



The background is a faded, sepia-toned image of an ancient Egyptian wall. It features several vertical columns of hieroglyphs. In the center, there is a large, seated figure, possibly a deity or a pharaoh, wearing a striped garment and a headdress. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the text overlaid in the center.

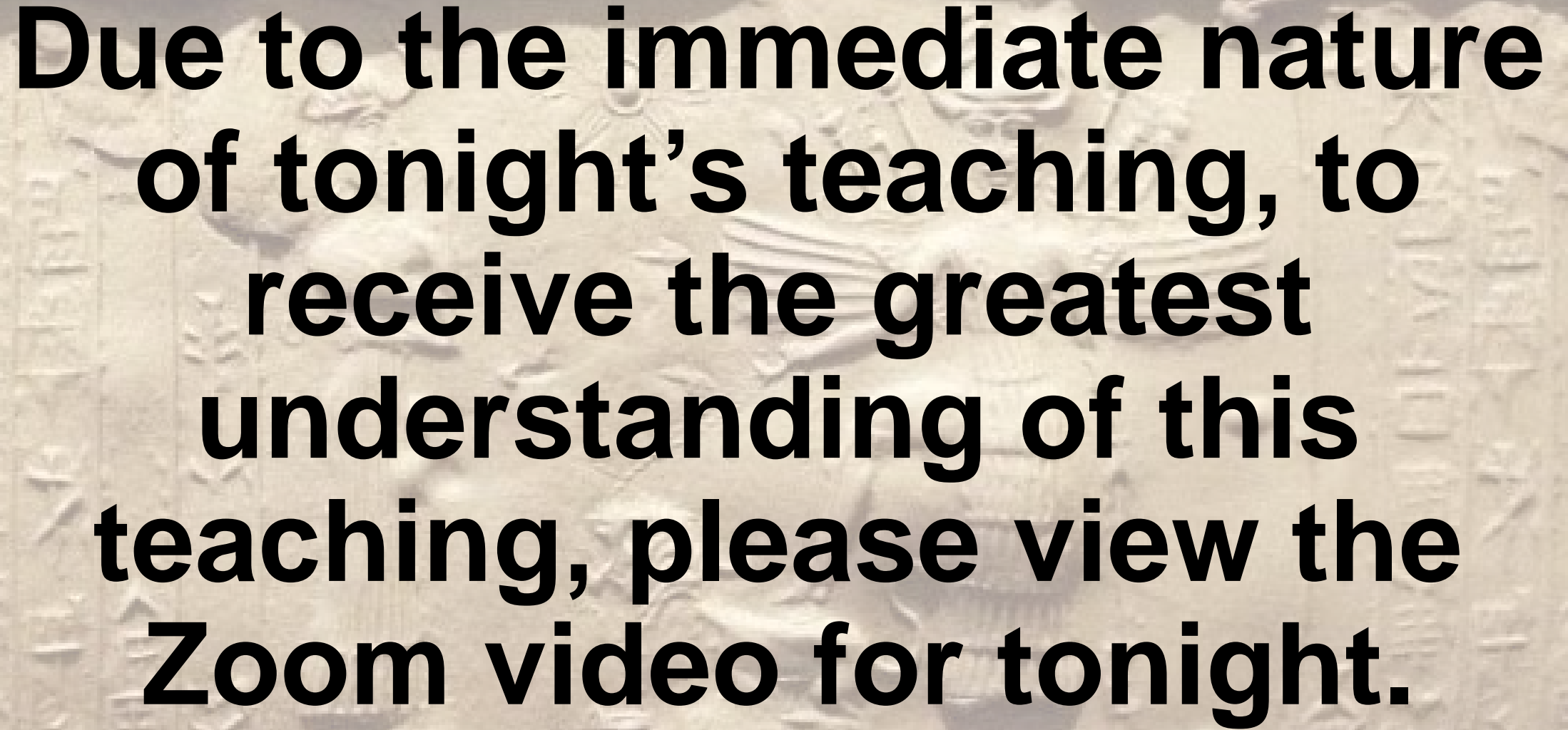
Our Thoughts

Ezekiel 8

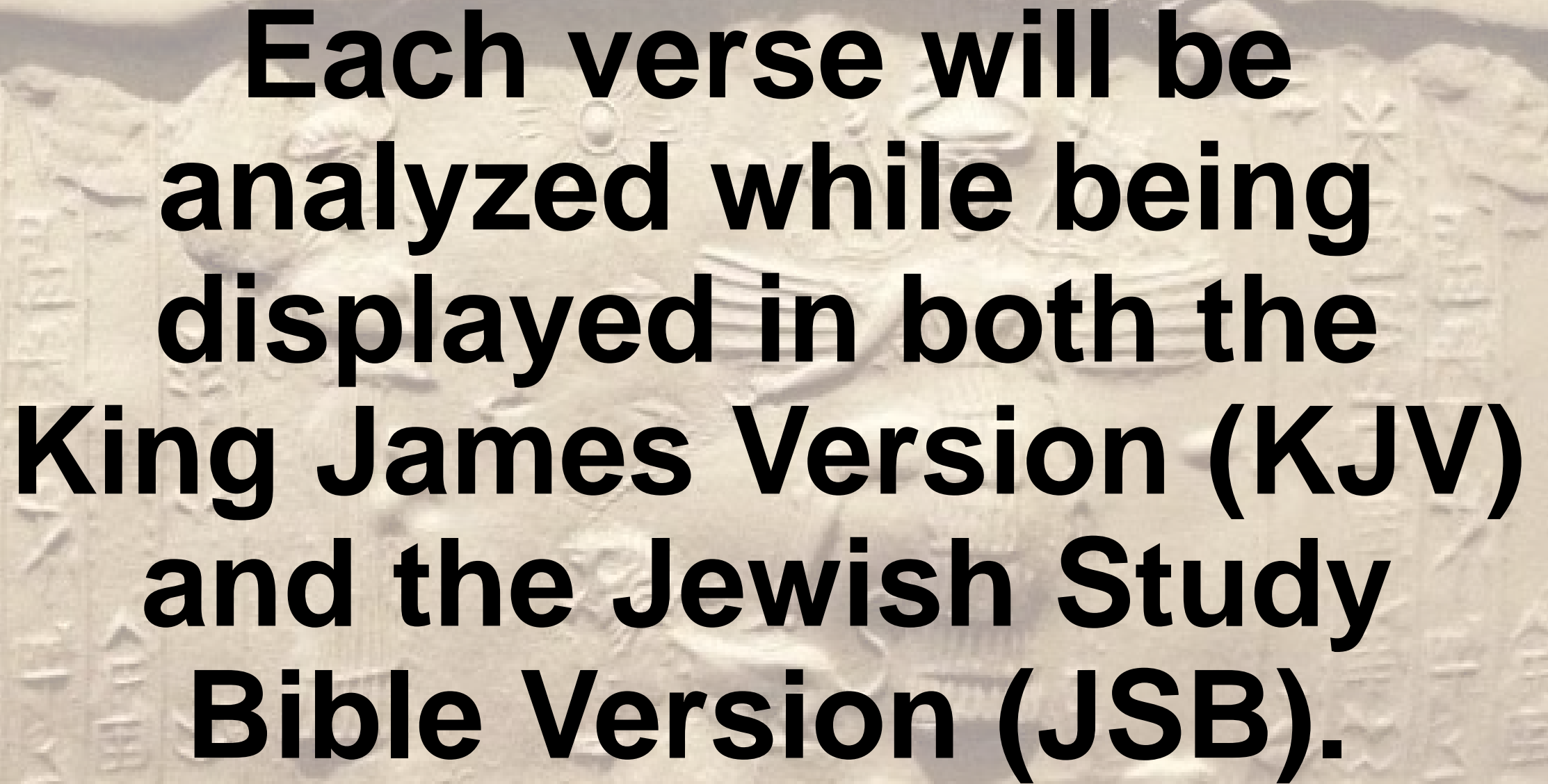
Part 2

Unlike previous teachings, led by one person, this teaching is based on the input of all the Fellowship attendees.

