

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Book of Ezekiel*  
*Message 36*  
*May 15, 2016*



Jeroboam Offering Sacrifice in Front of the Golden Calf by Jean-Honoré Fragonard Cir 1732-1806

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The Book of Ezekiel

Message Thirty-Six

Historical Rebellion of The Nation Israel

May 15, 2016

Daniel E. Woodhead

GOD'S ACTIONS TOWARD ISRAEL IS SUPPORTED

Ezekiel 20:1-17

*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 inquire of Jehovah, and sat before me. <sup>2</sup>And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, <sup>3</sup>Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Is it to inquire of me that ye are come? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will not be inquired of by you. <sup>4</sup>Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? Cause them to know the abominations of their fathers; <sup>5</sup>and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day when I chose Israel, and swore unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I swore unto them, saying, I am Jehovah your God; <sup>6</sup>in that day I swore unto them, to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. <sup>7</sup>And I said unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God. <sup>8</sup>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 would pour out my wrath upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, among which they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt <sup>10</sup>So I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. <sup>11</sup>And I gave them my statutes, and showed them mine ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live in them. <sup>12</sup>Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth them. <sup>13</sup>But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they rejected mine ordinances, which if a man keep, he shall live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. <sup>14</sup>But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I brought them out. <sup>15</sup>Moreover also I swore 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; <sup>16</sup>because they rejected mine ordinances, and walked not in my statutes, and profaned my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. <sup>17</sup>Nevertheless mine eye spared them, and I destroyed them not, neither did I make a full end of them in the wilderness. (ASV, 1901).*

## DATING OF THIS MESSAGE

### Ezekiel 20:1-3

*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 inquire of Jehovah, and sat before me. <sup>2</sup>And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, <sup>3</sup>Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Is it to inquire of me that ye are come? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will not be inquired of by you. (ASV, 1901).*

This passage cites a specific year, month and date when the following events transpired in Babylon to Ezekiel from the Lord. Because the dating of the events found in chapter eight it is apparent that these dates are measured during the time Jehoiachin was captured by Nebuchadnezzar and brought to Babylon after only a three month reign in Jerusalem. Ezekiel's prophecies began in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezekiel 1:2) it is known what time period is referred to in this passage. Jehoiachin was captured in 597 B.C. So this prophecy is taking place on August 14, 591 B.C. In the Jewish calendar it would be the 10<sup>th</sup> of Av. The Temple would be destroyed five years later on the same date.

On this day the 10<sup>th</sup> of Av of 591 B.C. some of the elders of Israel came to him recognizing his prophetic abilities desiring that he connect with God for them. It is not given exactly what these men asked Ezekiel but from God's response in this chapter it appears they may not have been genuinely pious. Certainly the people they represented had abandoned their worship of God. These elders might have been divided in their loyalties. God recognizes their true nature and that of the people of Israel and is about to remind the nation through them of the history of rebellion and the necessity of judgment He meted out to them. God tells Ezekiel to essentially be harsh with them and ask them if in fact they are really coming seek Him. God is harsh and does not like they way they are coming to Him when He says that, "*I will not be inquired of by you.*" It is clear that He does not think they are worthy to petition Him due to their sinful history. He will go on in the chapter to recall all the various general rebellions in which they engaged against Him.

The chapter will conclude with their national restoration and the renewal of properly worshipping Him.

1. The sojourn in Egypt (Ezekiel 20:5-10)
2. The First Wilderness Generation (Ezekiel 20:11-17)
3. The Second Wilderness Generation (Ezekiel 20:18-26)
4. Their Settlement in The Land (Ezekiel 20:27-29)
5. Their Exile in Babylon and Their Future Hope (Ezekiel 20:30-44)

## GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL

### Ezekiel 20:4-6

*<sup>4</sup>Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? Cause them to know the abominations of their fathers; <sup>5</sup>and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: In the day when I chose Israel, and sware unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I*

*sware unto them, saying, I am Jehovah your God; <sup>6</sup>in that day I swear unto them, to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands (ASV, 1901).*

God starts off with a direct question, “Will you judge them?” meaning He is very impatient with them and essentially means go ahead and judge these people. So God wants Ezekiel His servant to confront them with all the detestable practices of their ancestors that eventually led to the present condition of exile in Babylon. Ezekiel has been given the role of the prosecutor to bring the case against Israel for the sovereign God. God is going to recall the time from when they became a nation. Their prediction of a time in Egypt was given to Abraham in the Covenant that God made with him (Genesis 15:13). But their development as a nation was from the time Abraham’s grandson Jacob when to Egypt in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. They went down as a family of seventy souls but emerged under the leadership of Moses in the Exodus four hundred years later as a bonafide nation of more than a million people.

