

Cuppa Cafe

Daily devotions
from God's Word...



cuppajcafe.org



The Grind

Savor the taste of our previous brew



Since everything in the Bible leads into and prepares the way for what comes after it, refresh yesterday's Brew to let the previous passage get you ready for today's verses. Though you should have already explored the passage, personally with Jesus, here is the heart of what we saw, together.

In the previous passage, verses 5-6, the LORD reveals the first of four visions to expose both priestly and civilian abominations starting with idol worship that justify divorcing National Israel.

5 This passage is the second of a four-chapter vision of Jerusalem that God gave to Ezekiel. It starts with Ezekiel's supernatural transport to Jerusalem and ends with his return to the exiles so he can tell them everything God has shown to him. God wants the exiles to know they can't pin any hopes on Jerusalem – the flagship of Judah – because it is corrupt, beyond repair, and must be destroyed. It's unbridled idolatry warrants drastic punishment.

The four chapters look like this:

- A. God takes Ezekiel to Jerusalem in a vision (8:1-4)
- B. Ezekiel sees visions of abominations committed in and near the Temple (8:5-18)
- C. The LORD commands His messengers to destroy the city (9:1-11) Cultic people
- D. The man wearing linen is ordered to destroy the city with fire (10:1-7)
- E. Vision of the cherubim and the wheels, again (10:8-17) Ties to vision in Ch. 1
- F. The LORD'S glory crosses the threshold and hovers over the cherub (10:18-19) He still loves her
- G. Vision of the cherubim, again (10:20-22) Ties to vision in Ch. 1
- H. Vision of 25 wicked counselors near the Temple (11:1-13) Misguided leaders
- I. An oracle of regeneration after exile (11:14-21) Points to Christ and the Gospel
- J. The LORD'S glory vacates the Temple and Ezekiel returns to the exiles (11:22-25) Execution with no hope of parole

The second section, verses 5-18, divides the abominations committed in and near the Temple into four parts:

- Idol Worship (8:5-6)
- Animal Worship (8:7-13)
- Nature Worship (8:14-15)
- Sun Worship (8:16-18)

The LORD now orders Ezekiel to "lift up your eyes" and really look at the image that caught his eye in v.3, to see it as it really is. More than a mere statue, the LORD wanted Ezekiel to grasp the deeper significance of what the idol meant. Manasseh, who reigned from 687-642 BC had erected a wooden image of Asherah, or Ishtar the Canaanite goddess in the LORD's house (2Kgs. 21:7). Although he later removed it (2Ch. 33:15), that wicked monarch didn't destroy the statue, symbolizing a refusal to give up idolatry, because his successor Josiah, who reigned from 641-609 BC had it taken out and burned at the brook Kidron (2Kgs. 23:6). Now, someone had

recreated the idol, an even worse sin than Manasseh's refusal to get rid of it. Archaeologist Wm. F. Albright compared it to other "figured slabs" engraved with pagan cultic and mythological scenes found at Gozan and Carchemish, proof that Jerusalem priests and high-ranking Israelite nobility had merged their beliefs with those of idol-worshippers from Syria and Mesopotamia.

Three times, the verse mentions the word "north" emphasizing its location. The Hebrew word *tsaphon* translated "north", refers to the Canaanite belief that its gods lived on a mountain to the north. Placing an idol that offends God at the entrance to the Temple compelled everyone who came in through that gate to see it before they saw the true God, thus calling on them to honor it instead of Him. On the same side of the Temple as the royal palace, it was most honorable of its three gateways. Passing it every time he went to participate in ceremonies dedicated to God, the King symbolically led the people to worship the idol in God's place. Thus, setting up the idol in that place further symbolized the pagan ideal of a false god installed in the mountainous north, recreating *tsaphon* right there on Mt. Zion. The LORD refers to it as "near the altar" because sacrifices were made, according to Lev. 1:11, "**on the north side of the altar in the LORD's presence.**" Situating the idol on the north side of the altar underscores the blasphemy of it all, so that sacrifices were actually made at the feet of a pagan substitute for God.

