Ezekiel 8

“My Chia Pet, or God?”

1. **Intro:**
   1.1. The early church leader Augustine was once accosted by a heathen who showed him his idol and said, “Here is my god; where is thine?” Augustine replied, “I cannot show you my God; not because there is no God to show, but because you have no eyes to see Him.”

   1.2. Overview next few chapters(8-11):
      1.2.1. Here is a vision God gave to Ezekiel of the defilement of the Temple(8); the destruction of the people(9); & the departure of God’s Glory from His house(10,11).

2. **MY CHIA PET, OR GOD? (1-18)**
   2.1. HAIR PULLING! (1-4)
   2.2. (1) Sitting w/the elders- they considered him a prophet at least worth listening to?
   2.3. 14 months after 1st vision…he falls into a prophetic trance. [Sept. 592bc]
      2.3.1. He’s gripped by the power of a profound religious experience.
         2.3.1.1. How long we don’t know? (comes out of it in 11:24,25)
      2.3.2. What did these other guys do?

   2.4. This likeness was none other than a theophany of God.
      2.4.1. An appearance of God in human form.
      2.4.2. Picture a “man form” – bottom half looked like Fire; top half looked was bright(Shekinah) w/amber color.

   2.5. (3) By the lock of his hair? – I guess he was hair-borne!

   2.6. (3b) Brought me in visions of God to… – He didn’t physically take him from Babylon back to Jerusalem. [He was supernaturally transported in the Spirit]

   2.7. (3c) The image of jealousy – i.e. it provokes God’s jealousy.
      2.7.1. Deut. 32:31 “They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.”

   2.8. May have been the idol Asherah, the female fertility goddess.
      2.8.1. Because earlier King Manasseh of Judah placed an idol of Asherah in the Temple. [2 Kings 21:7. It was removed in Josiah’s day, but prob reappeared in these last sad days of the Temple’s history]

   2.9. (4) The Glory of God was there…but soon to depart (10:18).
2.10. **MAKING GOD GO AWAY!** (5,6)

2.11. **SIN IN THE ENTRANCE!**

2.12. **North entrance** is where the animals came through for sacrificial offerings.

2.13. Reminds me of Genesis 4:7 “**Sin lies at the door & its desire is for you**”.

2.13.1. Sin is crouching at the door waiting to pounce on you!

2.14. **The people** were worshiping this idol.

2.14.1. God was so **angry** that He is going to leave. (rt now grief that will turn to anger)

2.14.2. They’re driving God out of His own house!!!

2.14.2.1. In a separation of a husband & wife one is driven out of the house...what does that feel like to be driven from your home?

2.14.3. Of course God would leave, its incongruous (not in agreement).

2.14.4. You can’t mix Israel’s God with other gods!

2.14.4.1. Just as you can’t mix the **oil & vinegar** of Paul Newman’s Italian Dressing. You can try, but as soon as you walk away, it separates again.

2.14.5. **A true Temple only has room for one god!**

2.14.5.1. Isn’t it equally true of the person whose **body** is God’s temple.

2.14.5.2. Better to have the **false presence** removed, than have the **True presence** depart! (& if God wont depart from us...)

2.14.6. Therefore glorify God in your **body & spirit**, which are God’s. 1 Cor.6:20

2.15. Ezekiel saw the image “in the Temple” knowing immediately that the 1st **commandment** had been broken.

2.15.1. Thus the natural result is the entire foundation of the faith becomes undermined.

2.16. **WHATCHA DOIN IN THE DARK?** (7-12)

2.17. **SIN IN THE HIDDEN CHAMBERS!**

2.18. (7-9) Secret passageway – Do you have a secret passageway to sin in your life?

2.18.1. Blow up its entrance tonight!

2.19. (10) **Creeping things** decorating the walls – inanimate murals decorating the room.

2.19.1. These included the “unclean” forbidden things.

2.19.2. They also included the animal cults that were worshiped in Egypt.

2.20. (11) The Jewish elders were burning incense to devilish images **inside** the Temple.

