



Lesson 193

The Glory of the LORD Leaves the Temple

Story Elements

- **Text:** Ezekiel 8:1-11:25
- **Setting:** ca. 592 B.C. in Jerusalem
- **Main Characters:** God and Ezekiel
- **Plot:** Ezekiel receives a vision that graphically reveals the extent of Judah's idolatry and the subsequent departure of the LORD's glory cloud from the temple.
- **Key word(s):** "*thou shalt see greater* _____" — Ezekiel is taken on a prophetic vision tour of the idolatry within God's temple. After each scene, the LORD warns the prophet that the next scene reveals even greater wickedness.

• **Climax:** Ezekiel 9:8 *And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?* This verse shows us the great wrath of God that would make the prophet despair so. The following passages reveal God's justice against evil, his revulsion of sin, and his removal from Jerusalem.

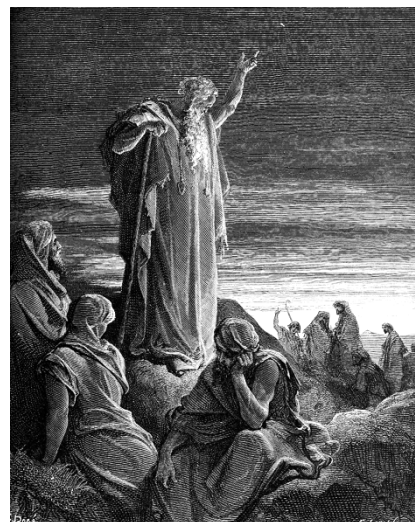
Showing the Idolatry in Jerusalem

1. (8:1-4) As Ezekiel sat in his own house, the elders from amongst the captive Jews of Tel-Abib resorted to him (possibly for sabbath prayer and teaching from the prophet. As a people without a temple, they would've begun what would later become the common practice of going to _____ for religious services).

APPLICATION → Matthew Henry notes, "Now that the elders of Judah were in captivity they paid more respect to God's prophets, and his word in their mouth, than they did when they lived in peace in their own land. When God brings men into the *cords of affliction*, then he *opens their ears to discipline*."¹

2. During this visit with the local elders, Ezekiel was given a vision from God wherein he was transported to Jerusalem by the same figure in 1:27 – the preincarnate _____. In Jerusalem, he beheld four tragic examples of the depths of Judah's idolatry:

- (a) (8:5-6) Inside the temple grounds, on the north side, the people had erected what is called "the image of _____" – an idol that provoked God to jealousy.
- (b) (8:7-12) Ezekiel was led to peak into a dug-out hole in the wall to see a clandestine gathering of Jerusalem's elders as they participated in a secret cult.
- (c) (8:13-14) Then Ezekiel is shown women who are weeping for Tammuz. This idol was a favorite of Babylonians, and the "weeping for Tammuz" was a reference to the yearly observance of the idol's supposed demise before his rebirth in the spring.
- (d) (8:15-16) The final scene is worst: within the temple (where only the priests were allowed), twenty-five men were, their backs turned away from the holy place, facing east, worshipping the _____. Who were these men? Henry answers, "...it should rather seem that they were priests, for this was the court of the priests, and the proper place to find them in. Those that were entrusted with the true religion, had it committed to their care and were charged with the custody of it, they were the men that betrayed it."²



¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1353.

² Ibid, 1354.

Shielding the Faithful in Jerusalem

3. (9:1-2) What Ezekiel sees next is truly startling: six men of war are summoned, each with a slaughter weapon, and with them a man dressed in linen carrying a writer's _____.
 - (a) (9:3) At this point, the glory of the LORD moved from the between the cherubim (on the ark) to the entrance to the temple.
 - (b) (9:4-6) The LORD then told the one with the writing tools to go through Jerusalem and put a mark on those that had remained faithful to God and _____ the sin of the city.
 - (c) Then the men with the slaughter weapons were to go behind and kill all who were not marked.
 - (d) This judgment was to begin in the _____, and the elders gathered there were killed.
4. (9:8) When Ezekiel saw that he was the last man standing in the temple, he cried out in dismay, *Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?*
 - (a) (9:9-10) The LORD responded to the despairing prophet that his intense wrath is completely justified in the light of the peoples' extreme evil.
 - (b) (9:11) Yet God "comforts [Ezekiel] by the report that the faithful had been marked to be spared."³

NOTICE➔ When John sees an angel marking the foreheads of the servants of God in Revelation 7, the imagery is related to what Ezekiel sees in chapter 9. We can take comfort that no matter how severe God's wrath, he will not pour it out upon his _____.

Shifting the Glory Cloud away from Jerusalem

5. (10:1-2) The writing angel was instructed to take burning coals from the chariot of God (as described in ch. 1) and cast them into Jerusalem. These burning coals are symbols of God's burning wrath (cf. Rev. 8:5)
6. (10:3-22) Most of this chapter is dedicated to another scene of the chariot described in ch. 1. Ezekiel saw the cloud of Glory leave Jerusalem because the sin of the people had driven God _____.
7. (11:1-12) Ezekiel is instructed to prophecy to the 25 elders who are smug in their sinfulness.
 - (a) (11:3) These wicked leaders believed they were secure in their city like "flesh in a _____."
 - (b) (11:7-9) The LORD turned the elders' metaphor upon them: they were not the flesh in the pot, their victims were – and the wicked leaders will not find safety in their city, because they will be smitten outside of the city.
 - (c) (11:13) Pelatiah, one the city leaders, died suddenly during Ezekiel's vision – a sign that God's swift justice was already on its way.
8. (11:14-25) Not only were the leaders of Jerusalem smug in their sin, but they also mocked the _____ of the Hebrew captives (like Ezekiel) and conspired to the steal their vacant properties.
 - (a) But God comforted the captives by assuring them that their LORD was them (after all, Ezekiel saw the glory cloud leave Jerusalem).
 - (b) (11:19) The LORD also told Ezekiel that the day was coming when the faithful would be given not just new homes, but new _____.

Answer Key: Key word(s): "abominations" • 1. synagogue • 2. Christ; a) jealousy; b) sun • 3. inkhorn; b) mourned; d) temple
➔ faithful • 6. away • 7. a) cauldron • sufferings; b) hearts

³ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005) 902.