

## Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Individual Responsibility and Retribution (c. late 592 BC)

### Ezekiel 18

#### Israel's Proverb

1 And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,

2 "What do you mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel, saying,

'The fathers, they ate unripe fruit,  
and the teeth of the child became blunt.'

3 As I live, declares the Lord Yahweh, it will surely not any longer be appropriate for you to quote this proverb in Israel!

4 Look! All lives are mine. The lives of father and son alike are mine. The person sinning will die.

#### A Righteous Man's Wicked Son

5 And if a man is righteous and does justice and righteousness,

6 and on the mountains he *does* not eat and he *does* not lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, and the wife of his neighbor he *does* not defile and he *does* not approach a woman of menstruation,

7 and he oppresses no one *and* he returns *a* pledge for his loan and he commits no robbery *and* he gives his bread to *the* hungry and he covers a naked person *with* a garment,

8 *and* he does not charge interest and he takes no usury, *and* he holds back his hand from injustice *and* he executes *a* judgment of fairness between persons,

9 *and* in my statutes he goes about and my regulations he keeps, performing faithfully—*then* he is righteous, *and* certainly he will live," declares the Lord Yahweh.

10 "And *now* he has a son, a violent one, who sheds blood and does any of these things

11 (though he did not do all of these *things*), *for the son* also eats on the mountains and he defiles the wife of his neighbor.

12 He oppresses *the* needy and *the* poor, *and* he commits robbery, *and* he *does* not return *a* pledge for a loan, *and* he lifts his eyes to the idols *so* he does a detestable thing.

13 He charges interest and takes usury. Then, shall he live? He shall not live, *for* he did all of these detestable things. Surely he will die! His blood will be on him.

#### A Wicked Man's Righteous Son

14 "And look! He has a son, and he sees all of the sin of his father that he did, and he sees *it*, but he does not *do* it.

15 On the mountains he does not eat, and he does not lift *up* his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, *and* the wife of his neighbor he does not defile.

16 And he oppresses no one; he requires no pledge for a loan, and he does not commit robbery; he gives his bread to *the* hungry, and he covers the naked person *with* a garment.

17 He brings back his hand from iniquity; he does not take interest and usury; he does my regulations; he goes in my statutes. He will not die because of the guilt of his father; he will surely live!

#### Each Individual Stands On Their Own

18 Because his father oppressed severely; he stole from his brother; *that* which *is* not good he did in the midst of his people, and look! He will die through his guilt.

19 "Yet you say, 'Why *does* the son not bear the guilt of the father?' And *since* the son does justice and righteousness and he keeps all of my statutes and does them, he shall surely live!

20 The person, the *one* sinning, will die. A son shall not bear the guilt of the father, and a father shall not bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be on him; the wickedness of the wicked shall be on him.

#### The Salvation of the Wicked Who Repent

21 But if the wicked returns from all of his sins that he has done and he keeps all of my statutes and he does justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die!

22 All of his transgressions that he committed will not be remembered against him. Through his righteousness that he has done he shall live.

23 Have I delight by any means *in the* death of *the* wicked, declares the Lord Yahweh, *and* not at his turning from his way, so that he lives?

#### The Destruction of the Righteous Who Rebel

24 And when the righteous turns from his righteousness, so that he does injustice, and does all of the detestable things that the wicked do, then will he live *because of* all of his righteousness that he did? *Those things* will not be remembered because of his infidelity that he displayed, and because of his sin that he committed. Through them he shall die.

25 “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not fair!’ Listen, now, house of Israel, is my way not fair? *Is it not your ways that are not fair?*  
 26 When the righteous turns from his righteousness, and he does injustice, then he will die because of them; because of his injustice that he did he will die!

27 And when the wicked turns from his wickedness that he did and he does justice and righteousness, he will preserve his life.

28 And if he sees and he returns from all of his transgressions that he did, surely he will live; he will not die!

29 And yet they, the house of Israel, say, ‘The way of the Lord is not fair!’ *Are not my ways fair, house of Israel? Are not your ways unfair?*

### Repent!

30 “Therefore I will judge you, house of Israel, each one according to his ways,” declares the Lord Yahweh. “Repent and turn around from all of your transgression, and it will not be as a stumbling block of iniquity to you.

31 Throw away from yourselves all of your transgressions that you committed, and make for yourselves a new heart and new spirit, and so why will you die, house of Israel?

