

EZEKIEL

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God is a perfect judge.

[Ezekiel 18 to 21.](#)

Who to blame for their situation?

The Jewish people living under Babylonian rule were always blaming their ancestors for their conditions, Ezekiel brings the message that God judges each individual for their own failures, not anyone else. The nations leaders were still not leading the people back to God and the nation as a whole deserved all they were receiving. Yet God had not deserted them, His covenant with them still applied but they had failed to keep their side of it, so had to be punished.

A personal responsibility. [Ezekiel 18:1-32.](#)

The people were continually blaming the situation on their ancestors, often quoting a proverb which had the meaning *"our fathers sinned and we are being punished for them."* They were still not looking at themselves and their lives and turning back to God.

Where did this proverb come from? It was probably based upon a wrong interpretation of the Law, *"I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"*

[Exodus 20:5;](#)

[Exodus 34:6,7;](#)

[Numbers 14:18;](#)

[Deuteronomy 7:9,10.](#)

In addition an innocent animal will be killed for a persons sin according to the Law, but there is no law which said an innocent person will be punished for another persons sin, in fact the opposite,

[Deuteronomy 24:16.](#)

The usual problem is that the children also commit the sins of their fathers, so this is why God made the statement and also why they were being punished.

Blame your ancestors! [Ezekiel 18:5-20.](#)

Ezekiel now looks at the parable of the people by making up a story of a possible situation. He starts with a righteous father, verses 5-9, this imaginary Jew kept all the Law of God perfectly, he was therefore considered just and would not be punished for his sin, verses 4,9, he loved God.

Death is talked about a number of times, this is the physical death of a person, not the spiritual death of eternal punishment that comes at the judgement day.

The story now moves onto a second generation, this man has a son who is the exact opposite, ten offences against God, such as worships idols, totally ignores the Law of God, three were crimes, such as murder and adultery. He took pleasure in hurting people. Verdict was death. *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die,"* verse 20.

Now a grandson is born who seeks God, twelve characteristics which point to a Godly heart are listed. He may not have been as perfect as his grandfather but he did not follow his own father in his attitude to God. God dealt with this son based upon his own behaviour, not upon the life and behaviour of his parent or grandfather.

Blame yourselves. [Ezekiel 18:19-24.](#)

How you live your life will determine the end result, repent and seek God and the Lord's response will be *"he shall surely live, he shall not die,"* verse 21. This was the message from God, through Ezekiel, to the people in Babylon. live a life of sin and God will keep up the punishment, repent and turn back to Him and He will release them. *"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD:"* verse 23.

We will not be judged upon how much good and how much bad is in our life, you cannot collect "points" towards salvation, only believe and have faith in God and His Son will result in your salvation.

The ways of the Lord is not equal. [Ezekiel 18:25-32](#).

The people were accusing God of not being fair, but Ezekiel points out that they expected God to fulfil all His promises. If they obey His commands then He will keep them, but they did not do this, so by what right did they expect Him to keep His side of the covenant. That would be asking God to act the opposite to His holy nature, to ignore sin.

Despite being very patience and long suffering, when people rebel against His commands, then He must punish. If God did what was really fair, He would have destroyed Adam and Eve when they broke His instruction and turned against Him, instead He has provided a payment for the sins of the world through His own Son.

"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye," verse 32. God offers forgiveness if they repent and turn back to Him.

[Jeremiah 29:10-14](#);

[Ephesians 2:8-10](#).

The Leaders are responsible. [Ezekiel 19:1-14](#).

The people were personally responsible for their sin but the tribe leadership and priests were not actually encouraging them to turn to the Lord, so were also responsible for the situation. They had not listened to Jeremiah's message from God, to give in to Nebuchadnezzar and then later king Zedekiah turned for help from Egypt, breaking an agreement with Nebuchadnezzar, who then attacked and destroyed Jerusalem.

Verses 1-14, Ezekiel uses the images of a lion and a vine when he refers to the leaders, also Ezekiel called them "princes" and not "kings," the words used by Ezekiel was making fun of the leadership.

