

Ezekiel 8v1-18—Exposing The Sins Of The Heart

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Background to Ezekiel so far

Today we start chapter 8 of Ezekiel, a very enlightening, but also very convicting chapter in Ezekiel, as it is a vignette of our sinful nature. But before we do, let's take a few minutes to review what we have covered so far in the first seven chapters. I've given a quick summary of the main themes with some key verses.

Chapter 1: God revealed His awesome majesty, glory and power to Ezekiel, helping Ezekiel to have a “heavenly” perspective; meaning that Ezekiel knows that God is in complete and absolute control, and therefore no person, situation, nation, king, or circumstance will ever come to us that is not a part of His loving plan for us.

Ezekiel 1:28 NKJV

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.

Chapters 2 and 3: Ezekiel is commissioned as a prophet and watchman for the nation of Israel. He was to warn the wicked of their wicked ways so as to save their lives (see Ezekiel 3:16).

Ezekiel 2:3-5 NKJV

And He said to me: “Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. ⁴ For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’ ⁵ As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for they are a rebellious house—yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.

Chapters 4 and 5: These are action sermons which portray the events surrounding the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. They were a sign to the nation of Israel of the judgement that would come if they did not repent.

Ezekiel 5:11-12 NKJV

My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. ¹² One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

Chapter 6: In this chapter God lists and details many of the specific sins that the people need to repent of. They include sexual immorality, child sacrifice (abortion), idol worship, drunkenness, desecration of the temple, materialism, and general defiance towards God. God also makes clear His purpose of why He is sending the Babylonian army to destroy Judah and Jerusalem, and reveals to us how sin affects Him personally.

Ezekiel 6:9-10 NKJV

Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations. ¹⁰ And they shall know that I am the Lord; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them.”

Chapter 7: This is a sobering chapter that reminds us that God’s mercy and patience has limits; God gives us a certain amount of time to repent, and if we continue to allow sin to harden our hearts by persisting in it, then certain judgement or discipline awaits us (see Hebrews 3:7-18). God deals with us as sons, doing what is best for us as He acts according to His grand plan to transform us into the image of Christ (see Romans 8:28-29). In chapter 7 God reveals Himself to Israel as Yahweh Makkeh, “The God Who Strikes the Blow”. As believers we can continue to sin and bring upon ourselves God’s divine discipline. As unbelievers, God desires all to repent and believe the gospel (see Mark 1:15). God is long suffering towards us and gives all as much time as possible to repent (see 1 Peter 3:9), but there will come a day of judgement when God’s patience has run out and there will be no more chances for those people to repent and believe.

Ezekiel 7:1-3, 9 NKJV

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ² “And you, son of man, thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel:

‘An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. ³ Now the end has come upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways, and I will repay you for all your abominations.

⁹ My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will repay you according to your ways, and your abominations will be in your midst. Then you shall know that I am the Lord who strikes.

Ezekiel 8—Exposing the sins of the heart

Then He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? (Ezekiel 8:12a)

The context of chapter 8: “Several months had passed since the beginning of the ministry to which Ezekiel had been called—a ministry to the captives in Babylon. Many of the Jews in Babylon were listening to false prophets who were saying their captivity would be short. Ezekiel, on the other hand, said, “We’re here for awhile. The Lord is dealing with us, breaking us before He rebuilds us. There is work to be done in our lives for we have been a rebellious, hard-hearted, stiff-necked people, wrong in our actions and in our thinking.

Ezekiel spoke straightforwardly and bluntly. And some of the men of Israel were beginning to recognise that he indeed was speaking with the authority of the Holy Spirit” (Jon Courson).

Ezekiel 8:1-18 NKJV

And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there. ² Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire—from the appearance of His waist and

downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the colour of amber. ³ He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy. ⁴ And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

⁵ Then He said to me, “Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north.” So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.

⁶ Furthermore He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations.”

⁷ So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. ⁸ Then He said to me, “Son of man, dig into the wall”; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.