Using one Biblical chapter, the Fellowship will dissect and analyze the chapter, hopefully providing new insights to all that are present.



**Due to the immediate nature
of tonight's teaching, to
receive the greatest
understanding of this
teaching, please view the
Zoom video for tonight.**

The background of the image shows the Ten Commandments stone tablets. The tablets are arranged in two columns, with the first four on the left and the last six on the right. The text on the tablets is in Hebrew. The overall image has a warm, golden-brown color palette.

Each verse will be analyzed while being displayed in both the King James Version (KJV) and the Jewish Study Bible Version (JSB).

However, each Fellowship member is free to use their own version of the Bible in making their analysis.



Ezekiel 8
Verses 9-18



**(KJV) –King James
Version**

(JSB) –Jewish Study Bible

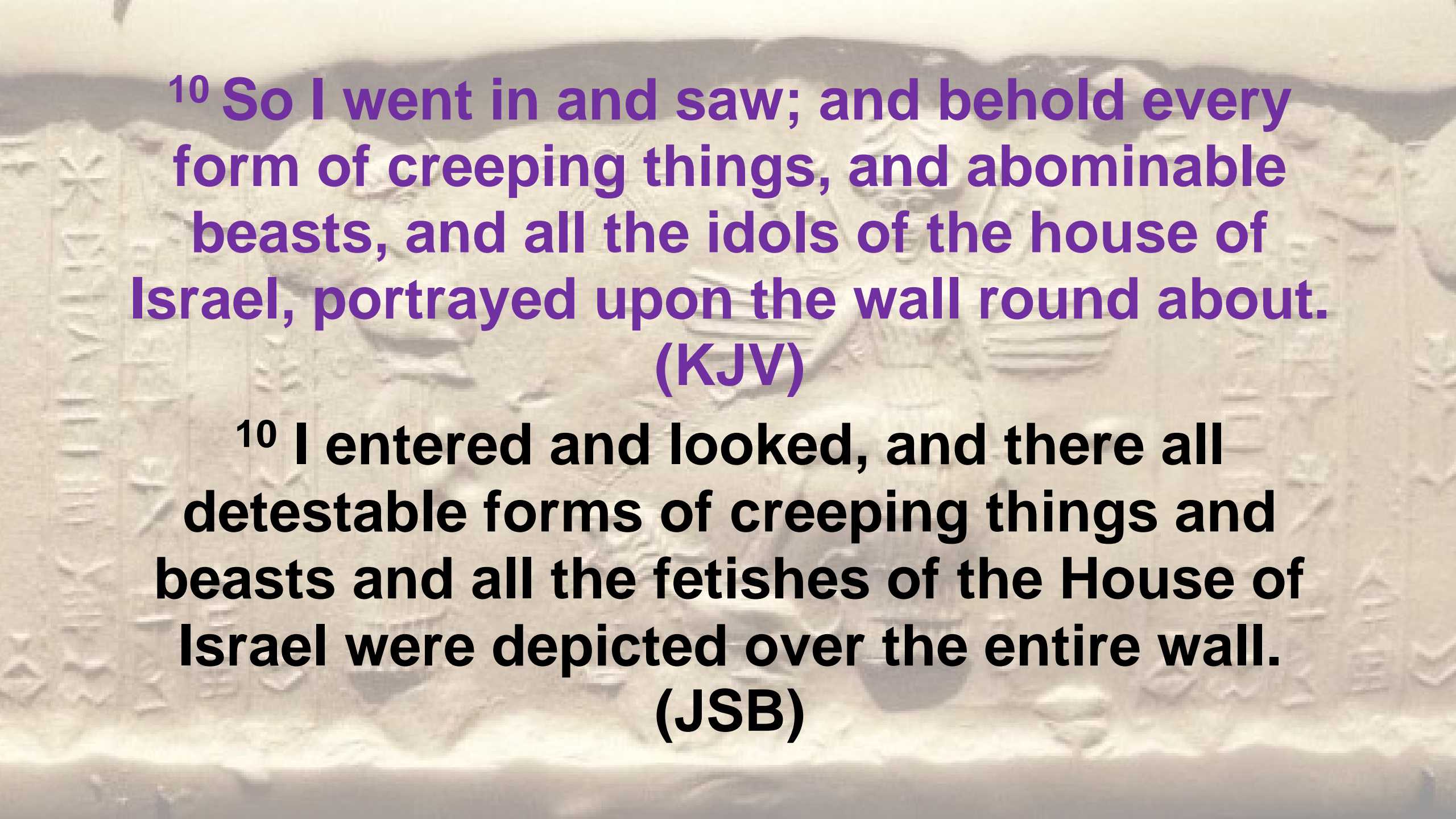
The background is a faded, sepia-toned image of an ancient Egyptian wall. It features several vertical columns of hieroglyphs. In the center, there is a large, prominent figure, likely a deity or a royal figure, with wings and a headdress. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a soft glow around the central figure.