[Ezekiel 19:1-9](#).

The lioness represents the royal Jewish tribe of Judah,

[Genesis 49:9](#);

[Numbers 23:23](#)

Ezekiel now turns to the poor leadership of Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, he describes them "strutting and roaring," to much show but no use.

Verses 10-14. The "vine" represents Israel, the "fruitful vine" has produced both bad and good "kings," so God is punishing those who followed the recent bad kings, they are moved from "many waters" to wander in the desert, from blessing to punishment. Had the people followed the Lord they would have become a mighty lion and a very fruitful vine. God kept His side of the covenant but the people rejected Him and were now suffering the consequences.

See [2 Samuel 7:1ff](#);

[Ezekiel 34:23,24](#);

[Ezekiel 37:24,25](#);

The Nation is responsible. [Ezekiel 20:1-44](#).

The plan's of God are slowly being worked out, occasionally they may seem to fail but ultimately they will be completed, these plans are centered upon the people of Israel,

[Daniel 5:21](#);

[Acts 14:14-18](#);

[17:22-31](#).

The People of Israel were not helping by failing to keep their side of the covenant, they were guilty of unbelief and rebellion. The exiles were complaining that they were not being treated fairly by God,

[Ezekiel 18:2,19,15 and 29](#)

So the message from God looks back at the history of the Jews to prove they were still as bad.

The Jew's in Egypt. [Ezekiel 10:5-8](#).

Following God choosing Abraham as the father of the Nation, God built the nation out of the descendants of Abraham in the land of Egypt. When God then took them into the Promised Land out of Egypt. Some of the people took their old idols and way of worship with them. Yet God showed His power and kept His promise with their freedom from Egypt.

The journey to the Promised Land. [Ezekiel 20:9,10](#).

The ultimate aim is that for every event associated with God it will always end by giving Him the glory. As the Jews travelled across to the Promised Land the other nations saw the power of God,

[Joshua 2:10](#)

The time at Sinai. [Ezekiel 20:11,12.](#)

The Glory of God was revealed at Sinai. There the Law was given, with the instructions for the tabernacle and its furniture, these were then constructed, according to instructions by God to Moses. But the people turned away, despite seeing the power of God, idol worship was restored again with the construction of the golden calf,

[Exodus 32:1ff.](#)

The giving of the Law and the associated instruction from God showed they were a special people but they still rebelled against God,

[Ezekiel 20:13,16,20.](#)

Israel was controlled by God, their "Leader and King" but they still sinned.

Time in the wilderness. [Ezekiel 20:13-26.](#)

The Promised Land was available but the people insisted on a search of the land. The spies agreed that the land was as described by God but the ten spies felt that God was not powerful enough for the Jews to conquer the land. So this lack of trust in God resulted in the forty years in the wilderness, so all who doubted would die.

[Numbers 14:1ff.](#)

Yet during the forty years they still turned away from God and were punished, God even thought about their utter destruction, but that would not have shown the world His glory.

In the Promised Land. [Ezekiel 20:27-30.](#)

The people had been instructed to claim the land, wipe out the godless nations and remain faithful. If they failed then they would lose the Promised Land,

[Exodus 34:11-17;](#)

[Deuteronomy 7:1ff.](#)

But this is what was now happening as a result of their rebellion, instead of showing these neighbouring nations of the glory of God, they instead took up the religion of the godless people around them, they even made human sacrifice, which was totally against the Laws of God,

[Ezekiel 20:26,31;](#)

[Leviticus 18:21.](#)

Now in Exile. [Ezekiel 20:31,32.](#)

"You are still just like your fathers!"

The future Israel. [Ezekiel 20:33-44.](#)

The leaders had now been told why God was not acting on their prayers, now the message shows the love and grace of God by pointing to their future.

The message from the Lord, given to Ezekiel, describes a time in the future when God will call the Jewish people from the nations of the world, to then be returned to the Promised Land. This message shows His plans, mercy and power, *"I will bring you out from the people."* Verse 34 shows that this action will be more than a release from their captivity in Babylon.

