

# Ezekiel 14:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart,  
because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

## Analysis

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God addresses Estranged through idols in this verse. Idolatry separates from God, demonstrating that God sees hearts and motives, not just external religious practices. The scenario reveals the futility of seeking God while maintaining idolatry—true inquiry requires undivided allegiance. Attempting to consult God while harboring idols represents the divided heart God rejects.

The passage illustrates that religious externals without heart reality constitute hypocrisy God abhors. Mere consultation of prophets, attendance at worship, or performance of rituals means nothing if the heart remains idolatrous. God demands total allegiance, not partial commitment combined with idolatrous hedging. The call is to genuine repentance involving both turning from sin and turning to God.

From a Reformed perspective, this passage teaches the doctrine of regeneration's necessity. External religion without heart transformation cannot save. Only the Spirit's work creating new hearts produces genuine faith and repentance. Attempts to maintain both God and idols reveal unregenerate hearts needing divine recreation, not mere moral reformation.

## Historical Context

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The elders coming to Ezekiel (v. 1) represented Jerusalem's leadership or fellow exiles seeking prophetic guidance. However, God revealed their secret idolatry—

they maintained household gods or idolatrous practices while outwardly seeking Yahweh. This duplicity characterized pre-exilic Israel and necessitated judgment. Idolatry separates from God within this context of widespread syncretism where people attempted to hedge spiritual bets by worshiping both Yahweh and other deities. Archaeological discoveries of household figurines and foreign cult objects in Israelite homes confirm this pattern. The practice violated the Shema's demand for exclusive love and loyalty to Yahweh (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does this passage expose the futility of religious practices divorced from heart reality?
2. What modern idols do people attempt to maintain while still seeking God's blessing?
3. In what ways does Estranged through idols illustrate the necessity of genuine conversion versus mere external religion?

## Interlinear Text

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אָשֶׁר	רְכִבָּה	בְּלִבְנֵי	לִשְׁבָּא	לְבַתְּרוּךְ	בַּיִת	אֶת	תְּנַפְּשָׁה	לְמַעַן	אֲשֶׁר
H834	H3820	H1544	H3478	H1004	H853	H2114	H8610	H4616	
because	they	are	all	estranged	from	me	through	their	idols

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 1:4** (References Israel): Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

**Zechariah 11:8** (Parallel theme): Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

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