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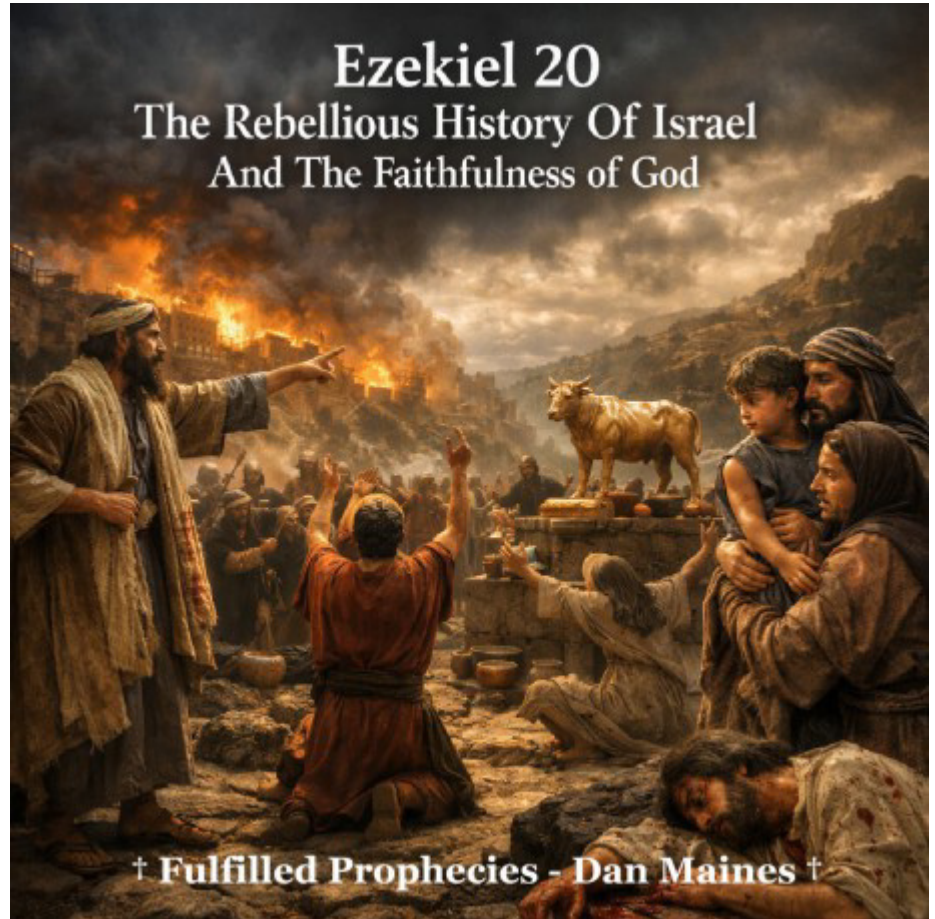
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## Ezekiel 20 The Rebellious History Of Israel And The Faithfulness Of God



By Dan Maines

## **Ezekiel 20 The Rebellious History Of Israel And The Faithfulness Of God**

### **Introduction**

† Ezekiel 20 walks through Israel's entire history, showing a pattern of rebellion from Egypt to the wilderness and into the land.

† God repeatedly delivered them, gave them His statutes, and called them to walk in His ways, yet they continually turned to idols.

† This chapter proves that judgment wasn't random, it was the

direct result of covenant unfaithfulness.

† At the same time, it shows God's mercy, because He restrained His wrath for the sake of His name.

### **Ezekiel 20:1**

Now in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, some of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

† The elders came seeking God, but their history shows they weren't truly seeking obedience, only answers (Isaiah 29:13).

† This reflects a pattern where Israel wanted guidance without submission (Jeremiah 42:20-21).

† It shows outward religion without inward faithfulness, something God continually rebuked.

### **Ezekiel 20:2-3**

And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, This is what the Lord GOD says: Do you come to inquire of Me? As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I will not let you inquire of Me.

† God refuses to answer because their hearts were corrupt, showing that access to God isn't mechanical but relational (Proverbs 28:9).

† This lines up with Psalm 66:18, if I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

† Their inquiry was hypocritical, and God exposes it immediately.

### **Ezekiel 20:4**

Will you judge them, will you judge them, son of man? Make them know the abominations of their fathers.

† God shifts the focus from inquiry to accountability.

† Israel needed to understand their history of sin, not seek new revelation.

† This shows that truth begins with recognizing past rebellion (Nehemiah 9:16-17).

### **Ezekiel 20:5-6**

And say to them, This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, I am the LORD your God, on that day I raised My hand in an oath to them to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had selected for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands.

† God reminds them that He chose them and delivered them first.

† Their identity was rooted in grace, not merit (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

† This highlights that their rebellion came after receiving blessings.

### **Ezekiel 20:7-8**

And I said to them, Each of you, get rid of the detestable things of your eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God. But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; none of them got rid of the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they abandon the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

† Even in Egypt, Israel clung to idols, proving their rebellion started early (Joshua 24:14).

† Deliverance didn't automatically produce obedience.

† This shows that external salvation doesn't change the heart without transformation.

## **Ezekiel 20:9**

But I acted for the sake of My name, so that it would not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived.

† God spared them for His name, not their righteousness.

† His reputation among the nations was at stake (Exodus 32:12).

