

God's People in Exile

What Comes After?: A Driven God

Leviticus 26:1 -- "You must not make for yourselves idols, so you must not set up for yourselves a carved image or a pillar, and you must not place a sculpted stone in your land to bow down before it, for I am the Lord your God."

Deuteronomy 4:25-31; and Deuteronomy 31:8 --"The Lord is indeed going before you – he will be with you; he will not fail you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged!"

Ezekiel 8

Why was it important for Ezekiel to record the exact date and what he was doing on that day? [1] Who and/or what did Ezekiel see when he first arrived in Jerusalem? [3-4] What did God tell Ezekiel to do there? [5-6] What is God's mood or attitude, what emotions are evident? If the idols are such a big deal to Him, why doesn't He just destroy them? -- He is the Almighty, after all!

Who did God say would “drive me far from my sanctuary”? The tabernacle, and later the temple, was where God dwelt among His people. Did God need a place of refuge, a hiding place, there?

Where did the secret doorway lead to? [7-11] What did Ezekiel find there? and who else was in the room? and what were they doing? [10-11]

God has summoned the Watchman of Israel (Ezekiel), what does He call his attention to? [12-13, 14-15, 16] What do the elders of Israel keep saying that disturbs God? Why is He upset by that? [12]

Four times God has called Ezekiel to witness (“do you see?”) these “greater abominations” (*you ain't seen nothin' yet!*). [6, 12, 15, 17] God says “they have filled the land with violence and provoked me to anger”, what is He going to do about it? [18] Which is the greater evil, their idolatry, or their failure to provide justice?

Ezekiel 9

Where was the Glory of the God of Israel, and where did it move to? [8:3, 9:3] God has called in His cleanup crew: describe them and the task they were assigned to accomplish. [1-7] Why is God willing to defile the temple?

*The rule seems to be that God doesn't care about the purity of the temple, or of the offering, but He cares very much about the purity of His people. He doesn't care about all the commandments, He cares that **you** care about them. The only sacrifice that matters, the only offering that matters to Him is that **you** care about the commandments, the sacrifices, and the offerings. He doesn't want your stuff, He wants your obedience -- He wants you.*

Meanwhile, back at the temple, what is Ezekiel doing? In verse 9, what great sin does God say is deserving the wrath He is now unleashing? What do “they say”? What does God say in response? [10]

“I have done just as you commanded” -- does this sound familiar? [11]

Behold!

The NET offers this footnote: *The Hebrew word הִנֵּה (hinneh, traditionally “behold, lo, or see”) indicates becoming aware of something and has been translated here as a verb throughout the chapter. Apparently “behold” is considered an outdated word like “thee”, “thou”, or “shalt”. Other translations take a similar approach. The problem is that the sense of astonishment, wonder, or outrage is often lost.*

8:2 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.

8:4 Then **I perceived** that the glory of the God of Israel was there, as in the vision I had seen earlier in the valley. 8:5 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.

8:7 He brought me to the entrance of the court, and as I watched, **I noticed** a hole in the wall. 8:8 He said to me, “Son of man, dig into the wall.” So I dug into the wall and discovered a doorway.

8:10 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.

8:14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the Lord’s house. **I noticed** women sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

8:16 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!

8:17 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!

9:2 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.

9:11 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.”

Next week: Ezekiel chapters 10 and 11.