⁹ And He said to me, “Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.” ¹⁰ So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. ¹¹ And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. ¹² Then He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, ‘The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.’”

¹³ And He said to me, “Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.” ¹⁴ So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord’s house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

¹⁵ Then He said to me, “Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these.” ¹⁶ So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house; and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.

¹⁷ And He said to me, “Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. ¹⁸ Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.”

Ezekiel goes to Jerusalem in a vision [8:1–3a]

Ezekiel 8:1 NKJV

And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell upon me there.

v 1 **In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month:** This is a new time marker. What we have read so far in chapters 1-7 are a series of visions that began in the *fifth* year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity. Now, about a year and a half later, we come to chapters 8 through 11 which are one long vision given to Ezekiel in the

sixth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity. At the start of this vision we see the glory of the Lord at the temple in Jerusalem, but by the end of the vision, in chapters 10-11, God's presence, the Shekinah glory, had departed from the temple. What we will see later is that God is withdrawing from the people because of their sin and rejection of Him.

v 1 **I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me:** We read before that Ezekiel had his own house (Ezekiel 3:24), and now it appears that he has enough respect as God's prophet that the elders or leaders of Israel wanted to come to him to hear what God had to say. It sounds good, it sounds like Ezekiel is making an impact, but later we will see that they weren't sincerely seeking God—it was just lip service. God rebukes them for their hypocrisy in Ezekiel 33:30-33. *“So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain (Ezekiel 33:31).*

v 1 **The hand of the Lord God fell upon me there:** Like previously in Ezekiel 1:3; 3:14, and 3:22, Ezekiel receives a vision or message from God. Again, this was more than a year later than the first visions

Ezekiel 8:2-3a NKJV

Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire—from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the colour of amber. ³ He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem.

This is the likeness of God, God appearing to Ezekiel in something similar to the form of a man. In Ezekiel's vision, God grabs him by his hair and takes him to Jerusalem. Remember that this is when Jeremiah was serving as prophet, shortly before the final conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

God reveals to Ezekiel the specific sins of the people (8:3b-16)

In this vision Ezekiel saw four abominations at the temple. God showed Ezekiel was what literally happening, in both an outward and in a spiritual sense. The vision is in four parts:

1. The idol or image of jealousy, associated with the king (Ezekiel 8:3b–6)
2. The images and censers, associated with the city leaders (Ezekiel 8:7–12)
3. The weeping over Tammuz, associated with the women (Ezekiel 8:13–15)
4. The worship of the sun, associated with the priests (Ezekiel 8:15–18)

1. The idol or image of jealousy, associated with the king (Ezekiel 8:3b–6)

Ezekiel 8:3b-6 NKJV

To the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy. ⁴ And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

5 Then He said to me, “Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north.” So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.

6 Furthermore He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary?”

v 3 **To the north gate of the inner court:** Specifically, Ezekiel came to the temple. Remember that Ezekiel was a priest, and he would have been especially interested in what was happening at the temple.

v 3 **Where the seat of the image of jealousy was:** In his vision, Ezekiel saw an idolatrous image—the **image of jealousy**—standing near the north gate in the **inner court**. This was just outside the temple building itself.

“It was called **the image of jealousy** because it **provokes to jealousy**, i.e. it was an insult both to God and to his temple and to his people.” (Taylor) Do you remember when I compared this spiritual adultery to you coming home to find your spouse committing adultery in your own bed? This particular idol has a history with the kings of Judah:

“Hezekiah removed idolatry from Judah (2 Kings 18:1–5), but his son Manasseh restored it and made it worse than ever, even putting an idol into the temple (2 Kings 21:1–7). Manasseh’s son Amon continued the state-sponsored idolatry of his father. King Josiah cleansed Judah of idolatry and burned the idol Manasseh had put in the temple (2 Kings 23:4–20). Now we see that the idol in the temple was back.” (David Guzik)

v 5 **North of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance:** “This was the most honourable of the three gateways because, the royal palace being on the north side of the temple, the king would have used it whenever he went in to worship.” (Taylor) This gives a connection between this particular idol and the king, because the king would enter by the northern gate.

v 4 **Behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there:** In his vision, Ezekiel saw the same **glory** of God that he **saw in the plain** more than a year ago. Only this time, the glory of God was present at the temple of God in Jerusalem.