Read also [Deuteronomy 30:1-8.](#)

The message also contains the remark, *"I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face."* verses 35,36, The Lord will deal with their sins and make them clean, restoring the relationship of the covenant. Those who do not follow the Lord will not be allowed to enter the blessings of the coming Messiah's kingdom. A new sanctified nation will worship the Lord in holiness, verse 41. The people will realize their sins and come to know the Lord with all His blessings, verses 42-44. This can only be describing the future time when Christ returns and establishes His kingdom.

The responsibility of God. [Ezekiel 20:45 to Ezekiel 21:32.](#)

The focus now turns to the action by God, to punish those who turned against Him. Ezekiel is told to *"set thy face toward the south."* Judah and Jerusalem are found to the South of Babylon, judgement is about to fall. Using an image of a forest fire we see that the "fire" is the swords of the Babylonian soldiers, who in the near future would attack Jerusalem and destroy the temple.

The sword of the Lord in action. [Ezekiel 21:1-7.](#)

The word "sword" is referred too many times in this section, it is always referring to the coming attack by the army of Babylon. The purpose of God is the punishment of Judah and the people of Jerusalem, eventually resulting in the destruction of the temple.

"I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth," verse 4. Note *"my sword."* Unfortunately, the righteous and wicked will suffer together. The coming action is under

the control and orders of God, the Jews reject Him, so the Gentile armies are following His guidance and "instructions."

Ezekiel's painful "sermon." [Ezekiel 21:8-17.](#)

Ezekiel is instructed by God to cry and wail, to hit his thigh and clap his hands, he may have also been holding a sword, but we are not told of it. God was preparing the Babylonian army, any defence would be useless, despising the king (the scepter), verse 13, turning their power into a "*stick of wood*," or useless, verse 10. These soldiers will have great power, each able to fight like three men, verse 14. None will escape this "*sword*," verse 16. God will be pleased with the action of these "*swords*," verse 17.

The army is under the direction of God. [Ezekiel 21:18-27.](#)

Ezekiel pictures the Babylonian army at a fork in the road, trying to decide which way to go, to "*Rabbath of the Ammonites*," or "*to fortified Judah in Jerusalem*," verse 20. The pagan leaders use some sort of divination to find the will of their gods. God's will is for Jerusalem to be attacked and He makes sure the divinations, received from the soothsayers and diviners by the Babylonian leaders, "shows this action."

King Zedekiah had promised to help Nebuchadnezzar but broke his promise, [Ezekiel 21:23; 2 Kings 24:20](#), so Nebuchadnezzar plans to punish the Jewish nation. Ezekiel sends a message to Zedekiah, but only calls him a "prince," "*thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come*," verse 25. Zedekiah was about to lose the throne and be humbled, "*overturn, overturn, overturn, it*," verse 27.

Note the future Messianic promise in this verse, "*whose right it is*."

The Ammonites are also judged. [Ezekiel 21:28-32.](#)

The Ammonites also need punishment by God, they had sinned against Him. Because God pointed the Babylonian army to Jerusalem they thought they had escaped, that was a false hope, verse 29. God proposed a "*furnace!!*" to judge the Ammonites in their place of origin, this nation was to disappear from the world.

God will not tolerate any rebellion against Him by any nation, "*for I the LORD have spoken it*," verse 32.

The end of the sinful city.

[Ezekiel 22 to 24.](#)

The people are evil. [Ezekiel 22:1-16.](#)

These verses list the terrible sins of the people, Ezekiel names two main sins. Injustice, through the spilling of innocent blood and secondly the worship of idols. The nations leaders, who are there to keep the law, were using their power to take money, to charge innocent people of wrong, using false witnesses, supplying many lies, then often condemning themselves to death so that someone can claim their property for themselves. These judges were so evil that all the nations around knew of it, verse 4,5 and so turned against God. The sentence has already been announced by God, but He still has not carried out the punishment, verses 13-16.

Consider [Exodus 20 16](#);

[Exodus 23:1-3](#);

[Deuteronomy 16:19](#);

[Deuteronomy 27:25](#).

