



“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” (Ezekiel 8:18).

You Cannot Hide From God

Central Truth: The prophet proclaimed a God who knows all things.

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Topic: God: Attributes of. (Omniscience)

“The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12, 13).

Nothing is hidden from God. Things external are more evident to Him than to us. Things internal are as clearly evident to Him as external things. Everything is stripped bare and revealed to Him. *‘The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart’* (I Samuel 16:7).

The title of this study is “You Cannot Hide From God.” It is a needed emphasis today. We tend to think that if people cannot see us or know what we are doing, we are hidden from God also. Not so! He knows all things. He has searched us already and knows us perfectly. An understanding of this truth will lead to holiness of life and purity of worship.

Ezekiel was faced with a nation which had great pretensions of religious devotion. They came to hear the prophet and sat respectfully while he spoke. *“They hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness”* (Ezekiel 33:31). No wonder he warned his generation that you cannot hide from God.

I. YOU CANNOT HIDE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP (Ezekiel 8:5, 6)

The great problem in Ezekiel's generation was their error in worship. There were four things wrong with their worship.

A. They worshiped the wrong thing. There was “*an image of jealousy*” in their entry to the Lord's house (verse 5). There was “*every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house Israel*” (verse 10).

God had clearly said, “*Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them*” (Exodus 20:3-5). There could be no misunderstanding of His meaning.

Yet, Israel was prone to idolatry. God sent them into the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities to cure them forever of that natural tendency to worship the works of human hands. The captivity had fully come at the time Ezekiel was prophesying. He showed the people that their problem was due to their worship of a false god.

B. They wept over the wrong things. “*Behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz*” (verse 14). Tammuz was a pagan god worshiped by the Phoenicians, Babylonians, Sumerians, Egyptians, and Greeks under various names (Dumuzi, Adonis, etc.). He was a handsome shepherd slain by a wild boar. Ishtar (his female consort) would go into the underworld to try to rescue him from death. During her trip, winter would come and all vegetation would die. At that time the women would gather to weep for Tammuz. Disgraceful and licentious rites were celebrated in the worship. Ezekiel took the sight of Hebrew women weeping for Tammuz as one of the greatest abominations that could defile the house of God. Over what do Christians weep today? Whatever makes us weep reveals much about our spiritual concerns.

C. They worshiped in the wrong way. Ezekiel saw people standing with their backs to the temple of God (a sign of rejection) while they worshiped the rising sun. That was a polluting of the house of God (Jeremiah 7:30). Priests and people alike erred after the abominations of the heathen and defiled the temple of the Lord (II Chronicles 36:14).

D. They received the wrong response. Their rejecting the true God for pagan gods provoked the Lord God to jealousy. God will not bless a person or a nation which has sin in its heart. His hands are not weak; neither are His ears dull of hearing. But sin separates a person from God so that God will not hear or help (Isaiah 59:1, 2). Hosea predicted that the people would seek the Lord in times of need, but they would not find Him (Hosea 5:6). “*Ye*

cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of the devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (I Corinthians 10:21).

There are important lessons here for us to learn. (1) We must enter the worship of God with a right spirit. We must *"lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word"* (James 1:21). We must listen with open hearts and check the Scriptures daily in personal Bible study (Acts 17:11). We must *"enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise"* (Psalm 100:4). We must *"worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24).

(2) We must keep attention centered on God. *Worship* means "worth-ship." It is the act and attitude of attributing worth to one. Who is due our worship more than God?

(3) God withdraws from those who do not recognize him as supreme (verse 6). He will not hear the prayer offered by a person with unconfessed and unforgiven sin (Psalm 66:18). He will not receive the worship of a person who has practiced sin (Isaiah 1:10-15). He who comes to God must have *"clean hands and a pure heart"* (Psalm 24:4). Nothing can be substituted for that.

Be careful about your public worship. Pay attention. Desire to meet God. Act according to what you learn. Discipline your mind in singing, praying, and listening. Be humble, sincere, and open before God and He will reward you.

II. YOU CANNOT HIDE IN SECRET WORSHIP (Ezekiel 8:7-12)

Many people in Judah secretly worshiped false gods. They had images painted on their walls inside their houses, where they engaged in idolatrous worship. Even worse, they supposed that God did not know. They said, *"The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth"* (verse 12). Those acts of devotion were only adding sin to their sin.

God knows your heart, what you worship. *"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance"* (Psalm 90:8). Even the most secret sin is known to God. When people sin against the Lord they should know that the sin will find them out (Numbers 32:23).

Keep your thoughts pure. God knows them all (Psalm 139). If that requirement seems too demanding, heed this word from II Corinthians 10:4: *"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."* *"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (I Corinthians 15:57).

Watch your motives before God. He will bring all the hidden things to light at the day of judgment (I Corinthians 4:5); He knows them already.

III. YOU CANNOT HIDE IN TIMES OF ACCOUNTING (Ezekiel 8:17, 18)

God said of the sins of Judah, *“They have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. 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”* (Ezekiel 8:17, 18).

Judgment will come on sin. And it will come on every person who persists in sin. Judah went into the Babylonian captivity because of her sins against God, and the heathen knew it (Ezekiel 39:23). *“They believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation”* (Psalm 78:22). There was no other recourse except just judgment on sin.

God's judgment on sin is severe. He will deal in fury and will have no pity. What a terrible prospect! Just and catastrophic consequences will occur because of sin.

God's judgment on sin will be irreversible. The *“great gulf”* between the righteous and the wicked will never be crossed after the day of opportunity has passed (Luke 16:26). *“If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries”* (Hebrews 10:26, 27). Beware!

Make your worship sincere. *“Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness”* (Psalm 29:2). Keep your heart open to God so that He may commune with you in worship. Let what God tells you on Sunday influence your life the rest of the week. Let God's knowledge of all things challenge you to holiness of conduct and discipline of thoughts.

Questions

1. How does Hebrews 4:12, 13 relate to this study?
2. What is the spiritual problem indicated in Ezekiel 33:31?
3. Why is it wrong to worship gods other than the Lord God?
4. How is I Corinthians 10:21 a call to holiness?
5. What does Psalm 100:4 say about our spirit in worship?
6. What else does John 4:24 say about our worship?
7. What is the warning of Proverbs 28:13?

8. What does Hebrews 10:26, 27 mean to a Christian?
9. How can you put this study into application this week?
10. How does Psalm 24:4 instruct us further?