Ezekiel 8

**And now, you
become the teacher:**

⁹ And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. (KJV)

⁹ And He said to me, "Enter and see the vile abominations that they are practicing here." (JSB)



**¹⁰ So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.
(KJV)**

**¹⁰ I entered and looked, and there all detestable forms of creeping things and beasts and all the fetishes of the House of Israel were depicted over the entire wall.
(JSB)**

¹¹ And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. (KJV)

¹¹ Before them stood seventy men, elders of the House of Israel, with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing in their midst. Everyone had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense smoke ascended. (JSB)

12 Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth. (KJV)

12 Again He spoke to me, "O mortal, have you seen what the elders of the House of Israel are doing in the darkness, everyone in his image-covered chamber? For they say, 'YAHOVAH does not see us; Yahovah has abandoned the country.' " (JSB)

13 He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. (KJV)

13 And He said to me, "You shall see even more terrible abominations which they practice." (JSB)

14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (KJV)

14 Next He brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the House of the Lord; and there sat the women bewailing Tammuz (JSB)

15 Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. (KJV)

**15 He said to me, "Have you seen, O mortal? You shall see even more terrible abominations than these."
(JSB)**

¹⁶ And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. (KJV)

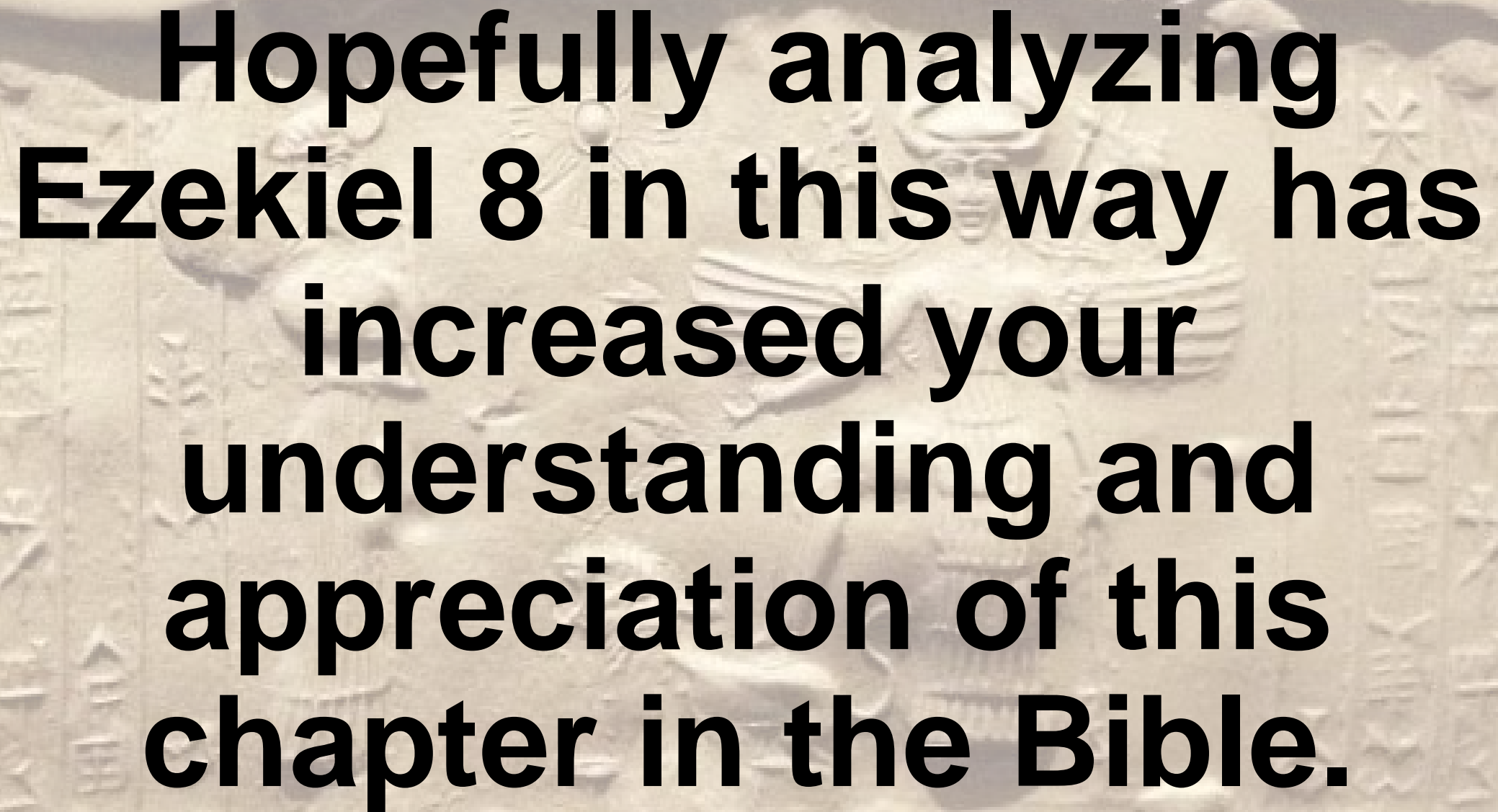
¹⁶ Then He brought me into the inner court of the House of Yahovah, and there, at the entrance to the Temple of Yahovah, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men, their backs to the Temple of Yahovah and their faces to the east; they were bowing low to the sun in the east. (JSB)

17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. (KJV)

17 And He said to me, "Do you see, O mortal? Is it not enough for the House of Judah to practice the abominations that they have committed here, that they must fill the country with lawlessness and provoke Me still further and thrust the branch to their nostrils? (JSB)

1⁸ Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them. (KJV)

**1⁸ I in turn will act with fury, I will show no pity or compassion; though they cry aloud to Me, I will not listen to them."
(JSB)**

The background features a faded, sepia-toned image of ancient stone tablets, likely the Ten Commandments. The tablets are arranged in a grid, with a central figure, possibly a cherub or angel, visible between them. The text on the tablets is in Hebrew. The overall scene is set against a light, hazy background.

**Hopefully analyzing
Ezekiel 8 in this way has
increased your
understanding and
appreciation of this
chapter in the Bible.**





A Commentary



A. Ezekiel goes to Jerusalem in a vision.

1. (1) Ezekiel, the elders, and the hand of the LORD.