32 For I have no pleasure in the death of the dying,” declares the Lord Yahweh. “And so repent and live!”

## Ezekiel’s Prophecy to the Exiles—Lament for the Princes of Israel (c. late 592 BC)

### Ezekiel 19

#### Dirge for the Lions of Judah

1 “And you, raise a lament about the leaders of Israel,  
 2 and you must say,

‘What a lioness *was* your mother  
 among *the* lions.

She lay down in the midst of young lions,  
 and she reared her lion cubs.

3 And she raised up one from her cubs;  
 he became a fierce lion,  
 and he learned to tear prey;  
 he ate humans.

4 And nations heard about him;  
 in their pit he was caught,  
 and they brought him with hooks  
 to the land of Egypt. [cf. Jehoahaz in [2 Kgs 23:31–33](#)]

5 And she saw that she was waiting *in vain*;  
 her hope was destroyed,  
 and she took one from her cubs,  
 and she made him a fierce lion.

6 And he walked about in the midst of lions;  
 he became a fierce lion,  
 and he learned to tear prey;  
 he ate humans.

7 And he knew their widows,  
 and he devastated their cities,  
 and *the* land was appalled, and everyone in it  
 at the sound of his roar.

8 And nations set out against him  
 from the surrounding provinces,  
 and they spread their net over him,  
 and he was caught in their pit.

9 And they put him in a collar with hooks,  
 and they brought him to the king of Babylon; [cf. Jehoiachin in [2 Kgs 24:8–16](#)]  
 they brought him into a prison,  
 so that his voice *would* not be heard any longer  
 on the mountains of Israel.

#### Dirge for the Vine of Judah

10 Your mother *was* like the vine in your vineyard;

planted fruitfully beside water,  
and it was full of branches  
from many waters.

- 11 And she produced branches of strength  
to scepters of rulers;  
its height became tall  
between thick foliage,  
and it was seen because of its tallness  
among the abundance of its branches.
- 12 But it was uprooted in rage;  
it was thrown to the earth,  
and the east wind dried up its fruit;  
they were stripped off,  
and its strong branch dried up;  
fire consumed it.
- 13 And now *it is* planted in the desert,  
in a dry and thirsty land.
- 14 And *so* fire has gone out from the stem of its branches;  
its fruit it has consumed,  
and *there* was not in it a strong branch,  
a scepter for ruling.”

This *is* a lament, and it will be used as a lament.

## Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—The History of Israel's Rebellion (August 14, 591 BC)

Ezekiel 20:1–44

### Call for Israel's Arraignment

- 1 And then in the seventh year, in the fifth *month*, on the tenth *day* of the month, men from the elders of Israel came to consult Yahweh, and they sat before me.
- 2 And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,
- 3 “Son of man, speak with the elders of Israel, and you must say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “*Are you coming to consult me? As I live, I will surely not allow myself to be consulted by you!*” ‘ declares the Lord Yahweh.
- 4 Will you judge them? Will you judge *them*, son of man? Make known to them the detestable things of their ancestors.

### Israel's Rebellion in Egypt

- 5 And you must say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “On the day of my choosing Israel I swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, and I made myself known to them in the land of Egypt, and I swore to them, saying, ‘*I am Yahweh your God.*’
- 6 On that day I swore to them to bring them out from the land of Egypt to *the* land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey—it *is the most* beautiful of all of the lands.
- 7 Then I said to them, ‘*Let each one* throw away the detestable things of his eyes, and you must not make yourselves unclean with the idols of Egypt! *I am Yahweh your God.*’
- 8 But they rebelled against me, and they were not willing to listen to me; each *one* did not throw away the detestable things of their eyes; and they did not abandon the idols of Egypt, and I decided to pour out my rage on them, to fully vent my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.
- 9 “But I acted for the sake of my name to keep it from being profaned before the eyes of the nations among whom they lived, where I made known to them before their eyes, to bring them out from the land of Egypt.

### Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness (Exodus generation)

- 10 And I brought them out from the land of Egypt, and I brought them to the desert,
- 11 and I gave my statutes to them, and my regulations I made known to them, which, if a person does them, then he will live by them. [[Lev 18:5](#)]
- 12 And also my Sabbaths I gave to them to be a sign between me and between them so they would know that I, Yahweh, *am the one* sanctifying them.
- 13 “But in the desert the house of Israel rebelled against me; they did not walk in my statutes, and they rejected my regulations, which, if a person does them, he will live by them, and they greatly profaned my Sabbaths, and I decided to pour out my rage on them in the desert to destroy them,
- 14 and I acted for the sake of my name, *that it* not be profaned before the eyes of the nations before whom I brought them out.

