

Ezekiel's Prophecy to the Exiles—Individual Responsibility and Retribution (c. late 592 BC)**Ezekiel 18****Israel's Proverb**

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

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

"The fathers eat sour grapes

And the children's teeth become numb?"

3 "As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, you will not quote this proverb in Israel anymore!

4 Indeed! All lives are mine—the life of the father as well as the life of the son is mine. The one who sins will die.

A Righteous Man's Wicked Son

5 "Suppose a man is righteous. He practices what is just and right,

6 does not eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains or pray to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife, does not have sexual relations with a woman during her period,

7 does not oppress anyone, but gives the debtor back whatever was given in pledge, does not commit robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and clothes the naked,

8 does not engage in usury or charge interest, but refrains from wrongdoing, promotes true justice between men,

9 and follows my statutes and observes my regulations by carrying them out. That man is righteous; he will certainly live, declares the sovereign LORD.

10 "Suppose such a man has a violent son who sheds blood and does any of these things mentioned previously

11 (though the father did not do any of them). He eats pagan sacrifices on the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife,

12 oppresses the poor and the needy, commits robbery, does not give back what was given in pledge, prays to idols, performs abominable acts,

13 engages in usury and charges interest. Will he live? He will not! Because he has done all these abominable deeds he will certainly die. He will bear the responsibility for his own death.

A Wicked Man's Righteous Son

14 "But suppose he in turn has a son who notices all the sins his father commits, considers them, and does not follow his father's example.

15 He does not eat pagan sacrifices on the mountains, does not pray to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife,

16 does not oppress anyone or keep what has been given in pledge, does not commit robbery, gives his food to the hungry, and clothes the naked,

17 refrains from wrongdoing, does not engage in usury or charge interest, carries out my regulations and follows my statutes. He will not die for his father's iniquity; he will surely live.

Each Individual Stands On Their Own

18 As for his father, because he practices extortion, robs his brother, and does what is not good among his people, he will die for his iniquity.

19 "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not suffer for his father's iniquity?' When the son does what is just and right, and observes all my statutes and carries them out, he will surely live.

20 The person who sins is the one who will die. A son will not suffer for his father's iniquity, and a father will not suffer for his son's iniquity; the righteous person will be judged according to his righteousness, and the wicked person according to his wickedness.

The Salvation of the Wicked Who Repent

21 "But if the wicked person turns from all the sin he has committed and observes all my statutes and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die.

22 None of the sins he has committed will be held against him; because of the righteousness he has done, he will live.

23 Do I actually delight in the death of the wicked, declares the sovereign LORD? Do I not prefer that he turn from his wicked conduct and live?

The Destruction of the Righteous Who Rebel

24 "But if a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and practices wrongdoing according to all the abominable practices the wicked carry out, will he live? All his righteous acts will not be remembered; because of the unfaithful acts he has done and the sin he has committed, he will die.

25 "Yet you say, 'The Lord's conduct is unjust!' Hear, O house of Israel: Is my conduct unjust? Is it not your conduct that is unjust?"

26 When a righteous person turns back from his righteousness and practices wrongdoing, he will die for it; because of the wrongdoing he has done, he will die.

27 When a wicked person turns from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will preserve his life.

28 Because he considered and turned from all the sins he had done, he will surely live; he will not die.

29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The Lord's conduct is unjust!' Is my conduct unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your conduct that is unjust?

Repent!

30 "Therefore I will judge each person according to his conduct, O house of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD. Repent and turn from all your wickedness; then it will not be an obstacle leading to iniquity.

31 Throw away all your sins you have committed and fashion yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why should you die, O house of Israel?

32 For I take no delight in the death of anyone, declares the sovereign LORD. 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, sing a lament for the princes of Israel,

2 and say:

"What a lioness was your mother among the lions!

She lay among young lions; she reared her cubs.

3 She reared one of her cubs; he became a young lion.

He learned to tear prey; he devoured people.

4 The nations heard about him; he was trapped in their pit.

They brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt. [cf. Jehohaz in [2 Kgs 23:31–33](#)]

5 "When she realized that she waited in vain, her hope was lost.

She took another of her cubs and made him a young lion.

6 He walked about among the lions; he became a young lion.

He learned to tear prey; he devoured people.

7 He broke down their strongholds and devastated their cities.

The land and everything in it was frightened at the sound of his roaring.

8 The nations—the surrounding regions—attacked him.

They threw their net over him; he was caught in their pit.

9 They put him in a collar with hooks;

they brought him to the king of Babylon; [cf. Jehoiachin in [2 Kgs 24:8–16](#)]

they brought him to 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 a vine in your vineyard, planted by water.

It was fruitful and full of branches because it was well-watered.

11 Its boughs were strong, fit for rulers' scepters; it reached up into the clouds.

It stood out because of its height and its many branches.

12 But it was plucked up in anger; it was thrown down to the ground.

The east wind dried up its fruit;

its strong branches broke off and withered—

a fire consumed them.

13 Now it is planted in the wilderness,

in a dry and thirsty land.

14 A fire has gone out from its branch; it has consumed its shoot and its fruit.

No strong branch was left in it, nor a scepter to rule.'

