

# 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 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.

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 have 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



Now  
Serving

## The Brew

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

In today's passage, verses 14-18, the LORD continues to show Ezekiel the spiritual crimes of the rebels that made it necessary for Him to divorce 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.14.



### WHAT TO LOOK FOR TODAY

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

Parts	Verse 14	Verse 15	Verse 16	Verse 17	Verse 18
<b>Links</b>	And	But, even more than	Then, and	And	Therefore, neither, nor, and, though
<b>Persons</b>	He, the LORD'S, me (Zeke), some women	You 2x (Zeke), he, I (LORD)	He, the LORD 2x, me (Zeke), the 25 men, their, they	You, son of man (Zeke), he, me, my (LORD), the people of, they, the whole nation, their (Rebs)	I 3x (LORD), them, they (Rebs)
<b>Places</b>	To the north gate of Temple, there		Into the inner courtyard of T., at the entrance of the	To the people of Judah, into violence, at me	In (fury)

			sanctuary between the entry room, there, to the sanctuary of, east, to		
<b>Things</b>	The god Tammuz	This, these, detestable sins	The bronze altar, backs, the ground, the sun	This, it, nothing, that, these detestable sins, violence, noses, anger	Fury, mercy
<b>Words</b>	Brought, were sitting, weeping for	Have seen, asked, will show	Brought, were about with, were facing, bowing low, worshipping	Have seen, asked, is, commit, leading, thumbing, provoking	Will respond, will (not) pity/spare, cry for, will not listen

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

14 He brought me to the north gate of the LORD's Temple, and some women were sitting there, weeping for the god Tammuz.

15 "Have you seen this?" he asked. "But I will show you even more detestable sins than these!"

16 Then he brought me into the inner courtyard of the LORD's Temple. At the entrance to the sanctuary, between the entry room and the bronze altar, there were about twenty-five men with their backs to the sanctuary of the LORD. They were facing east, bowing low to the ground, worshipping the sun!

17 "Have you seen this, son of man?" he asked. "Is it nothing to the people of Judah that they commit these detestable sins, leading the whole nation into violence, thumbing their noses at me, and provoking my anger?"

18 Therefore, I will respond in fury. I will neither pity nor spare them. And though they cry for mercy, I will not listen."

### THE EXPANDED BIBLE

<sup>14</sup>Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the ·Temple [<sup>l</sup>house] of the LORD, where I saw women sitting and crying for Tammuz [<sup>c</sup>a Babylonian god of fertility and rain, whose annual death marked the change of seasons].

<sup>15</sup>He said to me, "Do you see, ·human [<sup>t</sup>son of man; 2:1]? You will see things even more ·hateful [detestable; abominable] than these."

<sup>16</sup>Then he brought me into the inner courtyard of the ·Temple [<sup>l</sup>house of the LORD]. There I saw about twenty-five men at the entrance to the ·Temple [<sup>l</sup>house] of the LORD, between the ·porch [portico] and the altar. With their backs turned to the Temple of the LORD, they faced east and were worshipping the sun in the east.

<sup>17</sup>He said to me, "Do you see, ·human [<sup>t</sup>son of man; 2:1]? Is it ·unimportant [a trivial thing] that the ·people [<sup>l</sup>house] of Judah are doing the ·hateful [detestable; abominable] things they have done here? They have filled the land with violence and ·made me continually angry [provoked me to still greater

anger]. ·Look [ʔBehold], they are ·insulting me every way they can [ʔputting the branch to their nose;  
Cperhaps part of the worship of the sun god].

<sup>18</sup> So I will act ·in anger [with wrath]. I will have no pity, nor will I ·show mercy [spare them]. Even if they shout in my ears, I won't listen to them."

#### **THE SCRIPTURES 1998/2009**

"14 And He brought me to the door of the north gate of the House of יהוה, and I saw women sitting there, weeping for Tammuz.

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

16 And He brought me into the inner court of the House of יהוה. And there, at the door of the Hēkāl of יהוה, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the Hēkāl of יהוה and their faces toward the east, and they were bowing themselves eastward to the sun.

17 And He said to me, "Have you seen, O son of man? Is it a small matter to the house of Yehudāh to do the abominations which they have done here? For they have filled the land with violence, and turn back to provoke Me. And see, they are putting the branch to My nose.

18 "Therefore I shall indeed deal in wrath. My eye shall not pardon nor would I spare. And they shall cry in My ears with a loud voice[...]"

#### **THE NET BIBLE**

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!"

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 worshiping 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."

