

# Ezekiel 20:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.

## Analysis

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'Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols.' The cause of judgment: despising God's law and idolatry. 'Their heart went after their idols' identifies the root problem—divided affection, misplaced worship. External rebellion (despising judgments) stems from internal idolatry (hearts after idols). God's law addresses heart orientation, not merely external conformity.

## Historical Context

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Wilderness idolatry included the golden calf (Exodus 32), illicit relationships with Moabite women and their gods (Numbers 25), and ongoing syncretism. Acts 7:42-43 (quoting Amos 5:25-27) indicates they carried idols throughout the wilderness period despite God's presence in the tabernacle. Heart-level rebellion persisted despite external religious observance.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. What idols compete for our hearts while we maintain external religious observance?
2. How do we address heart-level idolatry rather than merely conforming externally?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹא	חֻקֹּתַי	וְאֵת	מֵאֵסוּ	בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי	יֵן
H3808	H2708	H853	H3988	H4941	H3282
	not in my statutes		Because they despised	my judgments	
אַחֲרַי	כִּי	חֵלְלוּ	שַׁבָּתוֹתַי	וְאֵת	בָּהֶם
H310	H3588	H2490	H7676	H853	H0
after		but polluted	my sabbaths		and walked
					H1980
וְהָלְכָה	לִבָּם	גִּלּוּלֵיהֶם			
H1980	H3820	H1544			
and walked	for their heart	their idols			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 15:39** (Parallel theme): And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

**Ezekiel 20:8** (Parallel theme): But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

