

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

During a period of gloomy captivity and despair for the Israelite nation, the pre-incarnate *Logos*, Jesus Christ, appears to Prophet Ezekiel roughly 600 years before the incarnation. At the time of the revelation, Ezekiel was sitting in his house in Babylon conversing with other Israelite refugees. Ezekiel, in awe of the glory of God, describes the *Logos* as “a likeness, like the appearance of fire – from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color amber” (Ezek. 8:2). The *Logos* then takes Ezekiel in the spirit from the gathering and shows him four abominations occurring in the most sacred, holiest, and consecrated place on earth – the glorious Temple.

The first abomination the Lord showed Ezekiel was that there was an idol near the entrance of the northern gate of the Temple. The Lord disappointedly says to Ezekiel, “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” (Ezek. 8:6).

Next, the Lord led Ezekiel to the entrance of the outer court and took Ezekiel through a wall into a secret room. In this hidden room, Ezekiel saw seventy Israelite leaders offering incense and worshipping images of snakes and other unclean animals that were drawn on the walls. Outraged, the Lord says, “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.’ Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing” (Ezek. 8:12-13).

The third abomination the Lord showed Ezekiel was a gathering of women by the northern gate to mourn the death of god Tammuz. Tammuz was a god who was believed to die when vegetation died and was thought to come to life the next year. In my opinion, the previous abomination seems more scandalous, but perhaps this abomination is considered worse because it was done in public for everyone to see while the previous abomination was done secretly. Regardless, the Lord once again sorrowfully says to Ezekiel, “Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these” (Ezek. 8:15).

The last and final abomination is by far the worst. The Lord takes Ezekiel to the holiest place of the Temple -- the inner court in front of the altar door. There, the Lord shows Ezekiel twenty-five men who have apathetically turned their back on the altar and were worshipping in the opposite direction toward the sun.

It is heartbreaking to imagine that such blatant acts of idolatry and defilement were occurring in the Temple of God. Could you imagine how you would feel if you entered into our Holy Church and instead of the icon of St. Mary, there was an idol present and all the people were crying to this idol? Or could you imagine the priests going into a secret room after they have just finished the Divine Liturgy and raising incense before the idols? Unholy things have no place in such a holy place! What an outrage and atrocity! However, if you think about it, we unfortunately commit these atrocities all the time! Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us that “the Kingdom of God is within [us]” (Luke 17:21). If the words of our Lord are true, that means that the glory of heaven and throne of God is found within us! St. Paul elaborates on this amazing concept saying, “Do you not know that *you are the temple of*

God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

The church building is indeed holy and consecrated with the Holy Myron, but so also is each believer! Our bodies are the true Temple of God, and, therefore, sanctity is not just reserved for the church altar -- our entire lives are to be sanctified. We should no longer view the holiness of the church and ourselves as dichotomous – they are truly one and the same. Just as the Lord showed Ezekiel what was happening in the Temple, I imagine the Lord bringing his saints into the temple of our hearts and the Lord revealing our concealed abominations—the idols of money, lusts, pride, etc. It is amazing to think about how many secret rooms and idols there might be in our Holy Temple. A quick examination of our daily lives reveals that we may be unconsciously attached to numerous unholy things (i.e. idols) that we could not live without such as material objects, Netflix, video games, music, etc. As the Lord reminded Ezekiel, we must always remember that everything that we do is exposed before God and the saints. St. Paul says in his epistle to the Hebrews, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (4:12-13).*

In our nakedness, the Lord clearly sees our shortcomings, yet He still desires to dwell in the sanctuary of our hearts. As we have just read, it is our sins that “make [Him] go far away from [His] sanctuary” (Ezek. 8:6). Therefore, let us not push the Lord away by continuing in a life of sin! Rather let us invite Him to sit in the throne room of our hearts. Let us sanctify our Temple through the renunciation of this life and through prayers, repentance, and by partaking in Holy Mysteries so that the Holy Spirit may fill us with the light of His glorious Presence.

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May 27, 2018