#### **TODAY'S DEVOTIONAL:**

---

14 Today's passage is part 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) 8:5-10:7 expose J's corruption and she is judged
- 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)

After showing Ezekiel the atrocities in verses 5-13, the LORD exposed him to even worse crimes against Him in verses 14-18. The idol by the North Gate, and the secret room full of Egyptian inspired substitutes for God were bad enough, but true to His Word, today's verses report even more detestable sins committed by the rebels.

Crawling out of the hidden room through the tunnel he dug out for himself, and exiting the wall through the hole he first saw in it, the LORD returned Ezekiel **"to the north gate of the LORD's Temple,"** where **"some women were sitting...weeping."** The situation looked bleak for the city, and the women should have been upset about it. At first glance, you might think the women were crying in anticipation of the conflict to come and for the men about to die defending them and their children. But instead of imploring God for help at the entrance of the Temple's most sacred areas, the woman engaged in an annual ritual **"for the god Tammuz."** That's right. On the path that pointed, and should have led them, to the LORD, the most helpless citizens of the holy city chose to worship another so-called god. Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, the Sumerians and later on, the Babylonians worshiped Dumuzi, the imaginary brother and consort of Inanna – Ishtar of the Akkadians and Asherah in the OT who started out as a shepherd-god, but by this time had become a fertility-god and god of the underworld.

The personification of the change of seasons, they saw him in the way nature seemed to die and revive – gradually declining from summer to winter, and then, renewing in the spring. So, every summer – the dry season, the people pictured him dying and descending into the underworld. Then, they also visualized his sister mourning in the rainy season for him, and finally going down to the underworld to bring him back to life when everything began to bloom. To reenact this supposed scenario, Babylonian women bewailed the fertility god's "death" in July, and celebrated his resurrection in the spring. As Jaazaniah and the 70 men turned to Egypt for deliverance from Babylon by secretly worshiping its gods, the women publicly worshiped this nature-god to appease the powers they thought were behind Babylon's success, also hoping to head off disaster.

### He the Eternal One

**brought me to the north gate of the LORD's Temple,** escorted me, Ezekiel to the most sacred entrance of His place of worship

**and some women were sitting there,** where females who should have been home supervising domestic matters, settled down

**weeping for the god Tammuz.** Joined the Babylonian ceremony of crying for their god Tammuz when he supposedly dies at the beginning of summer

15 Preferring Tammuz, or the creation he symbolized deeply offended the Creator, especially doing so within the courts of His Temple, and constituted a greater insult to Him than the previous two abominations. The first line of v.15, "**Have you seen this**," tests Ezekiel's powers of observation to make sure he can relay an accurate report of what was happening in Jerusalem, to the exiles in Babylon. If the elders in Jerusalem are secretly depending on Egypt to rescue them from Babylon, and the women hope to pacify the Babylonians by publicly worshipping one of its gods – the city they were counting on to trigger their return is doomed.

Then, still building to a climax, the LORD again promises Ezekiel: "**I will show you even more detestable sins than these**." Added to what the prophet has already witnessed, the next and final atrocity will justify the LORD's decision to divorce National Israel.

"**Have you seen this?**" Do you, Ezekiel have a clear picture of this in your mind?

**he asked.** The Eternal One, inquired

"**But** (if you think that's as bad as it gets, you haven't seen anything yet)

**I will show you even more detestable sins** (Brace yourself, because) I, the Eternal One will expose you to still worse atrocities

**than these!**" than the ones you've already seen

16 "**Then**", or, next, the Eternal One took Ezekiel past the gate "**into the inner courtyard of the LORD's Temple**" closest to the divine presence. Entering from the north and facing south, the altar of sacrifice stood before him, with the holy place and holy of holies situated to his right. "**At the entrance**" or, door, "**to the sanctuary** [or, Tabernacle, or most sacred precincts of the sanctuary], **between the entry room** [or, holy place, the first room of the Tabernacle] **and the bronze altar**" stood "**about twenty-five men**" [probably priests because only they were permitted to enter that area], "**with their backs to the sanctuary of the LORD**." In other words, the priests God called to lead the people in worshipping Him had turned their backs on Him, pointing them in the opposite direction. The next line confirms, "**They were facing east**" and "**bowing low to the ground**, [prostrating themselves as they should have before the LORD, they were instead] **worshipping the sun**." The LORD deliberately placed Himself at the west end of the sanctuary so the people had to turn their backs on the sun and leave the world behind to worship Him. Now, the priests have rejected God, turning their backs on Him to return to the world and worship the sun in His place.

