15 "Son of man, your brothers, your relatives, and the whole house of Israel, all of them are those to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'They have gone far away from the LORD; to us this land has been given as a possession.'

16 "Therefore say: 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: Although I have removed them far away among the nations and have dispersed them among the countries, I have been a little sanctuary for them among the lands where they have gone.'

17 "Therefore say: 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: When I regather you from the peoples and assemble you from the lands where you have been dispersed, I will give you back the country of Israel.'

18 "When they return to it, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations.

19 I will give them one heart and I will put a new spirit within them; I will remove the hearts of stone from their bodies and I will give them tender hearts,

20 so that they may follow my statutes and observe my regulations and carry them out. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God.

21 But those whose hearts are devoted to detestable things and abominations, I hereby repay them for what they have done, says the sovereign LORD."

God's Glory Leaves Jerusalem

22 Then the cherubim spread their wings with their wheels alongside them while the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

23 The glory of the LORD rose up from within the city and stopped over the mountain east of it.

The End of the Visions

24 Then a wind lifted me up and carried me to the exiles in Babylonia, in the vision given to me by the Spirit of God. Then the vision I had seen went up from me.

25 So I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

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