

A Pattern, a Promise, and a Picture

Ezekiel 20:1–44

The Book of Ezekiel

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A watchman is a guard who keeps watch and warns the people of impending threats

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The present exile and every bit of the impending judgment is deserved and the direct result of Israel's unfaithfulness to their covenant with God.

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Ezekiel's message is one of conviction and of repentance.

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Ezekiel 11:17–20

¹⁷ Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: **I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you** out of the countries where you have been scattered, and **I will give you the land of Israel.**' ¹⁸ And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. ¹⁹ And **I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,** ²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

The Book of Ezekiel

A Glimmer of Hope:

Despite their constant idolatrous wandering, God has not abandoned his people; he will return a faithful remnant from among them to the Promised Land with new, transformed hearts.

The Book of Ezekiel

Ezekiel 20:3

“Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God, Is it to inquire of me that you come? **As I live, declares the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.**

Ezekiel 20:1–44

- 1) A Pattern of Rebellion (1–32)**
- 2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)**
- 3) A Picture of Grace (44)**

1) A Pattern of Rebellion (1–32)

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Promise –

|: Instructions – Rebellion – Consequences – Grace :|
– Deliverance

1) A Pattern of Rebellion (1–32)

Promise (6)				
Instructions (7)	Instructions (11–12)		Instructions (18–20)	
Rebellion (8a)	Rebellion (13a)		Rebellion (21a)	
Consequences (8b)	Consequences (13b)	Consequences (15–16)	Consequences (21b)	Consequences (23–26)
Grace (9)	Grace (14)	Grace (17)	Grace (22)	
Deliverance (10)				

1) A Pattern of Rebellion (1–32)

Instructions (20:7, 11–12, 18–20)

Turn away from “detestable things” and “walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules”

1) A Pattern of Rebellion (1–32)

Rebellion (20:8a, 13a, 21a)

Every generation rebelled against God and were not willing to listen to him

Consequences (20:8b, 13b, 15–16, 21b, 23–26)

God would have been completely justified in pouring out his wrath upon them

1) A Pattern of Rebellion (1–32)

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Idolatry

If you think about it, can you identify with being stuck in the pattern of rebellion?

1) A Pattern of Rebellion (1–32)

God persists in his grace and his mercy!

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“We are far worse than we know, and God is far more merciful than we realize. Ezekiel 20 reveals that no matter how bent we are on pursuing sin, God is even more determined to save us from ourselves.”

–Landon Dowden, *Exalting Jesus in Ezekiel*

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Ezekiel 20:33–44 (page 707)

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Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

...

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Ezekiel 20:33–44

³³ “As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out **I will** be king over you. ³⁴ **I will** bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. ³⁵ And **I will** bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there **I will** enter into judgment with you face to face.

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Ezekiel 20:33–44

³⁶ 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 Lord GOD. ³⁷ **I will** make you pass under the rod, and **I will** bring you into the bond of the covenant. ³⁸ **I will** purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me. **I will** bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then **you will** know that I am the LORD.

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Ezekiel 20:33–44

³⁹ “As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord GOD: Go serve every one of you his idols, now and hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name **you shall** no more profane with your gifts and your idols.

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Ezekiel 20:33–44

⁴⁰ “For on my holy mountain, the mountain height of Israel, declares the Lord GOD, there all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me in the land. There **I will** accept them, and there **I will** require your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your sacred offerings. ⁴¹ As a pleasing aroma **I will** accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered. And **I will** manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations.

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Ezekiel 20:33–44

⁴² And **you shall** know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country that I swore to give to your fathers.

⁴³ And there **you shall** remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves, and **you shall** loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed. ⁴⁴ And **you shall** know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD.”

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

The Lord GOD says, “I will...

- be your king
- deliver the faithful remnant back to your true home
- bring you back into covenant with me
- accept you
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... Then **you will** know that I am the LORD. (38c)

... And **you shall** know that I am the LORD. (42)

... And **you shall** know that I am the LORD. (44)

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

The Lord GOD says, “**I will...**

... Then **you will** know that I am the LORD.”

Not only is God promising to restore his people to their rightful home—which is undoubtedly welcome news for a generation in exile!—but, more importantly, he is promising to restore them to right relationship with him.

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God delivers on the 13 **I wills** for the one simple **you will** that we should know that *he alone* is the LORD. God does the heavy lifting of the covenant; our work begins with having a right understanding of who he is and revering him accordingly as God alone.

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Ezekiel 20:39

“As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord GOD: Go serve every one of you his idols, now and hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols.

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

Israel's choice:

If they are to continue in rebellion and idolatry, they must no longer call themselves the people of God. And if they are to claim to be the people of God, they must no longer turn from him and serve their idols.

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

God's utter holiness demands that if we claim to worship him, we must truly worship Him and Him alone.

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God's utter holiness demands that if we claim to worship him, we must truly worship Him and Him alone.

Am I choosing to worship my idols, and thus must stop claiming to be a Christian? Or am I going to turn from my rebellious ways and give myself fully to worshiping the one true God?

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

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Being in right relationship with God starts with having a right understanding that he alone is the LORD, which will then flow into proper worship.

- Proper worship is directed at the Lord GOD alone
- A hallmark of proper worship is repentance
 - remember the wickedness of your sinful ways, loathe your evil deeds, and turn to worship God

2) A Promise of Restoration (33–44)

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

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Ezekiel 20:44

And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD.”

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3) A Picture of Grace (44)

God doesn't treat us according to our sins because he treated *Jesus* according to them, so that he could treat us according to *Jesus'* righteousness!

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

Isaiah 53:4–6

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs

and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken,

smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;

he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;

we have turned—every one—to his own way;

and the Lord has laid on him

the iniquity of us all.

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

Romans 5:8–9

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

1 John 4:9–10

⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

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The scope of God's universal purpose, the goal of his universal mission, included all the nations, not just Israel. The election, redemption and history of Israel were all part of that mission of Yahweh to the nations of the world—the mission by which, ultimately, according to a key element in the theology of Ezekiel, the nations would 'know that I am Yahweh'... Hence God's passionate concern for the honour of his name among *Israel* is all of a piece with his universal concern for the honour of his name among all *humanity*.

—Christopher JH Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel*

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

As recipients of God's grace, we are to **be** a picture of God's grace to the nations.

3) A Picture of Grace (44)

Reflection/Discussion Questions

- What was my attitude when I read about Israel's pattern of rebellion—was it to throw stones? Or to mourn over my own sin?
- How/when do I get stuck in a pattern of rebellion?
- Am I choosing to worship my idols, and thus must stop claiming to be a Christian? Or am I going to turn from my rebellious ways and give myself fully to worshipping the one true God?
- What steps do I need to take to break the pattern of rebellion and repent of my sin and turn fully toward God?
- What habits can I put in place to help myself keep drawing daily from the inexhaustible well of God's grace?
- How has God called me to play a part in being a picture of grace to the nations?

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