**Then** Next

**he brought me into the inner courtyard of the LORD's Temple.** The Eternal One escorted me, Ezekiel into the innermost area of the Eternal One's place of worship

**At the entrance to the sanctuary,** Ahead of me through the door or opening into the place of worship

**between the entry room** in the middle of the holy place

**and the bronze altar,** plus the altar of sacrifice

**there were about twenty-five men** twenty-five men, probably priests

**with their backs to the sanctuary of the LORD.** had turned their backs on the Eternal One

**They were facing east,** to face the sunrise

**bowing low to the ground,** prostrating themselves

**worshipping the sun!** to revere and adore the sun in His place

17 Again, the LORD asks, "**Do you see, son of man**" only this time to test Ezekiel's powers of perception. The word "**trivial**" demands that Ezekiel judge the significance of what he has seen. The word "**abominations**" refers to all four of the disgraceful sights exposed to him in chapter 8. The idol at the North Gate in verses 5, 6 implicated the King in diverting the people away from the LORD. The hidden room of sacrilegious murals with

Jaazaniah diverting 70 elders away from the LORD to worship Egyptian-inspired gods shows that the leaders are even more corrupt than the king. The women weeping for the Babylonian fertility-god to ease tensions with Babylon shows that even homes and families have lost faith in God. And finally, the priests have turned their backs on the LORD and pointed the people back to the world. Beyond idolatry, these criminal actions have two horrible consequences for the nation. First, **“they** [the rebellious nation, from the king, to the elders, to the women and the priests] **have filled the land with violence.**” The failure of everyone to carry out God’s instructions symbolizes a complete breakdown of God’s plan for the people. When this happens, there is no end to the chaos and harm that follows. Second, the rebels have also **“provoked me to anger still further.”** Instead of recognizing their crimes and reconciling with God, the people only made things worse fanning the flames of God’s anger into divine rage.

As if to underscore their lack of repentance, the LORD draws Ezekiel’s attention to an act of even greater defiance: **“Look, they are putting the [vine] branch to their nose.”** The vine symbolized God’s care for Israel, from seed to flower. The idea of **“putting the [vine] branch to their nose,”** would symbolize the height of ingratitude and rejection. The Septuagint translators rendered this verse, **“they are turning up their nose to [or, sneering at] the vine branch,”** so that the rebels are expressing complete contempt for God. Beyond a preference for substitutes, this last line ratchets up the rebels’ disrespect for God to scorning Him and everything He’s done for them as worthless and no longer capable of getting a rise out of them. In the ultimate sense, turning up the nose to the vine branch points to rejecting Christ, the vine and turning down a chance to be one of His branches. The unpardonable sin because without Christ there is no pardon from sin, it represents the last straw in a long line of offenses that ultimately forfeits every covenant privilege and opens the door to destruction.

**“Have you seen this, son of man?” he asked. “Is it nothing to the people of Judah that they commit these detestable sins, leading the whole nation into violence, thumbing their noses at me, and provoking my anger?”**

**“Have you seen this, son of man?”** Do you, descendant of Adam have an accurate picture of what I’ve shown you in your mind?

**he asked,** The Eternal One inquired

**“Is it nothing** Is it really harmless

**to the people of Judah** in the eyes of the citizens of the southern kingdom

**that they commit these detestable sins** that they perpetrate these crimes against me, the Eternal One as a lifestyle?

**leading the whole nation into violence** unleashing chaos among everyone in the Promised Land

**thumbing their noses at me** showing contempt for me, the Eternal One and my plans for their salvation

**and provoking my anger.** plus antagonizing my already strong feelings of annoyance, displeasure, and hostility

**18 “Therefore,”** or “as a result,” the LORD declares: **“I will respond in fury.”** Pushed to the limit by the rebels’ arrogance and insolence, the LORD’s anger reaches its highest expression: all out rage. Because the people have nothing but disregard for God or His blessings, He will vent His wrath on them. The next two lines spell out what the rebels can expect from the LORD for their open resistance and bold disobedience. First, the LORD gives His word, **“I will neither pity [or, feel sorry for] nor spare [or, let] them [off the hook].”** He will not hold back one ounce of the punishment they have earned for themselves. He will pour out His bulletproof vengeance on them, undiluted and full strength. Expecting them to plead with Him, He warns: **“though they cry for mercy,”** scream at the top of their lungs for Him to reconsider, hoping for leniency, the LORD assures the rebels, **“I will not listen.”** After centuries of ignoring His voice, He will now refuse to acknowledge their pleas for help. He will neither notice what they do or hear anything they say, regardless of the sincerity or volume. Divorced, He will cut all ties with them.





v.13