2.21. And look, a man of good family & distinction **Ja-azaniah** (his father Shapan, had played a leading role in Josiah’s great reform). (2 Kings 22:3-20)

2.21.1. This indicates how sadly Israel’s faith had fallen.

2.22. (12) They think God does not see. (Irony: Ezekiel “**have you seen**”)

2.23. **Q: What are you doing in the dark?**

2.23.1. What can’t an all-present God **not** see?
2.23.2. Life is like a police interrogation room. The insiders cannot see out, but the observers can see & hear all that goes on inside the room!

2.23.3. Speech & behavior should be conducted with an awareness that ultimately there are no secrets from God!

2.24. When the integrity of a nation’s leadership is lost, there is not much hope for its people.

2.25. The Lord has forsaken the land – In what sense true? In what sense false?

2.25.1. True – from vs.6; False because God still is concerned.

2.26. WEEPING FOR YOUR CHIA PET! (13,14)

2.27. (14) Women weeping for Tammuz – i.e. taking part in the heathen festival of mourning the death of the vegetation god, Tammuz, later known in Greek mythology as Adonis[A-don'-is]. [birth-death-rebirth]

2.27.1. Tammuz – was the Sumerian(ancient Babylon) god of vegetation. The people believed Tammuz died each year & descended into the underworld. The heat of summer & wilting of the vegetation depicted Tammuz’s death. The people wept over Tammuz & in the spring, he emerged victorious from the underworld, bringing by the spring rains & emerging crops.

2.27.2. (Greek Mythology) The Festival of Adonis was celebrated by women at midsummer by sowing fennel and lettuce, and grains of wheat and barley. The plants sprang up soon, and withered quickly, and women mourned for the untimely death of the vegetation god.

2.27.2.1. Kinda like the Chia-Pet god! - 1982 fad (1st a ram, now even have a Mr.T Chia Pet, Saddam Hussain Chia Pet)

2.28. How sad, weeping for another god!

2.29. TURNING YOU BACK ON GOD! (15-18)

2.30. SIN IN THE INNER COURT!

2.31. (16) Between the porch & the altar – They must have been priests.

2.31.1. Joel 2:17 “Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar.”

2.32. Inner court – Holy of Holies.

2.33. 25 men – 24 courses of priests, & one high priest.

2.34. With their back towards the temple – This reveals their contempt for God by turning their backs to Him in violation to God’s law.

2.34.1. Jeremiah said, “They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline.” (32:33)

2.34.2. Faces then are toward the East, bowing down to the sun in the East.
2.34.3. They should have faced West praying for God’s mercy for His people.

2.34.4. Wailing wall today – the Jews walk backwards away from the wall in respect, always facing it. [Wailing Wall = closest accessible spot to the former Holy Place]

2.34.5. Isn’t all sin basically turning our backs to God instead of our faces?

2.35. Worshiping the sun to the East - The very thing God frees them of they go running back to.

2.35.1. God frees us from different bondages, yet the Christian often returns to his old form of bondage. (prone to wander Lord I feel it...)

2.35.2. The life of liberation called for continuing faith in the Great Liberator!

2.36. All humans are summoned to worship their Maker; not to do so, or to do so wrongly, is to miss the meaning of our existence! (Barclay)

2.36.1. Thus it becomes evil & aground for judgment.

2.37. Some worshipped idols openly; & others in the dark(12)...but all were guilty!

2.37.1. When sin comes in at the door of a person’s life, it eventually moves in to the inner chambers & takes over.

2.37.2. Prov.4:23 “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”

2.38. End: (Kelly asked me... why don’t we have prayer at end anymore? – Good idea!)

2.38.1. Last 10/15 min on Wed nights, give opportunity for prayer.

2.38.2. What it’s not:

2.38.3. Not a time to leave, & go get kids. They are not through w/service.

2.38.4. Not a time for counseling.

2.38.5. What it is:

2.38.6. It’s our desire to go with you to His throne of grace!

2.38.7. We want to PRAY for you!

2.38.8. You can come up as couples also.