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.

a. In the sixth year, in the sixth month: Ezekiel 1:2 began a series of visions beginning with in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity. This is a new time marker describing visions that happened about a year and a half later. This series of visions is in Ezekiel 8-11.

i. Ezekiel 8-11 is the record of one long vision. In the beginning of the vision Ezekiel sees the glory of the LORD at the temple in Jerusalem. By the end of the vision (Ezekiel 10-11), this glory will depart.

**ii. "They also supply us with a date corresponding to 17 September 592 B.C.E., therefore something more than a year after Ezekiel had received his prophetic call."
(Vawter and Hoppe)**

b. I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me: This reminds us that Ezekiel had his own house, and that he was respected enough as God's prophet to receive the elders of Judah for an audience in his home.

i. "The reason for their presence in Ezekiel's house is not given, though Ezekiel 14:1-3 and Ezekiel 20:1 suggest that they came to him customarily to seek a word from Yahweh." (Block)

c. The hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there: As before in Ezekiel 1:3, 3:14, 22, Ezekiel felt the presence and strength of Yahweh upon him.

2. (2-4) In a vision, Ezekiel is transported to Jerusalem.

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 color of amber. 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. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

- a. There was a likeness, like the appearance of fire: Ezekiel saw something similar to the likeness he saw in the vision of God and His glory in the first chapter (Ezekiel 1:27). That was a representation of God in some human likeness, and we see the same here.**
- b. He stretched out the form of a hand: In his vision, something like a hand grabbed Ezekiel by the hair, and the Spirit carried him between heaven and earth, bringing him to Jerusalem in a vision.**
 - i. Ezekiel had this spiritual vision of Jerusalem in the days when Jeremiah served as a prophet, in that period between the second invasion of the Babylonians and their final conquest of Jerusalem.**
 - ii. “That he did not actually leave Babylon is clear from Ezekiel 11:24. He was carried back in spirit to Babylon after the visions were completed (Ezekiel 11:22-25).” (Feinberg)**
 - iii. In this vision Ezekiel saw four abominations at the temple. They were probably not literal in the sense that they were happening all at the same time at the temple and Ezekiel saw this in real time. God showed Ezekiel what was literally happening, in both an outward and in a spiritual sense.**
 - The outrageous idol, associated with the king (Ezekiel 8:5-6).**
 - The images and censers, associated with the city leaders (Ezekiel 8:7-13).**
 - The weeping over Tammuz, associated with the women (Ezekiel 8:14-15).**
 - The worship of the sun, associated with the priests (Ezekiel 8:16-18).**

- c. To...the north gate of the inner court: Specifically, Ezekiel came to the temple. As a priest, he had a special interest not only in the temple but also in all that happened there.**
- d. Where the seat of the image of jealousy was: In his vision, Ezekiel apparently saw an idolatrous image – the image of jealousy – standing in the inner court. This was likely right outside the temple building itself.**
- i. “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)**
- ii. 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.**
- iii. “The word ‘image’ is *semel*, which occurs elsewhere only in Deuteronomy 4:16 (where it is translated ‘figure’) and in 2 Chronicles 33:7,15, of a special ‘idol’ set up by King Manasseh in the Temple. Although this idol was later removed, Ezekiel’s use of the word may mean that a replica, if not the original, was put back. The word also occurs in Phoenician writings.” (Wright)**
- e. 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. The glory of God was present at the temple of God in Jerusalem. There is a strong contrast between this glory and the debased idols and idolatry Ezekiel will see in the rest of this vision.**
- i. God’s glory filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35) and later the temple (1 Kings 8:11). By the end of this vision (Ezekiel 10-11) the glory of the LORD will no longer dwell in the temple.**

3. (5) Ezekiel looks to the north.

