

Ezekiel 20
Why God May Spare Me
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Amen, amen. Would you join me in a word of prayer? Heavenly Father, oh, the heart is heavy Lord, with everything that's going on here, whether it's in your personal life or things that we are watching take place over the news outlets or social media, Lord.

I want to lift up the people in Lahaina, the people who are lost, Lord, and the families, the people who are needing help. When I think about that, how heavy the heart is.

And then I think about You, Lord and how good You are. You are our only hope, Lord, only source of peace. So would You give those people out there the peace that is needed, Lord, the love that is needed to get through this time, Lord?

Would You encourage them, Lord? Would You send somebody to share the love of Jesus that they, too may know the hope? That hope is You, Lord. Thank You for this time to learn Your word, to study Your word, Lord. Would You humble our hearts that we may receive what it is that You have for us this evening, Lord? In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen. Thank you, Kapono, for that. It was good. Good evening and welcome. You can be seated. So glad you're here tonight. How ya doing? Blessed, blessed, blessed! All right. I want to welcome those of you that are joining us online as well. We're so glad that you are.

And we're also very grateful to everyone who has reached out to us concerning the situation on Maui. I will be providing an update Sunday morning about our ongoing relief efforts for the people on the island of Maui. However, it will have to be after we end the livestream on our social media platforms, and here's why.

Government agencies are confiscating containers and blocking the supplies from getting to the people. But God, as only He can, has His people positioned for such a time as this. And praise the Lord because He is granting us success in getting the supplies that we sent to the people using alternative measures. I'm just going to leave it at that.

So I am going to be sharing very specifically on Sunday morning actually for the Prophecy Update only, for those reasons because some of the things I'll be sharing, it is still kind of pushing the envelope, but it is censorship-sensitive. You can't even imagine the evil that is taking place.

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And actually, Sunday's Prophecy Update will be out of *Psalms 37*. You know this psalm well. **“Don't fret because of evildoers... workers of iniquity.”** The Lord has been ministering to me out of *Psalms 37* as of late, and it does concern the futility of fretting over evildoers and these workers of iniquity.

It is worse than you could possibly imagine what is happening there. And what I'm going to be talking about on Sunday is — it's pretty raw, but it's very real by virtue of the numerous and voluminous reports concerning the evil of what's really happening on and to the island of Maui. That's all I can say. Yeah, that's all I can say.

So even what is going to be shared on just the website has to be — we have to be very careful. And I'm not going to show any photos because they'll get the numbers off of those photos of those containers and they'll confiscate them. That's what's happening over there.

Ezekiel Chapter 20: This is one of those chapters that — this is a horrible way to, you know, for an introduction. But I just have to say it again. This is another one of those chapters that you just have to gut through to get through as you go through it. It's gnarly. It's long, 49 verses. And so I hope you brought your toothbrush and your pajamas. No, we'll do our best.

It's a very interesting chapter, though lengthy, Actually, it's a powerful picture of God's mercy in sparing us despite all of our sins and abominations. And this is what God is going to do, actually. He's going to paint this picture through the prophet Ezekiel on the canvas of this history lesson of sorts, reminding them of all of their sins, all of their abominations, all of their iniquities, all of their wickedness.

And as we're about to see, God in His mercy is going to show us why it is, and even when it is that He may choose to spare us, and it's not for the reasons that one might think. Let me just by way of a preface before we jump in say that we have a chapter like this in our Bible, along with other passages of Scripture and chapters in our Bible that are pretty tough, tough stuff, and it's not in our Bibles to show us how bad we are, or they were. It's to show us how good God is, despite how bad they were, and we are.

One more thing, and I hope you don't tire of me saying this, but it is very important that I say it again tonight because it is very apropos in terms of being applicable to a chapter like the one that's before us tonight. It's the disconnect factor. You know what I mean?

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I almost — I think I talk about this almost every week, the propensity for there to be a disconnect, especially with a chapter like this. Because, I mean, it's just — it's just rough, it's just raw. I mean, God is going to pull no punches, as it were. And it's so easy for us to disenfranchise ourself from the chapter, from the passage, and we do this under the banner of: “Well, I would never do that.” And then there's your disconnect.

And I just want to kindly ask — and I'll include myself first and foremost because I'm the one teaching it — I would just kindly ask that as we go through this, that there not be a disconnect because this chapter is in our Bible for a reason. Again, not to have God just rub our face in our iniquity and our sin and our wickedness and our abomination. No, it's to show us us, despite how sinful we are, how defiant and disobedient we are, that God is merciful.

And we're going to see this come out in this chapter, and we're going to have to take the scenic route if you will, to get there. But we're going to get there. So you're ready? Let's do this.

Verse 1. “It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, [There's a time stamp there] that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and sat before me.” [This is Ezekiel]

This is, as Yogi Berra famously said, déjà vu all over again. This was — they did this in *Chapter 14*, remember? They're doing it again. You're back.

“Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Have you come to inquire of Me? As I live,” says the Lord God, “I will not be inquired of by you.”