Ezekiel lists many of the sins that the people were doing, they were abusing neighbour's, friends, families, parents etc.

Consider [Exodus 20:12](#);

[Exodus 22:21-24](#);

[Exodus 23:9-11](#);

[Leviticus 19:33,34](#);

[James 2:1-13](#);

[Matthew 18:15-20](#);

[2 Corinthians 13:1](#);

[Leviticus 18:6ff](#).

Some of these commandments contained warnings of what would happen if they abused people.

Idolatry involved acts like defiling the temple or polluted the Sabbath day, a special day between God and the Jews. The main act was to pretending to worship God but not with their heart, preferring to really worship a man made idol.

The courts were corrupt so sins were ignored, bribes and lies were being accepted by the judges, verses 9,12.

The law was strict,

Consider [Deuteronomy 16:18,19](#);

[Deuteronomy 27:25](#);

[Numbers 35:9-34](#);

[Deuteronomy 17:2-13](#);

[1 Timothy 6:10](#).

The punishment is coming. [Ezekiel 22:13-22](#).

Could they endure the punishment? The first act will be to *"scatter thee among the heathen."*

Compare the promised judgement, [Leviticus 26:27-39](#).

The second judgement will be by fire, verses 17-22.

The guilty leaders and officers. [Ezekiel 22:23-27](#).

Ezekiel points out the evil leadership, including the religious leaders as well as the tribe leaders. The attitude of these people was turning them to behave like animals, hungry for their "food." They mis-used their position of power to gain more power or wealth, even killing the innocent to achieve their desires.

The people are full of lies. [Ezekiel 22:28,29](#).

As well as the religious leaders there were false prophets who supported the evil, making up lies, then claiming that the message was from God. The people followed these false prophets, they were covering the sins of the people with lies like a coat of "paint," covering only on the surface, so that the underneath is not seen.

No faithful leaders. [Ezekiel 22:30,31](#).

God can find no leaders who will stand for Him. The prophet Jeremiah was in Jerusalem at the time but his warnings were being ignored by the people.

[Jeremiah 5:1-6](#).

The End of the Kingdom. [Ezekiel 23:1-49](#).

The picture described is for a "Bride" who broke her vows of marriage, who was behaving like a "prostitute." She was looking for other "loves" in worship and helpers, they were turning to Assyria, Babylon and Egypt instead of putting their faith in God.

The message to Ezekiel described two sisters, they were given the names Aholah (which represented the Northern kingdom, Samaria) the elder, and Aholibah (which represented Jerusalem) her sister, at one time *"they were mine."*

The name "Aholah" has the meaning "her tent," and "Aholibah" means "my tent is in her." The glory of God had departed the temple in Jerusalem but the building was still known by the people as the "temple of God."

Samaria turned away from God for idol worship as soon as they split from the Jewish kingdom, they set up their own temple and priesthood. God used Assyria to attack and terminate the nation. Judah remains partly true to God for a few more years, but eventually God sent the Babylonian army as punishment.

Verses 5-13. The message for the people who were with Ezekiel was that the *"People of Judah"* ignored the warning from God when Samaria was attacked by Assyria, therefore they must expect their punishment. The earlier king David put his trust in God to protect the Jews but his son king Solomon preferred to make political arrangements of protection with other nations, that is why he had so many heathen wives.

Samaria had virtually no faith in God so turned to the Assyrians for protection, taking up their way of life and worship like *"lovers,"* The text tells us that they admired the soldiers appearance, *"clothed with blue,"* but the Assyrian *"lover"* turned on Samaria *"the prostitute,"* and so God put an end to the Samaritan Northern kingdom.

Assyria also attacked Judah, who was ruled by king Hezekiah at the time, but God overruled the action of the Assyrian's when Hezekiah turned to the Lord for help.

Read the story in [2 Kings 18 and 19](#).

Judah has now become worse than Samaria. [Ezekiel 23:14-21](#).

King Hezekiah became friendly with the Babylonian's,
see [Isaiah 39:1-8](#).

And received a warning from God. Then king Jehoiakim asked for help from the Babylonian's to attack and remove the power of Egypt,

[2 Kings 23:35 - 24:7](#).