Then Next, or after that

the LORD said to me, "Son of man the Eternal One told me, Ezekiel, Descendant of Adam (but not a descendant of Israel and therefore one of the rebels)

look toward the north." Turn your eyes northward (to the most sacred direction of the temple)

So I looked, Consequently, I, Ezekiel turned my eyes

and there to the north, in that direction,

beside the entrance to the gate near the altar, next to the portal of the entryway close to the place where sacrifices were offered and where the high-priest pleaded with the true God to forgive the people

stood the idol that had made the LORD so jealous was positioned the graven image that Israel preferred to God, that made the Eternal One feel like a cheated-on husband

6 Referring to the threefold blasphemy of recreating pagan *tsaphon*, blocking the path to God with a pagan alternative, and offering sacrifices at the idol's feet instead of before the LORD, the Eternal One calls on Ezekiel to "**see what [the rebels] are [really] doing.**" More than setting up a statue in the Temple, the people had committed "**many -hateful [or detestable, abominable] things that drive me far away from my -Temple.**" Like an unfaithful wife who makes it impossible for her husband to stay because she moves her lover into the house to replace him, the Israelites had moved a false substitute for the True God into His holy house in a deliberate effort to get Him to leave. The people who foolishly relied on God's presence to protect them from enemies swooping down on them from the north, dared to cheat on Him at its most vulnerable point – the north gate – arrogantly and irresponsibly doing exactly what it takes to make Him distance Himself from them. Rather than driving Him away like some helpless spouse, the people disqualify themselves from God's presence. Stained with centuries of unforgiven sins and thus, too polluted for Him to remain in the Temple, the LORD will voluntarily vacate His house in 11:23 at the end of the vision.

As if these abominations were not enough grounds to justify divorcing them, the LORD invites Ezekiel to "**come, and you will see even more detestable sins than these.**" Building to the climax of the vision in 11:22-25, the LORD repeats this same line twice more, at the climax of the next two passages, in verse 18 after showing Ezekiel their worship of animals, and in verse 15, following evidence they also worshiped nature. A skillful attorney, the LORD adds progressively more disgusting accounts of Israel's affairs with other lovers to justify ending His marriage to her. All the while, the LORD's undiminished glory remains in the Temple to symbolize His unfailing love. Instead of deserting Israel and breaking the covenant, the LORD simply cannot stay in the house the people have desecrated for centuries so it is now unfit for Him to live there any longer.

"Son of man," he said, "Descendant of Adam," the Eternal One called me

“do you see what they are doing? Did you notice that they have moved their lover into my house?

Do you see the detestable sins the people of Israel are committing Did you detect the nauseating, crimes the rebellious descendants of Israel who have relapsed into Jacob are carrying out against me

to drive me from my Temple? intended to make me leave my house?

But come, If you think that’s bad, keep looking

and you will see even more detestable sins than these!” I’ll show you even worse atrocities they’ve inflicted on me.



Now Serving **The Brew**

Let us pour you a fresh cup, ground verse-by-verse from today’s passage

In today’s passage, verses 7-13, the LORD reveals the second of four visions to expose both priestly and civilian abominations, continuing with animal worship that justifies divorcing National Israel. So please open your Bibles to Ezekiel Chapter 8, and let me pour you a hot CuppaJesus from today’s brew, starting with v.7.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

Here are the main items in the text that will lead you to its understanding.

