### Ezekiel

## Chapter 20

1It was in the 7th year, in the 5th month, and on the 10th day of the month that men from among the elders of the house of IsraEl came before me to ask [things] from Jehovah. So after they all came and sat down in front of my face, 2the Word of Jehovah came to me and said:  
  
 3‘O son of man,  
  
 ‘Speak to IsraEl’s elders  
 And tell them that thus says Jehovah:  
  
 ‘Have you come to ask something of Me?  
 As I live, I will not reply,’ says Jehovah!  
 4‘But I’ll punish you, O sons of men,  
 For the lawless deeds of your fathers…  
  
 ‘Yes, this is what you must tell them!  
  
 5‘And tell them that thus says Jehovah:  
  
 ‘From the day that I took the house of IsraEl  
 And to Jacob’s offspring, became known,  
 When I let them know Me in Egypt…  
 Yes, when I took hold of their hands,  
 And told them that I am Jehovah their God...  
  
 6Since the day that I took them into My hands  
 And led them from Egypt’s land  
 Into the land that I had prepared...  
 A land that flowed with honey and milk…  
 Honeycombs that are far greater  
 Than those in all other lands...  
 7And I told them that they must abandon  
 The disgusting things in front of their eyes  
 And the defilements of Egypt…  
 Since then, I’ve been Jehovah their God!  
  
 8‘But then, they revolted against Me  
 And refused to hear what I said.  
 Their disgusting things, they didn’t remove  
 The things [they could see] with their eyes,  
 Nor did they leave the bad ways of Egypt.  
  
 ‘So I threatened to pour out My rage upon them,  
 And finish My anger among them in Egypt.  
 9But I acted so My Name would not be profaned  
 Before the nations among which they were living  
 Those to whom I had made [Myself] known…  
 And I led them from Egypt’s land.  
  
 10‘Then I led them from Egypt into the desert,  
 11Where I gave them My orders and all of My Laws…  
 Which, if a man does them, bring life.  
  
 12‘And I gave them My Sabbaths to serve as a sign  
 That they knew that I am Jehovah…  
 The One who is making them holy.  
  
 13‘But, in the desert, they made Me feel bitter;  
 For they didn’t follow My orders,  
 And My Laws, they then pushed away...  
 Which, if a man does them, bring life,  
 And they profaned all My Sabbaths.  
  
 ‘So, it was there in the desert  
 That I threatened to pour out My rage  
 And to completely wipe them away.  
 14Yet I didn’t, so My Name would not be profaned  
 Among the gentiles who saw that I led them.  
  
 15‘Then, in the desert, I lifted My hand  
 So as not to bring them into the land  
 A land that flows with honey and milk…  
 Honeycombs that are greater than in other lands;  
 16For they’d pushed away all My Laws,  
 And they chose not to follow My orders…  
 They also profaned all My Sabbaths,  
 And they followed the desires of their hearts.  
  
 17‘Yet, My eyes continued to spare them…  
 I did not wipe them away  
 Or destroy them there in the desert.  
  
 18‘In the desert, I then warned their children  
 Not to follow the laws of their fathers,  
 Nor to obey their [bad] rules…  
 Not defile themselves with their fathers’ ways,  
 19For I am Jehovah their God.  
  
 ‘[I told them that they must] follow My orders…  
 They must keep My Laws and obey them,  
 20And keep My Sabbath days holy.  
 For, this is the sign between Me and them  
 That I am Jehovah their God.  
  
 21‘But against Me, they also rebelled,  
 And their children wouldn’t follow My orders…  
 They didn’t guard My Laws or obey them  
 – The Laws that bring life to all who’ll obey –  
 And they profaned all My Sabbaths.  
  
 ‘So I spoke to them in My anger…  
 I threatened to pour My rage upon them  
 And finish My wrath in the desert.  
  
 22‘So against them, I then turned My hand  
 And I acted because of Myself…  
 That My Name would not be profaned  
 Before the nations, from which they’d been led.  
  
 23‘But in the desert, I lifted My hand  
 To scatter them among all the nations,  
 24Because they’d refused to follow My Laws,  
 And My orders, they’d just pushed away!  
 Yes, they had profaned all My Sabbaths,  
 And they followed the thoughts of their fathers.  
  
 25‘So I [let them do as] their fathers had said  
 And to follow their laws that do not bring life…  
 26Yes, I let their orders defile them!  
 Then I scattered all those who opened the womb…  
 I completely wiped them away  
 So they’d know that I am Jehovah!’  
  
