

Ezekiel 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart,
and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face:
should I be enquired of at all by them?

Analysis

God reveals the elders' hidden sin: 'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?' The phrase 'idols in their heart' (gillulim ba-lebam, גִּילּוּלִים בַּלֵּבָב) describes internal idolatry—even without physical images, the heart worships false gods. The 'stumblingblock of their iniquity' (mikhshol avonam, מִכְשׁוֹל עֲוֹנָם) indicates that sin creates obstacles to spiritual sight and right worship. The rhetorical question 'should I be enquired of?' shows God refuses to answer those who maintain heart idolatry while seeking divine guidance. Hypocrisy—outward religious form masking inward idolatry—offends God more than open paganism. God demands heart purity, not mere external compliance.

Historical Context

The elders came to Ezekiel seeking a prophetic word (14:1), appearing outwardly religious. Yet God exposed their heart idolatry—they wanted divine blessing while maintaining allegiance to other gods. This pattern characterized pre-exilic Judah—temple worship continued while hearts pursued idols. Archaeological discoveries confirm household idols were common even among those who participated in temple worship. God's refusal to be 'enquired of' by double-minded inquirers demonstrates that He demands exclusive devotion. The New Testament similarly condemns double-mindedness (James 1:6-8, 4:8) and serving two masters (Matthew 6:24).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'idols of the heart' do you maintain while seeking God's guidance—what competes for your ultimate allegiance?
2. How does recognizing that God sees heart idolatry (not just outward actions) challenge your worship and devotion?

Interlinear Text

בֶּן	אָדָם	הָאָדָם יִם	הָאֵל לָהּ	הָעֵל ו	גִּלּוּלֵיהֶם	עַל
Son	of man	H376	H428	have set up	their idols	H5921
H1121	H120			H5927	H1544	
לִבָּם	וּמִכָּשׁ וּל	עֲוֹנָם	נָתַן ו	נֶחֱכָם	פְּנֵיהֶם	
in their heart	the stumblingblock	of their iniquity	and put	before	their face	
H3820	H4383	H5771	H5414	H5227	H6440	
שׁ	אֲדָרְ שׁ	לָהֶם:				
of at all	of at all	H0				
H1875	H1875					

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 14:7 (Sin): For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

Ezekiel 7:19 (Sin): They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity.

Isaiah 1:15 (Parallel theme): And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Ezekiel 20:3 (Parallel theme): Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

Ezekiel 20:16 (Parallel theme): Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.

Ezekiel 14:4 (Sin): Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

Proverbs 28:9 (Parallel theme): He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

Ezekiel 44:12 (Sin): Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.

Ezekiel 20:31 (Parallel theme): For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

Revelation 2:14 (Parallel theme): But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.