Parts	Verse 7	Verse 8	Verse 9	Verse 10	Verse 11	Verse 12	Verse 13
Links	Then	Now, so, and	And 2x	So, and 2x		Then	Then, and, even more than
Persons	He (LORD), me, I (Zeke)	He (LORD), me, son of man, I (Zeke)	He (LORD), they (Rebs)	I 2x (Zeke), the people of (Rebs), Israel (Jacob)	Seventy leaders of Israel, Jaazaniah son of Shaphan, each of them, they (t. seventy)	The LORD 2x, he, me, Son of man, you (Zeke), the leaders of Israel, they, their, us, our (Rebs)	The LORD, I, you (Zeke)
Places	To, the door of the Temple courtyard, where, in the wall	To, into the wall 2x	In, in there	In, the (walls)	There, in the center, from which, above	To (me), in (dark rooms), land (the Promised Land)	
Things	A hole	A hidden doorway	The wicked/detestable sins	All kinds of crawling animals/detestable creatures, the various idols	An incense burner, a cloud of incense, heads	What, idols, dark rooms	Detestable sins, these
Words	Brought, could see	Said, dig, dug, found	Go, said, see, are committing	Went, saw 2x, engraved with,	Were standing with, held, rose	Said, have seen, are doing with, are saying,	Added, come, will show

				worshiped by		doesn't see, has deserted	
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Pay careful attention to every item as you follow today's devotional in your study Bible. We have already grouped them by colors in "Today's Text," so you can follow the writer's flow of thought for yourself. Capture and grasp what he is trying to tell you with matching color pencils to draw lines connecting items to others in the same color-family, and a black pencil to cross-link items from different color-families that still have something to do with one another. Use circles, boxes, triangles, etc. to identify topics and themes (triangles, for instance, might represent the Trinity). Also mark with asterisks, etc., the ones you need to look up later for more information or greater details.

TODAY'S TEXT

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

7 Then, he brought me to the door of the Temple courtyard, where I could see a hole in the wall.

8 He said to me, "Now, son of man, dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and found a hidden doorway.

9 "Go in," he said, "and see the wicked and detestable sins they are committing in there!"

10 So I went in and saw the walls engraved with all kinds of crawling animals and detestable creatures. I also saw the various idols worshiped by the people of Israel.

11 Seventy leaders of Israel were standing there with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan in the center. Each of them held an incense burner, from which a cloud of incense rose above their heads.

12 Then the LORD said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the leaders of Israel are doing with their idols in dark rooms? They are saying, 'The LORD doesn't see us; he has deserted our land!'"

13 Then the LORD added, "Come, and I will show you even more detestable sins than these!"

THE EXPANDED BIBLE

⁷Then he brought me to the entry of the courtyard. When I looked, I saw a hole in the wall.

⁸He said to me, "·Human [^TSon of man], dig through the wall." So I dug through the wall and saw an ·entrance [doorway].

⁹Then he said to me, "Go in and see the ·hateful [detestable; abominable], ·evil [wicked] things they are doing here."

¹⁰So I entered and looked, and ·I saw [^Tlook; ^Tbehold] every kind of crawling thing [Lev. 11:20] and hateful beast [^Cunclean animal, ritually] and all the idols of the ·people [^Thouse] of Israel, ·carved [engraved] on the wall all around [^Csuch images were idolatrous; Deut. 4:16–18; Rom. 1:23].

¹¹Standing in front of these carvings and idols were seventy of the elders of [^Tthe house of] Israel and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan. Each man had his ·pan for burning incense [censer] in his hand, and a ·sweet-smelling [fragrant] cloud of incense was rising.

¹²Then he said to me, "·Human [^TSon of man; 2:1], have you seen what the elders of [^Tthe house of] Israel are doing in the dark? Have you seen each man in the ·room [chamber; shrine] of his own ·idol [carved image]? They say, 'The LORD doesn't see us. The LORD has ·left [abandoned; forsaken] the land.'"

¹³He also said to me, "You will see even more ·hateful [detestable; abominable] things that they are doing."

THE SCRIPTURES 1998/2009

7 Then, He brought me to the door of the court. And I looked and saw a hole in the wall.

8 And He said to me, "Son of man, please dig into the wall." And when I dug into the wall I saw a door.

9 And He said to me, "Go in, and see the evil abominations which they are doing there."

10 And I went in and looked and saw all kinds of creeping creatures, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Yisra'el, carved all around on the walls.

11 And facing them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Yisra'el, and in their midst stood Ya'azanyahu son of Shaphan. Each one had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up.