But instead Judah became controlled by Babylon.

The people then turned more and more to idol worship becoming more evil than Samaria,

[Ezekiel 23:11](#).

Judah is told of the coming punishment. [Ezekiel 23:22-35](#).

There are four messages to the people of Judah.

The Babylonian army will be sent to punish Judah, the message given actually describes the coming armies. They will be punished as if they were a "*prostitute*," revealing their evil nature, just as has happened to Samaria.

According to the Law prostitutes and murderers are to be stoned,

Read [Leviticus 20:10](#);

[Deuteronomy 22:22](#);

[Exodus 21:12-14](#);

[Leviticus 24:17](#).

Verses 28-31. Judah was once friends with Babylon, a nation hated by most of the other nations, but God was about to use them for His punishment of Judah, to destroy the land, Jerusalem and the temple.

Verses 32-34. They will receive "*a cup of God's anger*," and have to drink it all.

Verse 35. The reason for this action by God. The people had turned away from God and forgotten Him.

The "*wife*" of God had taken other "*lovers*."

Judgement is declared. [Ezekiel 23:36-49](#).

The Lord, as the judge, sums up the situation, He lists the crimes of the people before "the court," idol worship, adultery, killed innocent people, offering their own children to their idols, (possibly as a sacrifice,) made friends with evil nations, defiled my sanctuary. Then they came and pretended to worship the Lord. So really they were rejecting God and His Laws.

The end has arrived. [Ezekiel 24:1-14](#).

This chapter ends the warnings for the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The message from God to Ezekiel was the day the Babylonian army began the siege of Jerusalem,

[2 Kings 25:1-3](#).

The message starts with a parable followed by another action sermon by Ezekiel.

The Cooking Pot. Compare [Ezekiel 11:1-13](#).

In [chapter 13](#), the Jews of Jerusalem considered themselves far better than the Jews in Babylon, they felt that they were the "*best cuts of meat*," but in this chapter God told them that He will collect the various bits, "the meat" and "the bones" etc., He will then "*consume it*,"

[Ezekiel 24:9-14](#).

He will then turn out the resulting mess and burn the "*pot*," which represents sinful Jerusalem. The Jews thought that God would not destroy His Holy city and His temple or destroy "*His people*." The message, through Ezekiel, said that God was about to make a funeral fire of Jerusalem, verses 9,10.

Consider [1 Peter 4:17](#);

[Hebrews 10:30](#),

The judgement of God starts with His own people.

A Marriage ends. [Ezekiel 24:15-27](#).

Ezekiel was about to pay a great price for being the messenger of God.

The next message involved the sudden death of his wife and he was not allowed to show any sadness because of the event. God warned Ezekiel that she was about to die, she was the joy of his life, but he was not permitted to cry, as was normal to the Jews, neither was he to eat any of the food brought to him. When the people asked "why?" God released the mouth of Ezekiel, allowing him to speak normally,

see [Ezekiel 3:25-27](#).

Ezekiel gave the message from God to the people in the morning. His wife suddenly dies in the evening, verse 18. This was the message from God, His temple, His joy and meeting place with His chosen people was being destroyed. On August 14, 586 BC, the Babylonian army set the temple on fire. The message also warned that any of the relatives of the people in Babylon, who were still in Jerusalem, would also die.

The death of the wife of Ezekiel the prophets, the destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple was by the Hand of God. Why God caused the death of the wife of Ezekiel, who was innocent, is not immediately obvious. Ezekiel loved his wife, but God took her away. The temple in Jerusalem was also the love, pride and joy of the Jews, God had been warning the people for years of their sins, the temple had become a place of evil and sin, so God took it away.

God only gave Ezekiel a days warning, his wife's death was a warning to the people what God will do to fulfill His purpose.

God said that a witness to the events in Jerusalem will come to Babylon, this happened in, [Ezekiel 33:21,22](#)

Ezekiel's work of warning the people was now ended, now his job changed, it was to tell of the future plans of God for the Gentile nations and ultimately for His people.