 27‘And because of these things, O son of man,  
 You must speak to the house of IsraEl  
 And tell them that thus says Jehovah:  
  
 ‘To this day, your fathers have enraged Me  
 By the sins they’ve committed against Me.  
 28For, although I brought them into the land  
 That I gave to them when I lifted My hand…  
 When they saw its shady trees and [beautiful] hills,  
 To other gods, they offered sacrifices.  
  
 ‘So on them and their gifts, I then brought My wrath;  
 For to other gods, they also had offered  
 Drink offerings, incense, and pleasing aromas.  
  
 29‘Then I asked:  
  
 ‘What’s so great about your high places  
 That you’re still choosing to go there?  
 For they call them the High Places down to this day...’  
  
 30‘So tell IsraEl that thus says Jehovah:  
  
 ‘Do all the lawless deeds of your fathers!  
 With their disgusting ways, dirty yourselves!  
 31Offer [those gods] your first-fruits and gifts,  
 Then pass your children through fire!  
 Yes defile yourselves in all of your thoughts  
 As you’ve continued to do to this day!  
  
 ‘So house of IsraEl; what must I reply?  
 As I live,’ says Jehovah;  
 ‘If I should give you an answer,  
 Would your spirits pay any attention?  
 32Won’t you say that you’d rather be like the nations…  
 Like all the [other] tribes of the earth  
 That serve before wood and stone idols?  
  
 33‘Because of this, as I live,’ says Jehovah,  
 ‘With a strong hand, I’ll dominate you;  
 And with My arm raised high in great rage!  
  
 34‘But I’ll also lead you out of those nations…  
 Yes, I’ll take you away from those places  
 Where My strong hand has sent you  
 With My arm raised high in great rage!  
  
 35‘Then I’ll lead you into the deserts,  
 And there, before all the nations,  
 I’ll argue your case with them face to face,  
 36Just as I did for your fathers  
 Back in the deserts of Egypt…  
 And that’s how I’ll then be your judge,’ says Jehovah.  
  
 37‘I’ll lead you away with My rod,  
 And bring you back [to your homeland].  
 38Then I’ll pick away all those among you  
 That are irreverent and rebellious…  
 I’ll remove them from those who [are righteous],  
 And to the land of IsraEl, they’ll never return,  
 So you’ll know that I am Jehovah.’  
  
 39‘Jehovah says:  
  
 ‘As for you, O house of IsraEl;  
 Move away from your evil deeds,  
 And then you must listen to Me!  
 You may not profane My Holy Name  
 With your gifts and those [wicked] deeds  
 40That you practiced on My Holy Mountain,  
 And upon all of IsraEl’s hills.  
  
 ‘Jehovah says:  
  
 In their land, IsraEl must serve Me;  
 For, that is where I’ll receive them  
 And it’s where I’ll keep watch on their first fruits…  
 The first-fruits of all that they offer,  
 And the rest of their most-holy things.  
  
 41‘And when I bring them back from the nations  
 From the places where they will be scattered,  
 I’ll accept their pleasing aromas again,  
 And I will be holy among them  
 Before the eyes of [the gentiles]…  
 42And they’ll know that I am Jehovah  
 When I bring them back to IsraEl’s land…  
 The land that I gave to their fathers.  
  
 43‘Then, you will consider your ways,  
 And think about all the bad things you did  
 In order to make yourselves dirty,  
 And you’ll slap your own faces for your evil ways…  
 44For you’ll know that I am Jehovah.  
  
 ‘You’ll also know that I did all these things  
 So My Name would not be profaned  
 By the bad things you practiced and your evil ways,’ says Jehovah.’  
  
  
45Then the Word of Jehovah came to me and said:  
  
 46‘O son of man,  
  
 ‘Now, turn your face towards TeMan and look…  
 You must look towards [the land in the south];  
 Then, you must prophesy this  
 Towards the woods that lead to the Negev!  
  
 47‘You must tell those in the Negev’s wooded lands  
 To hear the Word of Jehovah!  
 For, this is what He’s declared:  
  
 ‘{Look!} Within you, I’ll now light a ‘fire’  
 That will burn up all of your trees,  
 Both those that are green and those that are dry.  
 And after this ‘fire’ has been lit,  
 It won’t be extinguished thereafter!  
  
 ‘All your faces will soon be consumed  
 By ‘winds’ that come from the north and the east.  
 48And all flesh will know that I am Jehovah  
 When I light a ‘fire’ that can’t be extinguished!’  
  
49But I said:  
  
 ‘O Lord… O Jehovah… By no means! For then they’ll ask:  
  
 ‘Aren’t you just telling us a parable?’