12 And He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Yisra'el are doing in the dark, each one in the room of his idols? For they say, 'יהוה does not see us, יהוה has forsaken the land.' "

13 And He said to me: "You are to see still greater abominations which they are doing."

THE NET BIBLE

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!"

TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:

7 Now the vision progresses to a second stage. "Then," or after the Spirit brought him to the Temple's North Gate and helped him to perceive the secret, dishonest maneuvering of the rebels behind the scenes there, the LORD brought Ezekiel "to the door of the Temple courtyard" so He could show him "a hole in the wall". The hole was a gap in the stonework surrounding the door, through which those who noticed it or knew it was there could enter an area that Josiah blocked to restrict its use as part of the spiritual reformation during his reign. As the statue grabbed attention on the way to God's presence, so the hole led to a chamber meant to divert people from God with other tokens of idolatry. Unlike the statue out in the open, however, the hole provides secret access to a hidden chamber for more private idolatry.

Then, Next, or after talking with me, Ezekiel at the North Gate

he brought me to the door of the Temple courtyard, the Eternal One escorted me, Ezekiel to the actual entrance of the place where people gathered for worship on the sacred grounds

where I could see a hole in the wall. At which I, Ezekiel noticed a gap in the sacred structure

8 The hole appeared as an innocent gap in the stonework to the uninitiated, and required closer examination to give away its true purpose. So, the LORD ordered Ezekiel to investigate it further, by "**dig[ing] into the wall.**" "**So,**" or, in response to the LORD's command, Ezekiel followed orders and "**dug into** [or, explored the gap in] **the wall.**" When he did, he "**found** [or, discovered] **a hidden doorway.**" The hole led him to the entrance of a hidden chamber, out of public sight.

He said to me, The Eternal One, ordered me, Ezekiel

“Now, At this time,

son of man, descendant of Adam and not one of the descendants of Israel who had relapsed into Jacob dig into the wall.” Burrow a tunnel through the gap in the sacred structure

So In response to His command

I dug into the wall I, Ezekiel burrowed through the gap

and found a hidden doorway. to discover a secret entrance

9 Now that Ezekiel was on the threshold of the chamber, the LORD ordered him to “Go in,” so he could see for himself “the wicked and detestable sins they are committing in there.” Ezekiel had deduced “the detestable sins the people of Israel are committing” by moving an idol with whom they had cheated on Him, into His house. With the LORD’s help, he concluded that the rebels were trying to “drive [Him] from [His] Temple.” But the previous passage ended with God’s guarantee that Ezekiel would see, or witness “even more detestable sins than these,” far beyond “the threefold blasphemy of recreating a striking example of pagan *tsaphon*, blocking the path to God with a pagan alternative, and offering sacrifices at the idol’s feet instead of before the LORD.” In other words, evidence of even worse crimes against the LORD by national Israel, violating her husband and her covenant marriage to Him awaited Ezekiel in the chamber. The expression, “wicked and detestable” is actually a literary device that connects two words with the linking word “and” to express a single idea. The first word, “wicked,” describes the effect of their sins on them, their neighbors and God’s plans for them as – evil, or bad – not just unlawful, but harmful. The second, “detestable,” describes God’s reaction to such loathsome, disgusting, and repulsive sins: normally translated “abomination”, because God can’t stand them.

“Go in,” he said, Enter, the Eternal One ordered

“and so

see the wicked and detestable sins you can witness for yourself the harmful, disgusting crimes they are committing in there!” the rebels are carrying out against me, inside