Wow! We're off to a great start, yeah? You know what God's saying here? You're coming to Me again, inquiring of Me through My prophet Ezekiel, and you didn't heed what I told you to do the last time. So why would I bother telling you to do something again this time? You're not going to listen. So why do you even ask? Why do you bother to inquire of Me if you have no intention of doing that which you've inquired of Me concerning?

So here's what we're going to do. Spoiler alert. I'm going to answer your question, your inquiry, but I'm going to do it My way on My terms.

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So I'm going to answer your inquiry by giving you a little history lesson. And this will satisfy your inquiry and answer your question because apparently, you're not getting it. Here you are again. You've come back to Ezekiel.

Now, Ezekiel has, apparently, a house there. This is in Tel Abib, not Tel Aviv, in Babylon. And these elders have come to Ezekiel, and they're going to inquire of the Lord through the Prophet Ezekiel. They want to know: What does the Lord have to say?

Okay, thus says the Lord: Here's what I have to say. But it's not what you're asking. I'm not going to answer you. I'm going to actually have you answer your own question because I'm going to give you a lesson.

Verse 4, “Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge them? Then make known to them the abominations of their fathers. “Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob [This was the custom; they would swear an oath by raising their hand, similar in our day in a different way] and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God.’

On that day [Verse 6] I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land [Listen to this] that I had searched out for them, [I went shopping for some good real estate] I searched out this land ‘flowing with milk and honey,’ the glory of all lands.

Then [Verse 7] I said to them, ‘Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.’
[Notice the emphasis on “I am the Lord your God,” not them, not that, not this]

But [Verse 8] they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, ‘I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.’

But [Verse 9] I acted for My name’s sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they were, in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.”

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By the way, we're going to see this again. But let's talk about this right now. You know what God just said here? I spared you because it was for My namesake, for My own reputation. That's the only reason I spared you. You deserve the fullness of My anger and My fury.

But I had mercy on you and spared you for My namesake. Because see, if I were to just crush you and destroy you, which you fully deserved, then My reputation would be at stake. Because see, the Gentile nations among you, that you are among, will look and say, Wow! Their God — not good.

He made a promise to them to deliver them out of Egypt and bring them into this land flowing with milk and honey. But He just destroyed them. So He did not make good on His Word and fulfill His promise. And then He would now have His name profaned, His reputation ruined, His promise broken, going back on His Word.

So I didn't destroy you. I spared you. But I didn't do it for you. I did it for Me, for My namesake. I showed you mercy.

“Therefore, [Verse 10] I made them go out of the land of Egypt...” *[That's interesting, isn't it?]*

You kind of almost get the impression that they didn't want to go. I wonder — I just — I'm kind of thinking out loud here. You'll indulge me. But I wonder about all of those ten plagues. Had it not been for those plagues, I don't think that they were — they were very comfortable there.

And here God wants to get them out of Egypt, but He's got to get the Egypt out of them to make them want to get out of Egypt. So here comes some plagues. I want out of here. I had to make them want to go out because they would not have gone out of the land of Egypt of their own volition.

So **“therefore, I made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness.”** Now I'm keeping My word. My reputation is at stake. This is for My namesake **“And [Verse 11] I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, ‘which, if a man does, he shall live by them.’ Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, [And I want you to**

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listen very carefully to why] **to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them.”**

In other words, the Sabbath, the laws, the statutes, the judgments: He gives to them, it's for them, for their own benefit, for their own good, and in addition to that, He also gave them the Sabbath as a symbol, a sign.

This is between you and Me. This is a covenant between you and Me. And it's a reminder and a symbol and a sign.

What does a sign do? It points you, right? Signs in town: What does the sign do? It points you to your destination. The sign points you to the right direction. That's what the sign is. And that's what this is. This is a sign.

Well, what is it pointing me to? It's pointing me to the Lord who's the One who sanctifies me. That's what the Sabbath was given to them for, as a sign.

Yet [Verse 13] the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, ‘which, if a man does [He says it again] he shall live by them’; and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. [So much for that sign, that symbol between us]

Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. But [Verse 14, and here it is again] I acted for My name’s sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out.”

I spared you not because of you because of Me, My reputation, My name, My word, My promise. That's why. You deserved fully My fury. And notice the end of *verse 13*. I would have consumed them.

You know what “consume” means? You know, by the way, we're called “consumers.” You know what consumers do? Consume. I was going to consume you. But for My namesake, I spared you.

“So [Verse 15] I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, ‘flowing with milk and honey,’ the glory

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of all lands because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols.

[And verse 16 is... oh, thank You, Lord, for verse 16] **Nevertheless My eye spared them from destruction. I did not make an end of them in the wilderness."**

Lord, this is — thank You, right? Uh, don't disconnect.

"Yeah, but, I mean, they went after idols."

"Well, idols are alive and well today."

They just — the names have been changed to protect the guilty. What's an idol? Anything or anyone that is more important to you than Jesus. That's an idol. Let me take it a step further. Whatever or whoever is the object of your attention and affection and devotion that which you give the most time and attention to. That can be an idol.