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.

a. Lift your eyes now toward the north: If one stood facing the entrance to the temple, the north would be on the right side. We don't know which way Ezekiel had to turn, but he was directed to face toward the north.

b. North of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance: There again, Ezekiel saw this idol in the temple court. It was called the image of jealousy because it provoked God to holy jealousy.

i. The connection of this image with the north gate (Ezekiel 8:3) was significant, connecting this image of jealousy with royalty and the king. “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)

4. (6-8) Great and greater abominations.

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

- a. The great abominations that the house of Israel commits here: Ezekiel saw the image of jealousy, and God told him that it represented the great abominations of Israel.**
- b. To make Me go far away from My sanctuary: The idolatry was so persistent and offensive to God that it made Him determined to go far away. It was His sanctuary, belonging to God Himself, but He would leave it because of their great abominations.**
- c. Now turn again, you will see greater abominations: What Ezekiel saw was bad enough; God now promised to show him worse things, greater abominations.**
- d. 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.**
 - i. “While we may puzzle over how he is able to dig a hole in the wall or why he does not use the existing entrance to this room, the visionary nature of this entire unit removes the necessity for realism or logical consistency.” (Block)**
 - ii. 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.**

B. What Ezekiel saw behind the wall.

1. (9-12) Wicked things and blind men.

And He said to me, “Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.” 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. 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. 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.’”

- a. Every sort of creeping thing, the abominable beasts, and all the idols: In his vision, Ezekiel saw the inside of the temple with all sorts of unclean and idolatrous things portrayed all around on the walls. The interior of the temple was supposed to have cherubim surrounding God’s throne portrayed on the walls, and instead had filthy idols.**
 - i. God called these wicked abominations; “the most abominable wickednesses; these are loathsome in their nature, and multiplied in number before me.” (Poole)**
 - ii. “The consensus of interpreters is that these were the animal cults of Egypt (see Rom. 1:23). In Egypt such worship had perhaps its highest and most extensive development in ancient times.” (Feinberg)**
 - iii. “This piece of idolatry the Jews had learned of the Egyptians, who madly worshipped oxen, asses, goats, dogs, cats, serpents, crocodiles, the bird ibis, &c.” (Trapp)**
 - b. There stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel: In front of these foul and idolatrous images were the leaders of Israel, each with a censer giving out a thick cloud of incense. They offered priestly service and incense associated with prayers, in the midst of the idolatry and impurity.**
 - i. Elders “refers to the lay leaders who had risen to prominence in Jerusalem after the deportation of Jehoiachin and his officials (2 Kings 24:12-16). These were obviously important men in the city.” (Block)**
 - ii. Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan: “Shaphan is probably to be identified with Josiah’s secretary of state (2 Kings 22:3), and Ahikam, another of Shaphan’s sons, was an influential supporter of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:24). Clearly Jaazaniah was the black sheep of a worthy family.” (Taylor)**

c. 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.

i. Ezekiel was probably shocked to see that all these city leaders were secret idolaters.

ii. “They had carried the idolatry of the temple into their private homes. Public and private worship was permeated with the God-dishonoring idolatry. And they were smugly complacent in it all.” (Feinberg)

iii. “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 state of pollution.” (Morgan)

iv. “Is it quite certain that evil thoughts and imaginations have not imprinted themselves on the walls of the heart? Ah, it may be so. What seems fair and beautiful in the eye of man may be concealing terrible secrets, open only to that of God.” (Meyer)

d. The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land: They excused their sin because they did not think Yahweh saw them, either in their minds or their actions. They also excused their sin because they believed God had forsaken Israel, when in fact they had forsaken God.

i. “With this kind of rationalization they permitted themselves to do anything they desired. If God did not exist then no one need care about him. It is tragic that the same attitude exists today among so many people.” (Alexander)

ii. “What the men in this dark room are saying about Yahweh is in fact false about him, but it is true of the images before which they stand.” (Block)

2. (13-14) Women weeping for Tammuz.

And He said to me, “Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.” 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.