This is a lament song, and has become a lament song."

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 In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth of the month, some of the elders of Israel came to seek the LORD, and they sat down in front of me.

2 The word of the LORD came to me:

3 "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and tell them: 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: Are you coming to seek me? As surely as I live, I will not allow you to seek me, declares the sovereign LORD.'

4 "Are you willing to pronounce judgment? Are you willing to pronounce judgment, son of man? Then confront them with the abominable practices of their fathers,

Israel's Rebellion in Egypt

5 and say to them: "'This is what the sovereign LORD says: On the day I chose Israel I swore to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, "I am the LORD your God."

6 On that day I swore to bring them out of the land of Egypt to a land which I had picked out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

7 I said to them, "Each of you must get rid of the detestable idols you keep before you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God."

8 But they rebelled against me, and refused to listen to me; no one got rid of their detestable idols, nor did they abandon the idols of Egypt. Then I decided to pour out my rage on them and fully vent my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

9 I acted for the sake of my reputation, so that I would not be profaned before the nations among whom they lived, before whom I revealed myself by bringing them out of the land of Egypt.

Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness (Exodus generation)

10 "So I brought them out of the land of Egypt and led them to the wilderness.

11 I gave them my statutes and revealed my regulations to them. The one who carries them out will live by them! [[Lev 18:5](#)]

12 I also gave them my Sabbaths as a reminder of our relationship, so that they would know that I, the LORD, sanctify them.

13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness; they did not follow my statutes and they rejected my regulations (the one who obeys them will live by them), and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I decided to pour out my rage on them in the wilderness and destroy them.

14 I acted for the sake of my reputation, so that I would not be profaned before the nations in whose sight I had brought them out.

15 I also swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them to the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands.

16 I did this because they rejected my regulations, did not follow my statutes, and desecrated my Sabbaths; for their hearts followed their idols.

17 Yet I had pity on them and did not destroy them, so I did not make an end of them in the wilderness.

Israel's Rebellion in the Wilderness (Wandering generation)

18 "But I said to their children in the wilderness, "Do not follow the practices of your fathers; do not observe their regulations, nor defile yourselves with their idols.

19 I am the LORD your God; follow my statutes, observe my regulations, and carry them out.

20 Treat my Sabbaths as holy and they will be a reminder of our relationship, and then you will know that I am the LORD your God."

21 "But the children rebelled against me, did not follow my statutes, did not observe my regulations by carrying them out (the one who obeys them will live by them), and desecrated my Sabbaths. I decided to pour out my rage on them and fully vent my anger against them in the wilderness.

22 But I refrained from doing so, and acted instead for the sake of my reputation, so that I would not be profaned before the nations in whose sight I had brought them out.

23 I also swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the lands.

24 I did this because they did not observe my regulations, they rejected my statutes, they desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols.

25 I also gave them decrees which were not good and regulations by which they could not live.

26 I declared them to be defiled because of their sacrifices—they caused all their first born to pass through the fire—so that I would devastate them, so that they will know that I am the LORD.'

Israel's Rebellion in the Recent Past

27 "Therefore, speak to the house of Israel, son of man, and tell them, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: In this way too your fathers blasphemed me when they were unfaithful to me.

28 I brought them to the land which I swore to give them, but whenever they saw any high hill or leafy tree, they offered their

sacrifices there and presented the offerings that provoke me to anger. They offered their soothing aroma there and poured out their drink offerings.

29 So I said to them, What is this high place you go to?" (So it is called "High Place" to this day.)

30 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the sovereign LORD says: Will you defile yourselves like your fathers and engage in prostitution with detestable idols?

31 When you present your sacrifices—when you make your sons pass through the fire—you defile yourselves with all your idols to this very day. Will I allow you to seek me, O house of Israel? As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, I will not allow you to seek me!

The Future Transformation of Israel—Israel in the Desert

32 "What you plan will never happen. You say, "We will be like the nations, like the clans of the lands, who serve gods of wood and stone."

33 As surely as I live, declares the sovereign LORD, with a powerful hand and an outstretched arm, and with an outpouring of rage, I will be king over you.

34 I will bring you out from the nations, and will gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a powerful hand and an outstretched arm and with an outpouring of rage!

35 I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face.

36 Just as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the sovereign LORD.

37 I will make you pass under the shepherd's staff, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.

38 I will eliminate from among you the rebels and those who revolt against me. I will bring them out from the land where they have been residing, but they will not come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

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

39 "As for you, O house of Israel, this is what the sovereign LORD says: Each of you go and serve your idols, if you will not listen to me. But my holy name will not be profaned again by your sacrifices and your idols.

40 For there on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD, all the house of Israel will serve me, all of them in the land. I will accept them there, and there I will seek your contributions and your choice gifts, with all your holy things.

41 When I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, I will accept you along with your soothing aroma. I will display my holiness among you in the sight of the nations.

42 Then you will know that I am the LORD when I bring you to the land of Israel, to the land I swore to give to your fathers.

43 And there you will remember your conduct and all your deeds by which you defiled yourselves. You will despise yourselves because of all the evil deeds you have done.

44 Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for the sake of my reputation and not according to your wicked conduct and corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD."

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