

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 364 – The Elders Come Through Being As The Heathen (Ezekiel 20:1-32)

1. Who came to Ezekiel in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day?
Certain of the elders of Israel: *“And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me”* (**Ezekiel 20:1**).
 - The elders had come to Ezekiel before (**Ezekiel 8:1; 14:1-3**).
 - They weren’t really coming to learn (**Isaiah 58:1-2** and **Ezekiel 33:30-33**).
 - Remember, Ezekiel was told to teach them even though they were not going to listen (**Ezekiel 2:1-3:11**).
 - We are under a different instruction that was Ezekiel (**Matthew 7:6, Matthew 10:14-15, Acts 13:45-47, II Timothy 2:23, and Titus 3:9-11**).
2. Was God delighted by those who came to enquire of Ezekiel?
No: *“(2) Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying, (3) Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you”* (**Ezekiel 20:2-3**).
 - They had no right to enquire of the Lord (**Proverbs 15:8, Proverbs 15:29, Proverbs 28:9, Isaiah 1:10-18, Isaiah 59:1-3, Micah 3:4, John 9:31, and I Peter 3:12**).
 - We will talk of this again in verse 31.
3. What was Ezekiel supposed to cause them to know?
The abominations of their fathers: *“Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers”* (**Ezekiel 20:4**).
 - Israel’s past sins were brought to their attention often (**Numbers 32:6-8, Numbers 32:14, Joshua 24:14-15, I Samuel 12:15, II Chronicles 30:7-8, Nehemiah 13:18, Psalms 95:1-9, Isaiah 65:7, Jeremiah 7:17-28, Jeremiah 44:9, Matthew 23:29-37, etc.**).
 - Even their restoration recalled the sins of their fathers (**Nehemiah 9:2** and **Daniel 9:16**).
 - Why? Why remember the past failures of a people? It is a learning tool for a person/people willing to learn (**I Corinthians 10:1-12**). It is not, as we studied a couple of chapters ago, because their father’s sins were being accounted for by them (**Ezekiel 18:1-32**).
4. In the review of the history of Israel, how did Israel respond to God’s demand that they cast away their abominations?
They rebelled against His will: *“(5) And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of*

the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I am the LORD your God; (6) In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands: (7) Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (8) 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” (Ezekiel 20:5-8).

- There is no clearer statement, that describes Israel of old, than this: “Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you” (**Deuteronomy 9:24**). Back up and read the context from **Deuteronomy 8:1-9:29**. It is very similar to the points in this context we are studying.
- Moses was worried about their rebellious hearts, he said this: “For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death” (**Deuteronomy 31:27**)?
- Instead of casting away their idols and their other sins, they tossed the Law of the Lord behind them (**Nehemiah 9:26**).
- They never seemed to grasp what they did to God (**Isaiah 63:7-10**).
- They felt the fury of God (**Isaiah 51:17**), but that never lastingly changed anything (**Psalms 78:1-41**).

5. For whose name’s sake did the Lord bring them forth out of Egypt?

His own: “But I wrought for my name’s sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt” (**Ezekiel 20:9**).

- For His name’s sake (**Numbers 14:1-25, I Samuel 12:22, I Kings 8:41, Psalms 23:3, Psalms 25:11, and Isaiah 48:9**).
- So that His name was not polluted before the heathen (**Ezekiel 36:21-22**).
- His protecting His name comes down to keeping His promises (**Deuteronomy 4:31 and II Kings 19:34**).
- God sought to protect HIS credibility. What is in a name [reputation] (**Proverbs 22:1 and Ecclesiastes 7:1**)?

6. When the Lord brought them out of the land of Egypt and gave Israel statutes and judgments, did they follow them?

No, they rebelled: “(10) Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. (11) And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. (12) Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. (13) But the

house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them” (Ezekiel 20:10-13).

- When you read **Exodus 13-20**, you get this history.
- Their turning away was “quickly” (**Exodus 32:8**).
- Do you think things have changed with the people of God under the New Covenant? No, is the answer (**Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-3**).

7. As you continue reading, what is the pattern you see through verse 22?

God gives them instructions, they rebel, and He saves them for His name’s sake: *“(14) But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out. (15) Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands; (16) Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. (17) Nevertheless mine eye spared them from destroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness. (18) But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: (19) I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; (20) And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God. (21) Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness. (22) Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth” (Ezekiel 20:14-22).*

- One of the statements in this context is “they despised my judgments” (**v.16**; cf. **Numbers 15:31** and **Psalms 106:24**).
- Yet, God withdrew his hand of fury for a reason, tied to preserving His name. Though they did not appreciate it, Israel knew this (**Psalms 79:9-10** and **Jeremiah 14:7**).

8. Though God punished their generations past and present, was idolatry purged from Israel at this point wherein we are reading?

No, this current generation followed the same sinful path of their forefathers: *“(23) I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; (24) Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. (25) Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and*

*judgments whereby they should not live; (26) And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD. (27) Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me. (28) For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out there their drink offerings. (29) Then I said unto them, What is the high place whereunto ye go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day. (30) Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations? (31) For when ye offer your gifts, when ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be enquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you. (32) And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone” (**Ezekiel 20:23-32**).*

- Now we get to a point of emphasis as to a reason why we are reading about their father’s history. They did not learn to turn AWAY from idols, but rather learned to CONTINUE following the idols of their fathers. “Their eyes (**Ezekiel 6:9**) were after their fathers’ idols.” Thus, their history lesson was necessary (**Amos 2:4**).
- Remember, there were times where the idols of their past were removed (**I Kings 15:11-12**). However, we are reading now that they still went back to them.
- What does it mean that God gave them “statutes that were not good”? Consider this: **Deuteronomy 28:15-37**.
- God establishing things for their hurt was THEIR FAULT (**Jeremiah 25:7**).
- Then God tells them what comes into their minds, their plans, they are not going to happen (**Proverbs 19:21**).