† This reveals God's faithfulness even when His people are unfaithful.

## **Ezekiel 20:10-12**

So I brought them out of the land of Egypt and led them into the wilderness. I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a person follows them, then he will live.

Also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, so that they would know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

† God gave them the Law as a covenant standard.

† The Sabbath was a sign of their relationship with Him (Exodus 31:13).

† Yet even with clear instruction, they failed.

## **Ezekiel 20:13**

But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness.

† The wilderness became a place of testing, and they failed repeatedly (Psalm 95:8-10).

† This shows that miracles don't produce faith.

† Their rebellion continued despite seeing God's power.

## **Ezekiel 20:14**

But I acted for the sake of My name, so that it would not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out.

† Again, God restrains judgment for His name.

† This repeated phrase shows His consistent motive.

† His faithfulness stands in contrast to their rebellion.

### **Ezekiel 20:18-21**

But I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers or keep their ordinances or defile yourselves with their idols.

† God gave the next generation a chance to walk differently.

† Yet they repeated the same sins.

† This proves that rebellion isn't just generational influence, it's a heart issue.

### **Ezekiel 20:23-24**

Also I raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them among the lands.

† God warned of future judgment long before it happened (Leviticus 26:33).

† The exile wasn't sudden, it was promised due to disobedience.

† This shows God's justice is consistent and predictable.

### **Ezekiel 20:32**

What comes into your mind will not come about, when you say, We will be like the nations, like the families of the lands, serving wood and stone.

† Israel wanted to become like the nations, rejecting their identity.

† This is the root of idolatry, conforming to the world (1 Samuel 8:5).

† God rejects that desire completely.

### **Ezekiel 20:33-34**

As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you.

† God declares His rule will stand, whether through blessing or judgment.

† His kingship isn't dependent on their obedience.

† This points forward to Christ's ultimate reign.

### **Ezekiel 20:37-38**

I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will eliminate from you the rebels and those who revolt against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they reside as strangers, but they will not enter the land of Israel.

† This is purification language, separating the faithful from the rebels.

† It anticipates judgment that refines (Malachi 3:2-3).

† Ultimately fulfilled in the first century judgment where the old covenant system was removed.

### **Ezekiel 20:39**

As for you, house of Israel, this is what the Lord GOD says: Go, serve everyone his idols; but later you will certainly listen to Me, and My holy name you will no longer profane with your gifts and with your idols.

† God is giving them over to their rebellion, similar to Romans 1:24, where persistent sin leads to being handed over.

† This is judicial language, not approval, but judgment for continued refusal to obey.

† Even in this, God still defends His name, showing His holiness isn't dependent on their obedience.

### **Ezekiel 20:40**

For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel, declares the Lord GOD, there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land.

† This points to restoration, not of physical land, but of true

worship.

† Fulfilled in the kingdom where all nations serve God (Hebrews 12:22-23).

† This is the reality of the fulfilled kingdom.

### **Ezekiel 20:45-49**

Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, set your face toward the south and speak out against the south and prophesy against the forest land of the Negev, and say to the forest of the Negev, Hear the word of the LORD: This is what the Lord GOD says: Behold, I am about to kindle a fire in you, and it will consume every green tree in you, as well as every dry tree; the blazing flame will not be quenched, and every face from south to north will be scorched by it. And all flesh will see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; it will not be quenched. Then I said, Oh Lord GOD! They are saying of me, Is he not just speaking in parables?

† The fire represents coming judgment, specifically pointing to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was total and unquenchable in its time (Jeremiah 21:14).

† Both green and dry trees show that judgment would affect all, righteous and wicked within that system, just as happened in AD 70 (Luke 23:31).

† The people dismiss it as parables, showing they didn't take the warning seriously, which matches the blindness Jesus spoke of in Matthew 13:14-15.

### **Historical References**

† Josephus records the continual rebellion of Israel leading up to AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem, confirming this pattern.

† Eusebius writes that the judgment on Jerusalem was the result of their rejection of God and His covenant.

† Irenaeus speaks of Israel's repeated disobedience and God's long-suffering patience.

### **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We don't approach God with hypocrisy, He sees the heart (Hebrews 4:13).

† We learn from Israel's history, repeated rebellion leads to judgment (1 Corinthians 10:11).

† God is faithful even when people are not, His purposes stand (2 Timothy 2:13).

† True worship isn't outward, it's obedience from the heart (John 4:23).

† The kingdom is established, and we live in it now under Christ's rule (Colossians 1:13).

### **Q & A Appendix**

**Q** Why did God refuse to answer Israel?

**A** Because their hearts were rebellious, Proverbs 28:9

**Q** Did Israel begin rebelling only in the land?

**A** No, they were already worshiping idols in Egypt, Joshua 24:14

**Q** Why did God spare them repeatedly?

**A** For His name's sake, Ezekiel 20:9

**Q** What was the purpose of the Law?

**A** To give them life if obeyed, Ezekiel 20:11

**Q** What does Ezekiel 20:39 show?

**A** God giving them over to their rebellion, Romans 1:24

**Q** What do the burning trees represent?

**A** Total judgment affecting all, Luke 23:31

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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**Source Index**

† Ezekiel 20

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews Book 10-13; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Irenaeus, Against Heresies

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