10 “So,” or in obedience to the LORD’s instructions, Ezekiel entered the chamber, or “went in and [once inside] saw the walls engraved with all kinds of crawling animals and detestable creatures.” Like the way addicts litter the place where they inject themselves with used syringes, so those who practiced idolatry in the chamber littered it with evidence of their disgusting habit. They had engraved or permanently decorated the walls of the room with paintings or images of “all kinds,” and therefore careless and senseless selection of animals and creatures – probably insects, reptiles, and vermin that any self-respecting Jew would avoid, let alone unimaginably consider for worship. Years since God rescued them from Pharaoh by defeating every Egyptian god, the people had managed to retain affection for Egyptian deities, as well as acquired Canaanite and Babylonian tendencies to worship virtually every living thing. Abraham deserted his ancestral deities for God, willing to slay his own miracle son at God’s command (Gen. 22). Now, instead of building on Jacob’s conversion to Israel, his descendants had relapsed into their great ancestor’s pre-conversion polytheism. As if animal worship wasn’t bad enough, the place was literally littered with the full spectrum or smorgasbord of “idols worshiped by the people of Israel.”

So In obedience to the Eternal One’s command

I went in and saw I, Ezekiel entered the chamber so I could observe

the walls engraved with all kinds of crawling animals and detestable creatures. the four sides of the chamber permanently etched with images or representations of living things without legs, plus filthy quadrupeds

I also saw In addition, I, Ezekiel observed

the various idols the whole spectrum of graven images

worshiped by the people of Israel. the rebels honored and served in place of me, the Eternal One

11 The number “**Seventy**” is the product of seven, the number of perfection and ten, the number of completion – so “**Seventy leaders of Israel**” would be a group that symbolized the nation, just as Israel later selected seventy men to form the Sanhedrin, its highest governing body. Worse than that, “**in the center**” of the group, and therefore serving as its ringleader was “**Jaazaniah son of Shaphan,**” the son of Josiah’s Secretary-of-State who played a leading role in Josiah’s spiritual reformation (2Kgs. 22:3-20). Though another of Shaphan’s sons, Ahikam served as a major supporter of the prophet Jeremiah, Jaazania, whose father named him: “May God hear” suggesting that nothing should be kept from God, spearheaded a secretive cult that practiced the most disgusting worship in the history of Israel. God vaporized Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu for “**putting coals of fire in their incense burners and sprinkling incense over them... disobeying the LORD by burning before him the wrong kind of fire, different than he had commanded**” (Lev. 10:1). Here, Ezekiel watched all 71 men desecrate the same sacred Temple grounds, intensifying Nadab and Abihu’s sin — offering their own strange fire, not to God but to idols. They perfectly personified the steep spiritual decline of the unfaithful nation and bride that forfeited God’s promises and forced Him to divorce her.

Seventy leaders of Israel A group of example setters symbolizing the nation

were standing there were on their feet, inside

with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan in the center. Gathered around the chief rebellious son of King Josiah’s Secretary of State, a key figure in Josiah’s spiritual reformation for the nation

Each of them held an incense burner, Every one of those men had a device meant only for Aaron’s sons in his hand intended to send a sweet aroma up toward the true God

from which a cloud of incense rose above their heads. Instead, they created a billow of unholy smoke over, or on top of them

12 As He did in the first vision of verses 5 and 6, the LORD now asks Ezekiel if he grasps the deeper significance of what he’s just seen. Before He can show the prophet additional atrocities, the LORD makes sure that His spokesman sees more than just the outward actions of the idolatrous leaders. To bring back an accurate report of what is happening in Jerusalem, Ezekiel must fully comprehend what is actually occurring there. Speaking directly with him, the LORD calls him “**Son of man,**” first to remind him that as a descendant of Adam he is part of the fallen race that needs saving, and second to separate him from the descendants of Israel who have betrayed their great ancestor – the rebels who have made it necessary for the Eternal One to divorce the nation and allow His ex-bride to suffer the overwhelming consequences of her sins. The first line, a question: “**have you seen what the leaders of Israel are doing with their idols in dark rooms**” evaluates Ezekiel’s powers of observation to make sure that he can describe accurately and in detail what he saw. The next line, “**The LORD doesn’t see us; he has deserted our land**” is an explanation to assist his powers of deduction, describing what only the LORD can say for sure – why each of them is worshiping idols in a room full of forbidden carvings. Rather than rely on Ezekiel’s limited eyesight, the LORD penetrates the seventy’s actions to reveal the motives behind their behavior. After the LORD rescued His enslaved people from Pharaoh, seventy elders joined Moses on Mt. Sinai to celebrate the covenant in God’s presence (Ex. 24: 1, 9). Now, on the eve of enslavement to Nebuchadnezzar, the Pharaoh of the day, seventy elders sought deliverance by the creepy/crawly gods of Egypt rather than from the true God who set them free. It’s as if they join the chorus of doubters in the wilderness who wanted to go back to Egypt instead of continuing to the Promised Land. Fear drove them back to the instincts of self and away from the hopes and dreams of faith.