God now starts to show Ezekiel the nation’s sins in Egypt. He had chosen them as a nation. He had entered into covenant relations with Israel and pledged Himself to bring them out of Egypt into the land Israel, which here is called “*the glory of all lands.*”

#### ISRAEL’S IDOLATRY IN EGYPT

Ezekiel 20:7-8

*<sup>7</sup>And I said unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God. <sup>8</sup>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 would pour out my wrath upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt (ASV,1901).*

God saw the idol worship in which they engaged in Egypt and begins to call them out for it. As they grew into a nation in Egypt they were drawn into idol worship even though God chose Aaron, Moses’s brother to warn them against this abomination (I Samuel 2:27-28). An abomination to God presented to the Jews in Egypt was looked upon by them as a delightful endeavor. God proclaims to Ezekiel that Israel rebelled already in Egypt: *Their eyes feasted on ... the idols of Egypt.* Israel was unfaithful from the beginning. They refused to respond to God’s calling even in Egypt but wanted to continue in abominable practices with the Egyptians. No specific mention is made of their Egyptian idolatry in the first five books of the Bible. It is introduced here for the first time in the Bible but alluding to the warning Aaron gave them in Egypt. Looking back from here and the condemnation they received after the incident of the worship of the golden calf (Exodus 32:4) it is apparent that they had caught the infection of the Mnevis or Apis worship while they sojourned in Egypt. At that time the Lord had been ready to pour out His wrath upon them in judgment in satisfaction of His anger toward them. This was simply because many Jews in Egypt had assimilated into the Egyptian culture and refused to listen to God. God was preparing them to be a distinct separate elect nation for His purposes and He was angered at their idolatry. They chose the inferior instead of the genuine.

## GOD WITHHOLDS JUDGMENT

### Ezekiel 20:9

*<sup>9</sup>But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, among which they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt (ASV, 1901).*

Israel deserved punishment from God but it did not come. They were spared because God had grace and mercy for the sake of His name. He did not want His name to be polluted in front of the heathen Egyptians. If they saw the judgment of Israel they would not see the overwhelming grace and mercy. Therefore His reputation was the issue here. He wanted them to see how He would bless the Jews so they would respond favorably. If all they saw was judgment they would never turn to God. As evidence all throughout the judgment on Egypt of the ten plagues the Jews were protected.

### THE 10 PLAGUES

- 1) Blood: The rivers, streams, ponds, and Egyptians drinking water throughout Egypt turned to blood. The fish in the waters died and left a stench throughout the land. (Exodus 7:14-25)
- 2) Frogs: Masses of frogs swarmed out of the streams and rivers and entered only the Egyptians' houses, bedrooms, beds, ovens, and servants' living quarters. (Exodus 8:1-15)
- 3) Lice: The dust of the land turned into lice, or gnats, and covered only the Egyptian people and their animals. (Exodus 8:16-19)
- 4) Flies: Swarms of flies flew into Pharaoh's house, the houses of his servants, and the houses of all the Egyptian people, and covered the ground. They plagued only the Egyptians, and not the Israelites. (Exodus 8:20-32)
- 5) Murrain: This was an infectious disease that affected the Egyptians' cattle, horses, donkeys, oxen, camels, and sheep that were in the fields. It did not spread to the Israelites' livestock. (Exodus 9:1-7)
- 6) Boils: At God's command, Moses and Aaron took ashes from the furnace, sprinkled them toward Heaven, and God turned the small pieces into boils and sores on the Egyptians and their animals. The Israelites were not affected. (Exodus 9:8-12)
- 7) Hail: The Lord sent a massive hail storm that was heavier than any previously seen in Egypt. There was thunder, lightning that ran along the ground, and hail that destroyed trees, crops, and any person or livestock that had not been brought under cover. (Exodus 9:13-35)
- 8) Locusts: The worst swarm of locusts that Egypt had ever experienced came on the east wind and covered all the land of Egypt. The insects filled the houses and ate any residue of trees and crops that had not been destroyed by the previous plague of hail. (Exodus 10:1-20)
- 9) Darkness: For three days, pitch-black darkness engulfed Egypt. It was so dark that the Egyptians could not see one another or anything else, so they stayed in their houses for the three days. In contrast, the Israelites had light in their dwellings while the Egyptians were in darkness. (Exodus 10:21-29)