- a. You will see greater abominations: Ezekiel saw idolatry outside the temple and corruption among the leaders within. Yet there were greater abominations to see.**
- i. “We need not then perplex our reader with a long discourse, to show wherein these latter sins are greater than the former mentioned; they are all very great.” (Poole)**
 - b. To my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz: This is the only mention of Tammuz in Ezekiel and the Old Testament. This was another example of pagan worship, and Tammuz was a deity worshipped by many in neighboring nations, often with immoral or impure rites. Ezekiel was dismayed because women were there, in the holy place reserved only for priests, and because of their immoral idolatry.**
- i. “It is likely that the prophet would have viewed the presence of women in the inner court as a profanation.” (Vawter and Hoppe)**
- ii. “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)**
- iii. “In the seasonal mythological cycle, he died early in the fall when vegetation withered. His revival by the wailing of Ishtar was marked by the buds of spring and the fertility of the land. Such renewal was encouraged and celebrated by licentious fertility festivals.” (Alexander)**
- iv. “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)**

3. (15-16) Priests worshipping the sun.

Then He said to me, “Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these.” 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.

- a. You will see greater abominations than these: God continually promised Ezekiel that he would see greater and greater abominations. This time, his vision would display them in the inner court of the LORD’s house.**
- i. “The idolatry of the seventy elders was hidden in the temple, but these men practiced their idolatry openly!” (Wiersbe)**
 - b. About twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple...and they were worshipping the sun toward the east: These men stood where the priests would normally stand to bless the people. Yet, with the temple behind them and the altar before them (their faces toward the east), they were worshipping the sun toward the east. They didn’t worship Yahweh, even at His own temple – they worshipped the sun, as the other pagan nations did.**
- i. 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 (cf. 1 Chron 23).” (Alexander)**
- ii. “These worshippers showed their contempt for God by standing in such a way that they had their backs to the Temple while they revered the sun (cf. 2 Kings 23:5,11), worshipping the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).” (Wright)**
- iii. Block on the sun cult in Israel: “According to 2 Kings 21:5 it appears to have gained royal sponsorship during the reign of Manasseh, who built altars for the entire host of heaven in the courts of the temple. From 2 Kings 23:11–12 one may also infer that the horses and chariots of the sun at the entrance of the temple that Josiah demolished had also been erected by Manasseh.”**

4. (17-18) A promise of judgment upon all these abominations.

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. 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.”

a. Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations: In his vision of the temple, Ezekiel saw a terrible variety of idolatries and abominations. The leaders and people of Jerusalem regarded it all as a trivial thing; God did not.

b. For they have filled the land with violence: These were not only religious or spiritual sins. Their rejection of Yahweh and His true worship led to a breakdown in the social order.

i. “The inhabitants of Judah were not content to provoke the Lord with their abominations. They had also filled the land with ‘violence,’ i.e., social chaos and injustice.” (Smith)

c. Indeed they put the branch to their nose: This is an unusual statement, used only here in the Old Testament. It was some obscure expression of contempt for God.

i. “The phrase ‘put the branch to their nose’ is obscure. Jewish commentators understood it to refer to some revolting and wicked rite. If it was a ritual act in an idolatrous cult, then it is grave indeed. But no such ritual act is known among Semitic peoples. Some take it to be a gesture of contempt toward God.” (Feinberg)

ii. “‘Sticking the branch to the nose’ may simply describe an insulting physical gesture, here employed euphemistically to express how Yahweh feels about the way his subjects have treated him.” (Block)

iii. Wright had another idea: “The branch held to the nose may have been in imitation of the Egyptian ankh, a symbol of life, which is shown in carvings as held to the nose, or it may have been connected with plants sacred to Tammuz or some other god.”

iv. Vawter and Hoppe argue that the text has been corrupted and should read, “A branch in My nose.” “All that the Lord is saying is that in place of the pleasing odor of honest sacrificial worship (Leviticus 1:9, etc.), what God is receiving from the Israelites comes as a stench in God’s nostrils.”

d. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity: 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.

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

**ii. “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)**

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