On the surface, as absurd as it may have seemed, the very men who were supposed to guard and guide the people in God’s ways, defected from the faith and worshiped creatures in place of the Creator in the very building He chose to live among the people. No matter how dark, secluded, or secret the places may have been,

they certainly would not hide them from God – especially in the Temple permeated with His presence. But, the leaders blaming God for their troubles claimed He had deserted them. How else could they explain the fall of the city where God’s presence should have, in their opinion, repelled invaders and prevented their capture? Instead of accepting responsibility for their sins and appreciating the need for them to suffer the consequences for their actions, the leaders excused their desertion of the Eternal One for idols, by accusing Him of abandonment – not just from the Temple, but, from the entire Promised Land. Jonah thought He could escape God’s presence by leaving the Temple. These Israelites believed that Babylonian advances across their beloved land meant that He had vacated the Temple as well as the country. Unfortunately, when they say, “He can’t see us, because He isn’t here anymore,” yet, worshiped idols in “[dark rooms](#),” they contradict themselves. Hiding in the shadows betrays fear of getting caught: either by the people, or, more probably by the God they still knew was there.

Then Next, or after showing me the seventy leaders worshiping their idols

[the LORD said to me](#), “[Son of man](#), the Eternal One asked me, Ezekiel, Descendant of Adam who still needs saving

[have you seen what the leaders of Israel](#) did you notice that the example setters for my ex-bride

[are doing with their idols in dark rooms?](#) Are cheating on me, the Eternal One with their false-god/lovers in their secret places (rendezvous’)

[They are saying](#), ‘[The LORD doesn’t see us](#); What the rebels are really insisting with their actions is: the Eternal One can’t make out what we’re doing

[he has deserted our land!](#)” He, the Eternal One has left His Temple and the Promised Land (He isn’t around anymore)

13 Then, or immediately after that, the Eternal One repeats what He said at the close of the previous vision. As if these abominations were not enough grounds to justify divorcing National Israel, the LORD invites Ezekiel to “**come, and I will show you even more detestable sins than these.**” Like a prosecutor building a case, the Eternal One is prepared to offer worse, more damaging grounds for divorcing the nation. God has noticed everything. There are no secrets from Him.

Then Next, or after showing me the seventy example setters worshiping all their idols in a single secret place

[the LORD added](#), the Eternal One brought up one more thing

“[Come, and I will show you](#) Follow me and I will enable you to see

[even more detestable sins than these!](#)” even worse crimes, or atrocities they are committing against me



A Tastier CuppaJ

Let Jesus pour you a fuller bodied, more flavorful CuppaJ from today’s brew

Well, we hope you enjoyed this morning’s CuppaJ for the Day, brewed verse-by-verse to bring out the full-flavor of the text. Now it’s your turn to explore the passage for yourself—to make this study good to the last drop. Remember, you haven’t really studied the Bible, God’s *Written Word*—until it connects you with Jesus, God’s *Living Word*. Then Jesus, the true Teacher can customize the text, so every word comes across written just for you. This morning’s CuppaJ is just a taste of what’s in the text—the starting point for a deeper learning experience with Jesus. So, go ahead; spend time alone with Him to go over this passage together. Let Jesus pour a tastier CuppaJ from the same brew, for you, today. Use the following form to jot down whatever Jesus shares with you.
