

03

EZEKIEL 20:1-14

HISTORY SPEAKS



THIS WEEK'S **focus**

History influences all of our lives—there is no way around it. From our personal family history to the world around us, all of us can learn from those who came before us. Ezekiel used Israel's own history to reveal God's judgment toward them. Just as their ancestors had time and time again rebelled against God, so too were they choosing to live outside of His boundaries. Since the very beginning, God had been faithful to Israel. Yet, even in God's continued mercy, humanity has continued to sin.



CENTRAL **truth**

Even in God's continued mercy, humanity has continued to sin.



EXPLORE

scripture

EZEKIEL 20:1-14

EZEKIEL 20:1-4

1 In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, some of Israel's elders came to inquire of the LORD, and they sat down in front of me. **2** Then the word of the LORD came to me: **3** "Son of man, speak with the elders of Israel and tell them, "This is what

the Lord GOD says: Are you coming to inquire of me? As I live, I will not let you inquire of me. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD."

4 Will you pass judgment against them, will you pass judgment, son of man? Explain the detestable practices of their ancestors to them.

EZEKIEL 20:5-9

5 Say to them, "This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore an oath to the descendants of Jacob's house and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, saying, "I am the LORD your God."

6 On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. **7** I also said to them, "Throw away, each of you, the abhorrent things that you prize, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of

Egypt. I am the LORD your God." **8** But they rebelled against me and were unwilling to listen to me. None of them threw away the abhorrent things that they prized, and they did not abandon the idols of Egypt. So I considered pouring out my wrath on them, exhausting my anger against them within the land of Egypt. **9** But I acted for the sake of my name, so that it would not be profaned in the eyes of the nations they were living among, in whose sight I had made myself known to Israel by bringing them out of Egypt.

EZEKIEL 20:10-14

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

11 Then I gave them my statutes and explained my ordinances to them — the person who does them will live by them.

12 I also gave them my Sabbaths to serve as a sign between me and them, so that they would know that I am the Lord who consecrates them. **13** But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They

did not follow my statutes and they rejected my ordinances — the person who does them will live by them. They also completely profaned my Sabbaths. So I considered pouring out my wrath on them in the wilderness to put an end to them. **14** But I acted for the sake of my name, so that it would not be profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out."

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE EZEKIEL 24:14

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about man?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

EZEKIEL 20:1-7

DWELL

God takes His promises very seriously. When the elders came to Ezekiel asking him what God was doing, God instructed Ezekiel to remind them about the oath He made to the Israelites during their captivity in Egypt (Ex. 6:2-8): He would be their God and they would be His people. God would protect them and deliver them from their exile, bringing them to a beautiful, abundant land—so long as they abandoned their false idols and were faithful to Him. They would need to trust that He would act for their good.



Israel had a part to play in the agreement that God made with them. What was it?



When are you most prone to forgetting God's promises? How can you trust in God more?

MEMORIZE

Use a phone or computer to record yourself reading Ezekiel 24:14 aloud. Listen to this recording throughout the week.

PRAY

Confess to God that you do not always trust His promises. Ask Him to draw you closer to Him in faith.

day 2

EZEKIEL

20:8-10

DWELL

When God makes promises, He puts His reputation on the line. The same is true for humans, of course, but unlike God, we are often unreliable and forgetful. Our reputations can be damaged. Not so for God—He is unwilling to let His good and holy reputation be tarnished. However, the Israelites in Egypt did not put their trust in Him, even though He had proven Himself faithful to His promises in the past. They did not abandon their idols or false worship. He considered acting against them because of their rebellion, but for the sake of His name and reputation, He remained faithful, and led them out of Egypt as He said He would.



What does the Israelites' refusal to follow God's instructions in Egypt teach us about humanity?



Why is reputation important? How can we protect our reputations? How can we show God that we trust Him and His reputation?

MEMORIZE

Write Ezekiel 24:14 on a note card and place it in a folder or binder where you will see it frequently. Read it to yourself each time you see it this week.

PRAY

Thank God that He always acts for the sake of His name and that we can trust His promises are a sure thing.

day 3

EZEKIEL

20:11-13

DWELL

When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He gave commands to them through His prophet Moses (Ex. 20:1-17). We now know these commands as the Ten Commandments. Included in these commands was the instruction to follow the Sabbath—a visible way of demonstrating their trust in God. One day a week, they would stop all their work, trusting that God would provide everything they needed that day. Even in today's age, we forget to trust in God and often get caught up in thinking that we alone are responsible for providing for ourselves. The Sabbath is a reminder that ultimately, God is the one who provides for us.



What does it tell us about the Israelites that they did not keep God's commandments, including His command to observe the Sabbath?



How can we encourage one another to observe the Sabbath in our own lives?

MEMORIZE

Break Ezekiel 24:14 into 3-5 smaller parts and try to recite a different part to yourself from memory throughout each day.

PRAY

Thank God for creating the Sabbath as a way for us to demonstrate our trust in His covenant promises to us.

day 4

EZEKIEL

20:14-17

DWELL

↑ How does this passage demonstrate both God's justice and His mercy?

→ How does it bring glory to God when we trust in His promises? What does this teach the people around us about God?

The Israelites had not followed God's commands or kept His Sabbath. They had not trusted that He would keep His Word, and continued to do things their own way. Once again, God showed His mercy towards His people and protected them in the wilderness despite their unfaithfulness. However, this time He told them that because of their refusal to trust in Him, no one from their current generation would actually enter the beautiful land He had promised them (Deut. 1:34-35). God would later lead the descendants of that generation into the land. Again, God acted in a way that maintained His reputation as a God of both justice and mercy.

MEMORIZE

Draw Ezekiel 24:14 on a piece of paper using colored pencils or markers, using a different color for the most important words and phrases. Hang it in your room or locker.

PRAY

Ask God to show you areas of your life where you are not fully trusting Him.

day 5

ROMANS

10:3-10

DWELL

← How did the Israelites try to make themselves righteous? Did it work?

→ What does it mean to believe with our hearts and confess with our mouths (v. 9)? How do we do this in our daily lives?

Paul wrote the Book of Romans more than 500 years after Ezekiel prophesied, and over 1000 years after Moses received the Ten Commandments, but the Israelites hadn't changed much at all in that time. They had become zealous about following God's Law, but in doing so they had forgotten that the goal was to humbly submit to God's righteousness (v. 3). They thought they could earn righteousness by doing the right things. However, their history demonstrated that they were incapable of consistently following God's commands in faith. When we follow Jesus in faith and love, we do not need to prove our righteousness. Jesus has already sealed the deal.

MEMORIZE

Practice reciting Ezekiel 24:14 aloud from memory with a friend or family member. They can prompt you with the next word if you need help remembering.

PRAY

Thank God for the work He did through Jesus to ensure that we receive righteousness through faith in Him alone.