10) Death of the firstborn: The final plague was horrifying. About midnight one night, all the firstborn children of the Egyptians started to die, from the first child of Pharaoh (the highest position) to the first child of the maidservants (the lowest occupation in Egyptian society). (Exodus 11:1-10)

#### GOD DEALS WITH THE FIRST WILDERNESS GENERATION

Ezekiel 20:10-13

*<sup>10</sup>So I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. <sup>11</sup>And I gave them my statutes, and showed them mine ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live in them <sup>12</sup>Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth them. <sup>13</sup>But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they rejected mine ordinances, which if a man keep, he shall live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. (ASV, 1901).*

So with the series of plagues God brought on Egypt and the House of Pharaoh the Egyptians drove the Jews out and gave them the gifts the Jews requested as an additional incentive to get them out of their country (Exodus 12:35-36). This was a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham about his descendants' captivity (Genesis 15:13-14). From the Egyptians God told Abraham that they will receive great substance for their 400 years of servitude. Through the last plague the Jews were given the Passover which by the blood covenant they were protected and then the Lord sent *them into the wilderness*. Further He said that, *"I gave them my statutes, and showed them mine ordinances, which if a man do, he shall live in them."* He later codified this into the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 18:5). Within this Law is an exhortation to avoid the customs of the other nations specifically Egypt and Canaan. God's system provided for an integration of physical and spiritual laws to provide a pleasant and meaningful life for the Jews. As stated here the people who keep the Law insofar as humanly possible would lead enjoyable lives in conformity with God's desires for His people. They did not do as God had desired. Some examples were:

1. They build a Golden Calf and worshipped it (Exodus chapter 32).
2. They complained at Refidim (Exodus 17:1-7).
3. They left some manna overnight (Exodus 16:20).

His sabbaths were as if He were setting a final seal upon all these laws. This was a sign between God and them regarding the rest which He designed for them. God is not a difficult taskmaster but a gracious Deliverer. Already on the very first Sabbath they searched for manna when God told them they would not be any on that day (Exodus 16:20). Then on the second Sabbath they again desecrate it by gathering wood (Numbers 15:32). However, they rejected God and His Laws in favor of sin with the adjacent nations which resulted in God's desire to blot them out in their desert wandering of forty years.

## ISRAEL WAS SPARED BECAUSE OF GOD'S PRESERVATION OF HIS NAME

Ezekiel 20:14-17

*<sup>14</sup>But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I brought them out. <sup>15</sup>Moreover also I swore 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; <sup>16</sup>because they rejected mine ordinances, and walked not in my statutes, and profaned my sabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. <sup>17</sup>Nevertheless mine eye spared them, and I destroyed them not, neither did I make a full end of them in the wilderness. (ASV, 1901).*

Even though God wanted to preserve the sanctity of His name with the other nations when the sins became so grievous He had to act. In the second year of their wandering God instructed them to go to the land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael). Then they sinned greatly with incident of the spies (Numbers chapters 13-14). Only Caleb was willing to go into the land. The rest of the spies who were sent with him lacked courage even though God was behind them.

The people of Israel cried and wailed in fear for the giants that the spies saw in Canaan and wanted to return the bondage of Egypt rather than follow the protection God offered them. In fact they wanted to overthrow Moses leadership, assign a new captain and return to Egypt (Numbers 14:4). As a result both Moses and Aaron fell on their faces pleading with God to spare these people. And as He recalls in the Ezekiel passage, "*Nevertheless mine eye spared them, and I destroyed them not, neither did I make a full end of them in the wilderness.* God did carry out His oath and left them in the wilderness for forty years so the entire first generation except for Caleb and Joshua went into the promise land.