15 And also I myself swore to them in the desert not to bring them into the land that I had given *to them*, flowing with milk and honey—it *is the most* beautiful of all of the lands—

16 because they despised my judgments, and they did not walk in my statutes, and my Sabbaths they profaned, for their heart was going after their idols.

17 But my eye took pity on them by not destroying them, and I did not completely destroy them in the desert.

#### **Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness (Wandering generation)**

18 “And I said to their children in the desert, ‘You must not go in the statutes of your parents; you must not keep their regulations, and you must not make yourself unclean with their idols.

19 I, Yahweh, *am* your God, *so* go in my statutes and keep my regulations and do them.

20 And treat my Sabbaths as holy, and they will be a sign between me and between you that you may know that I, Yahweh, *am* your God.’

21 But the children rebelled against me; they did not walk in my statutes, and they did not observe my regulations, which *if* a person does them, then he will live by them. My Sabbaths they desecrated, and I decided to pour out my rage on them, to finish my anger against them in the desert.

22 But I withheld my hand, and I acted for the sake of my name not to be profaned before the eyes of the nations *before* whom I *had* brought them out before their eyes.

23 What is more, I swore to them in the desert to scatter them among the nations and to disperse them in the lands,

24 because they did not *do* my regulations, and my statutes they despised, and my Sabbaths they profaned, and their eyes were after the idols of their ancestors.

25 And in turn I gave to them rules *that were* not good and regulations by which they will not live.

26 And I defiled them through their gifts in sacrificing all of *the* first offspring of *the* womb, in order that I will cause them to be stunned, so that they will know that I *am* Yahweh.

#### **Israel's Rebellion in the Recent Past**

27 “Therefore speak to the house of Israel, son of man, and you must say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “Again *in* this your ancestors blasphemed me at their display of infidelity toward me.”’

28 And I brought them to the land that I swore to give to them, and they saw every high hill and every leafy tree, and they offered their sacrifices, and they presented there the provocation of their offering, and they gave there their fragrant incense offering, and they poured out their libations there.

29 And I said to them, ‘What *is* the high place to which you are going?’ And it is called Bamah until this day.

30 Therefore thus say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “In the way of your ancestors *will* you defile yourself, and after their vile idols *will* you prostitute *yourselves*?’

31 And when you lift up your gifts, sacrificing your children through the fire, you are defiling yourself through all of your idols until today, and will I let myself be consulted by you, house of Israel?” ‘As I live,’ declares the Lord Yahweh, “I will not let myself be consulted by you!

#### **The Future Transformation of Israel—Israel in the Desert**

32 And what you are planning, surely it will not be—that you are saying, ‘Let us be like the nations, like the clans of the lands, serving wood and stone!’

33 “As I live,” declares the Lord Yahweh, “surely with *a* strong hand and with *an* outstretched arm and with rage pouring forth I will reign as king over you!

34 And I will bring you from the peoples, and I will gather you from the countries *to* which you were scattered with *a* strong hand and with an outstretched arm and with rage poured out.

35 Then I will bring you to the desert of the peoples, and I will execute justice on you there face to face.

36 Just as I executed justice on your ancestors in the desert of the land of Egypt, likewise I will execute justice on you!” declares the Lord Yahweh.

37 “And I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.

38 And I will purge the rebels from *among* you and the *ones* transgressing against me; I will bring them out from the land where they are living as aliens, but into the land of Israel they will not come, and *then* you will know that I *am* Yahweh.

#### **The Future Transformation of Israel—Israel on Yahweh's Holy Mountain**

39 And you, house of Israel, thus says the Lord Yahweh: “*Let* each one go serve his idols *now* and after, if you *are* not listening to me, but my holy name you will not profane *any* longer with your gifts and with your idols.

40 “For on my holy mountain, on the mountain of the height of Israel,” declares the Lord Yahweh, “there all of the house of Israel will serve me, all of them, in the land. I will take pleasure in them, and there I will accept your contributions and the best of your portions with all of your holy objects.

41 I will accept you as a fragrant incense offering when I bring you out from the peoples and I gather you from the lands *to* which

you were scattered, and I will show myself holy among you before the eyes of the nations.

42 And you will know that I *am* Yahweh when I bring you to the land of Israel, to the land that I swore to give to your ancestors.

43 And you will remember there your ways, and all of your deeds by which you were made unclean, and you will feel a loathing for yourself for all of your evils that you have done.

44 And you will know that I *am* Yahweh when I deal with you for the sake of my name and not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupted deeds, house of Israel,” declares the Lord Yahweh.

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