

Ezekiel 8:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

Analysis

Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. God reveals another layer of temple abomination: women engaged in mourning ritual for the pagan deity Tammuz, a Mesopotamian fertility god. This represents comprehensive syncretism where foreign religious practices penetrated the temple itself.

The door of the gate of the LORD house which was toward the north locates this practice at the temple northern entrance, a prominent public location. That this occurred at the LORD house emphasizes the shocking location—pagan worship conducted at Yahweh temple gates. The north direction recalls earlier imagery of divine throne (1:4) and judgment executioners (9:2), now also location of abomination.

Women weeping for Tammuz describes mourning ritual for Mesopotamian deity Tammuz (Sumerian Dumuzi), lover of Ishtar goddess. His annual death and descent to the underworld was mourned by female devotees, followed by celebration of his resurrection/return. This fertility cult directly contradicted Yahweh worship and represented spiritual adultery at covenant husband dwelling place.

From Reformed perspective, this demonstrates how idolatry often appeals to

emotional and religious sentiment. The women were not atheists but deeply religious, expressing devotion—but to false gods. The passage warns that sincere religious emotion directed toward wrong objects is still idolatry. True worship requires right object (God alone) not just religious feeling.

Historical Context

Tammuz (Sumerian Dumuzi, Akkadian Dumuzu) was ancient Mesopotamian deity associated with fertility, vegetation, and the seasonal cycle. His mythology involved death and resurrection corresponding to agricultural seasons. Tammuz cult was popular especially among women throughout ancient Near East, including areas under Mesopotamian cultural influence.

The weeping for Tammuz occurred during summer month (later named after him), when hot, dry weather caused vegetation to die. Worshipers mourned his death to underworld, believing their laments would encourage his return bringing rain and fertility. This practice infiltrated Judah during periods of Mesopotamian cultural and political dominance.

Archaeological evidence confirms Tammuz worship spread widely in the 1st millennium BC. By Ezekiel time, with Babylon as dominant power and many Jews already in exile there, Mesopotamian religious practices influenced Judean worship even in the Jerusalem temple itself.

For Ezekiel audience, this revelation exposed leadership failure. The temple gatekeepers and priests should have prevented pagan practices at God house. Their tolerance or participation in such abominations demonstrated comprehensive institutional failure requiring divine judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does Tammuz worship at Yahweh temple teach about dangers of religious syncretism?
2. How do sincere religious emotions directed toward false objects constitute idolatry?
3. In what ways do churches today incorporate pagan practices while maintaining Christian identity?
4. What is the relationship between cultural accommodation and theological compromise?
5. How does Christ resurrection as historical reality distinguish Him from dying-and-rising pagan myths?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּבְאַר אֶל אֹתָהּ שַׁעַר בֵּית יְהוָה
Then he brought me to the door of the gate house of the LORD'S
H935 H853 H413 H6607 H8179 H1004 H3068

אֶל אָשָׁר בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
which was toward the north
H834 H413 H6828 H2009 H8033 H802

וַיֵּשֶׁב וְתַּחַת מִבְּכָה אֶת אֹתָהּ בְּתַמּוֹז
and behold there sat weeping for Tammuz
H3427 H1058 H853 H8542

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