There is a strong contrast between the real **glory** of God (God’s **glory**), and the fake glory of the revolting idols that the people chose to glorify instead of God in the rest of this vision.

v 6 **Furthermore He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary?:** God’s glory filled the tabernacle in the days of Moses (Exodus 40:34–35) and later the temple in the days of Solomon (1 Kings 8:11). The tabernacle or temple represented God dwelling with His people. This is why the temple was so important to the Israelites. Tragically, by the end of this vision (Ezekiel 10–11) the glory of the Lord will no longer dwell at the temple—a very sad consequence of the people’s sin—sin grieves God and causes separation between God and man (see Ephesians 4:30 and Isaiah 59:2). This separation that sin causes should break our hearts as it breaks God’s (see Ezekiel 6:9).

Application—Under the New Covenant, does God leave us when we sin?

David prayed in Psalm 51:11 that God would not remove His Spirit from Him, meaning that he would be separated from the presence and power of God upon him. Fortunately for us under the New Covenant, God's Spirit will never leave us (see Hebrews 13:5 and Ephesians 1:14),

Ephesians 1:13-14 NKJV

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession**, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14 NLT paraphrase

And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. ¹⁴ **The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people.** He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

However, even though believers always remain children of God, our sin still breaks our fellowship with God. Under the New covenant, it is possible to still belong to God (have His Holy Spirit live inside of us), but be out of fellowship with God (to experience emotional separation from God). James describes the broken fellowship that the believer can experience well in:

James 4:4-5 NLT paraphrase

You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. ⁵ Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate [jealous] that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him.

It's like a husband and wife fighting or arguing; they are still married, but experience emotional separation until they choose to reconcile.

2. The images and censers, associated with the city leaders (Ezekiel 8:7-12)

Ezekiel 8:6b-12 NKJV

Now turn again, you will see greater abominations." ⁷ So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. ⁸ Then He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall"; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.

⁹ And He said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there." ¹⁰ So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. ¹¹ And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. ¹² Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.' "

v 6 **Now turn again, you will see greater abominations:** Things are only going to get worse. Each time God shows Ezekiel a different way the people were sinning, it was always worse than the previous one. All sin is offensive to God and breaks our fellowship with God, but some sins have greater practical consequences.

v 8 **Son of man, dig into the wall:** “To see those **greater abominations**, Ezekiel had to dig through a wall to see in his vision what was inside the temple itself... *In spiritual application, this shows that it may take some effort and energy to truly see the interior.* If only an easy or surface observation is allowed, the true state of things may not be seen.” (David Guzik) We’ll come back to this application at the end.

v 10 **Every sort of creeping thing, the abominable beasts, and all the idols:** Remember that the inside of the temple was supposed to be filled with images of cherubim or angels worshipping God. Instead, what Ezekiel saw inside the temple was unclean and idolatrous things. This is a dramatic representation of how our thinking can be so easily corrupted. We can so easily stop focusing on and worshipping God, and instead focus on and worship or give our affections to or count as worthy of worship the things (filthy idols) of this world—money, sexual immorality, etc.

v 11 **There stood before them seventy elders of the house of Israel... Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up:** Outwardly, things looked good, but inwardly, things were a different story. They were going through the motions of serving God and were still offering prayers to God, but their hearts were far from God. This is empty religion, or tradition, something that God despises. *God wants us to worship Him with our whole hearts, with sincerity.*

Jeremiah 3:10-11 NKJV

And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,” says the Lord.¹¹ Then the Lord said to me, “Backsliding Israel [the northern and outwardly more rebellious kingdom] has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.

