

# Ezekiel 8:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

## Analysis

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Ezekiel witnesses Israel's elders secretly worshiping idols in darkened temple chambers, each person serving 'his idols' (gillulim, גִּלְלִים—a contemptuous term meaning 'dung pellets' or 'filthy things'). Their rationalization reveals shocking theological apostasy: 'The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the land.' This represents practical atheism—they claim Yahweh is either unable (doesn't see) or unwilling (has forsaken) to engage with His people, therefore other deities must be consulted. This lie directly contradicts God's omniscience (Psalm 139:1-12) and covenant faithfulness (Deuteronomy 31:6). Their darkness symbolizes both literal secrecy and spiritual blindness. They worship in 'chambers of imagery' (cheder maskito, חֶדֶר מַשְׁקִיטָה)—rooms decorated with pagan murals and symbols. What they practice secretly, God sees fully. Their assumption that God has abandoned them becomes self-fulfilling—through their idolatry, they drive away His presence.

## Historical Context

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The seventy elders represented Israel's leadership—men responsible for spiritual guidance were leading in apostasy. These weren't ignorant common people but educated leaders who knew God's law yet chose syncretism. The phrase 'every man in the chambers of his imagery' suggests individualized idolatry—each elder

had customized his own secret shrine. This proliferation of private idolatry reveals how deeply corruption had penetrated Judean society. Historical records and archaeology confirm that Mesopotamian influence increased during this period, with many adopting Babylonian religious practices even before the exile. The leaders' cynicism ('God has forsaken the land') justified their pragmatic turn to other deities.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

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

## Study Questions

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1. What secret sins do you justify by assuming God doesn't see or doesn't care?
2. How does leadership's hidden compromise corrupt those under their influence?

## Interlinear Text

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רָא הָאָמֵן יְמִין אֶלְיָהוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם אֲשֶׁר  
Then said H413 hast thou seen H7200 he unto me Son of man H834  
H559 H1121 H120

אֲשֶׁר בְּחֹשֶׁךְ יְשָׁרָאֵל עַשְׂתָּם יְמִין אֶלְיָהוּ בְּנֵי  
what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark every man H376  
H2205 H1004 H3478 H6213 H2822

רָא הַיְהּוּנִי אֶלְיָהוּ בְּבַמְּדָרִי מִשְׁפִּית זָהָב  
in the chambers of his imagery Then said The LORD hast thou seen H7200  
H2315 H4906 H3588 H559 H369 H3068

בָּאָרֶץ אֶת כָּל יְהּוָה בְּעֵד אֶת כָּל  
hath forsaken The LORD the earth H776  
H853 H3068 H853 H776

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 29:15** (Darkness): Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

**Ezekiel 9:9** (References Lord): Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.

**Psalms 10:11** (Parallel theme): He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

**Ephesians 5:12** (Parallel theme): For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

**Ezekiel 8:15** (Parallel theme): Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

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