Jeremiah 3:10-11 NLT paraphrase

But despite all this, her faithless sister Judah has never sincerely returned to me. She has only pretended to be sorry. I, the Lord, have spoken!” ¹¹ Then the Lord said to me, “Even faithless Israel [the northern kingdom] is less guilty than treacherous Judah [the southern kingdom]!”

v 12 **Have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols?**

“God showed Ezekiel that the vision was about what the leaders of Israel did **in the dark, and in the room of his idols**. It wasn’t about what the leaders did in the temple, but the hidden place of their heart was filled with dark deeds and idolatry—*yet they carried on their service as if all was right.*” (David Guzik)

“While the external rites of the Temple of Jehovah were being observed, *these very observances were made a cloak for the thoughts, desires, activities of the heart. This is the most hopeless stage and stale of pollution.*” (Morgan)

What seems fair and beautiful in the eye of man may be concealing terrible secrets, open only to that of God.” (Meyer)

v 12 **The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land:** These are two of the excuses that the people in Judah used to excuse their sin. Firstly, they said that God didn't see them, which of course is obviously false; God sees and knows everything. Secondly, they twisted what had happened and said that God had forsaken the land, whereas the truth is the opposite; they had forsaken God. We can make the same mistake when we are in sin, we can assume that the mess we are in is all because God has been unfaithful to us, but actually, it's all because we have been unfaithful to Him.

3. The weeping over Tammuz, associated with the women (Ezekiel 8:13–14)

Ezekiel 8:13-14 NKJV

And He said to me, “Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.”¹⁴ So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

v 13 **You will see greater abominations:** So far Ezekiel has seen idolatry outside the temple and corruption among the leaders within. Yet there were still worse or more gross things that God wanted to reveal to Ezekiel.

b. **To my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz:** Why was Ezekiel dismayed? Because the women were there in the temple court, in the holy place reserved for priests, openly committing all kinds of gross sexual immorality.

“It is likely that the prophet would have viewed the presence of women in the inner court as a profanation.” (Vawter and Hoppe)

“With the worship of this god in ancient times were connected the basest immoralities. With the greatest of abandon women gave themselves up to most shameful practices.” (Feinberg)

“The worship of Tammuz came from Babylon through the Phoenicians (Canaanites) and then the Greeks. Tammuz, mentioned nowhere else in the Scriptures, was the Babylonian Dumuzi, beloved of Ishtar, and is to be identified with the Greek Adonis.” (Feinberg)

Just for your information, “Ishtar” is where we get our word “easter” from. Many of the symbols of easter like the rabbits and easter eggs go back to the mystery Babylon false religion based on Nimrod, Tammuz, and Semaramis.

“On the north side of the temple, Ezekiel saw women weeping for Tammuz. Tammuz was the Babylonian god of resurrection, In Genesis 11, we read of a man named Nimrod, founder of Babylon. He married a woman named Semaramis. Some time after Nimrod died, his wife said she miraculously conceived. The child produced was a man named Tammuz. As a young man, Tammuz went out hunting for wild boar and was killed. After being buried for forty days, suddenly, miraculously, he was resurrected. Weeping for him, as was the yearly custom, the Jews in Babylon were caught up in this counterfeit religion.

In every culture, there seemed to be the propagation of this same scenario. For the Canaanite, it played out through Ashteroth and Baal. In Greece, it was Venus and Cupid. In Egypt, it was Osiris and Isis. Satan knew the prophecies of the Old Testament—that truly a virgin would conceive and truly the Child conceived would be resurrected from the dead. Thus, these counterfeit religions were his attempt to confuse people.” (Jon Courson)

4. The worship of the sun, associated with the priests (Ezekiel 8:15–16)

Ezekiel 8:15-16 NKJV

Then He said to me, “Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these.” ¹⁶ So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house; and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were worshipping the sun toward the east.

v 15 **You will see greater abominations than these.** ¹⁶ **So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord’s house; and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar:** Now God takes Ezekiel to the inner court of the Lords house, literally right outside the door of the temple.

v 16 **About twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple ... and they were worshipping the sun toward the east:** Here it is the priests themselves who are not secretly, but openly, turning their backs to the temple, and are openly worshipping the sun when they should have been blessing the people. They had literally turned their backs on God.

“The idolatry of the seventy elders was hidden in the temple, but these men practiced their idolatry openly!” (Wiersbe)

“They didn’t worship Yahweh, *even at His own temple*—they worshipped the sun, as the other pagan nations did.” (David Guzik)

The *number* and the *location* of these men make it likely (though not certain) they were priests. “If they were priests perhaps the number is twenty-five because there was a representative of each of the twenty-four courses of the priests plus the high priest (see 1 Chronicles 23).” (Alexander)

God gives a promise of judgment because of all these abominations (Ezekiel 8:17-18)

Ezekiel 8:17-18 NKJV

And He said to me, “Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. ¹⁸ Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.”

v 17 **Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations:** This what the people were saying, that these sins were only little sins, trivial sins, and not very important. However, they were important enough for God to judge them!

v 17 **For they have filled the land with violence:** What happens when a society turns away from God? Lawlessness, violence, injustice, sexual immorality, child sacrifice (abortion), and the destruction of the family unit. The moral fabric of their society was breaking down. This is also exactly what we observe in our own society as we turn away from God more and more.

v 17 **Indeed they put the branch to their nose:** This unusual statement is used only here in the Old Testament. Most conclude that it is an expression of contempt for God.

v 18 **My eye will not spare nor will I have pity:** Again, as we learned last time, the time for mercy and repentance was over. It was too late. Today is the day of salvation, tomorrow may be too late. Don't remain in unbelief, refusing to repent, because sin hardens our hearts if we do, and that leads to us needing divine discipline to break us (see Hebrews 3:7-19).

“Because of the great idolatries and sins of Jerusalem, and that the people regarded it all as **a trivial thing**, God's judgment was assured, and could not be turned back.” (David Guzik)

“Because of this utter corruption of the people, Jehovah would proceed in judgment, in spite of all the loud crying of the people.” (Morgan)

“Yahweh hereby affirms that from now on his ears are closed to all pleas for mercy.... He will not allow his heart to overrule his head.” (Block)

Conclusion and Application: Exposing the hidden sin of the heart

Then He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? (Ezekiel 8:12a)

“Ezekiel was told to dig a hole through the wall of the temple. As he did, a door appeared, which he entered. On the inside walls of the temple, Ezekiel saw pictures of beasts, creeping things, and pornographic items. The Lord said to him, “This is what is going on in the minds of these men who outwardly are so religious, who offer prayers and worship, who appear so righteous and pious.”

Jesus had much to say about our minds. In His day, there were those who were very proud of their outward behaviour. They didn't murder. They didn't commit adultery. They didn't use profanity. And yet Jesus said, “That's not the issue. It's what's going on inside of your minds that matters. You pride yourself in not committing adultery. But I say to you that if you look at a woman with lust, in essence, you've already committed adultery. You pride yourself in the fact that you haven't killed, but I say to you if you've been angry with your brother without cause you're guilty of murder. You take pride in not using profanity, but you use My name in a way that lacks integrity” (Matthew 5).

What goes on in the chambers of our imaginations? What if Ezekiel came on the scene today and dug a hole through your skull? What kind of pictures would he see on your walls? Psychologists tell us that we have approximately 10,000 distinct thoughts in any given day. What if those thoughts were displayed upon screens for all to see?

Paul picks up on this same idea when he speaks to us concerning our imaginations...

For though we walk [live] in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [human or physical] but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments [imagination] and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (2 Corinthians 10:3–5 NKJV)” (from Jon Courson's Application Commentary)