And by the way, these judgments, these statues, they were so they could live at the level that God wanted them to live as His people. And they despised those judgments, and they didn't walk in those statutes. Those statutes were in place, those judgments were given for life, for them to live, and they despised them. And they went chasing after these other idols that had been seated in that place reserved only for God in one's life.

And we do that. Let's not disconnect ourselves from that because we're just as guilty as that, are we not? Nevertheless, He spares us. He's merciful to us.

"But [Verse 18] I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. [Don't persist in their sins]

I [Verse 19] am the Lord your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.' [That idol is not the Lord your God] [I am the Lord Your God]
Notwithstanding [Verse 21] the children rebelled against Me..."

I just — can I just take you back into Ezekiel's house where the elders are sitting around in the family room there with Ezekiel inquiring of the Lord? If I'm there and I'm one of them, and any one of us could be one of them, I would be thinking to myself, I am so sorry I

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brought this up at this point. Because I'm kind of getting reminded of some things here that I need to be reminded of.

“Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, 'which [This is the third time now] if a man does, he shall live by them,' but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness.

Nevertheless, [Verse 22] I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out.”

Give me just a moment before we move on to *verse 23*, if you will, please.

God is giving these gifts, judgments, statutes, signs, the Sabbath between them and Him. And there for them to live by, to live life to the fullest. Think this through with me. The Ten Commandments: As one affectionately referred to them, even authored a book titled, 'The Tender Commandments,' these judgments, these statues, these commandments, the Sabbath, all of these things that I'm giving you are for you, to live by them. Because if you don't live by them, you do so to your own peril.

And you could go through every single one of those commandments. I won't. I could. The chapter's too long. I won't. I could though, but I won't. Every single one: Maybe in your time with the Lord, you can go through them. Every single one of them is a loving Heavenly Father saying don't do this because if you do this, you will hurt yourself. And I love you so much, and I don't want to see you get hurt. When you have another God before Me that is no God at all and will not be there for you, that's going to hurt Me because I am the Lord your God.

I don't want you to murder anyone because you will be haunted and hunted for the rest of your life. I don't want you to covet. I love you so much. And I know — I made you, I designed you, I have the blueprint, the schematics, if you prefer, for you. I know how you tick and tock. I shouldn't have used to tick tock.

That's not good. That was — scratch that. I'll come up with a better one. So sorry.

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I know you. You're fearfully and wonderfully made. And the way I made you: Covetousness, envy, jealousy will destroy you. It will defile you; it will eat your lunch. And I love you so much I'm trying to protect you from that. Don't commit adultery.

God isn't saying: (Yelling) Don't do this because I'm God and I said so! These are My judgments and My statutes! You're to observe them and to keep them!

(Talking in normal voice again) No, I love you, and I don't want to see you suffer unnecessarily because if you commit adultery, your life will be ruined for the rest of your life. And that's no way to live.

All of the commandments — I basically almost went through all ten of them and I said I wouldn't, so I'll stop. Are we okay?

Verse 23, “Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers’ idols.”

And basically this is what He's doing. This was partially fulfilled in the Babylonian captivity. I'm going to scatter you. I'm going to discipline you. I have to teach you a lesson. I'm going to disperse you throughout the countries. I'm going to allow the Babylonians to take you captive. I'm going to scatter you among the Gentile nations. And I'm going to cure you of this idolatry.

And by the way, it worked. Israel, of course, throughout their history would sin against God in other ways. But when it came to idolatry, that was not at the top of the sin list for Israel after this.

In other words, I have to do this. I had to raise My hand in an oath to do this, to scatter you because of what you did. I've got to teach you and cure you of your idolatry because your idolatry is destroying you. And it's grieving Me.

“Therefore I also gave them up to [Verse 25] statutes that were not good...”

Stop right there. This is *Romans 1*. One of the hardest chapters when we went through *Romans* that I had to teach — there's been a lot of tough chapters, but *Romans Chapter 1* —

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in fact, I remember one week I wept through the whole teaching. It was kind of embarrassing, actually.

God gives them over. Listen, your heart has already hardened. Your mind is already made up. Your fate is already sealed. The Spirit of God is not going to strive with man forever. You've already made your decision.

I'm not going to force Myself on you so I'm just going to say, okay, I'm going to give you over to this idolatry. You're going to get your fill of it.

It's really in a way akin to when the mixed multitude started stirring up strife amongst the Israelites in the Exodus wandering in the wilderness, making them discontent and disgruntled with the manna. So they demanded that they get meat to eat.

And God just said, okay, here you go. And He gave them quail to the full. He gave them over to it, and they ate so much, and while it was still in their teeth, they died eating this flesh because they rejected the manna, which, by the way, is a type of Jesus.

Manna is a picture of Jesus the Christ. Fascinating study when we were in Exodus. And here, I gave this to you, and you despised it. And so, okay, I'll give you over to what you want. It's not good.

“I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, [My judgments] by which they could not live; [They were good] and [Verse 26] I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that [Here it is, child sacrifice] they caused all their firstborn to pass through the fire, [Molech] that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the Lord.”

“Therefore, son of man, [Verse 27] speak to the house of Israel, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “In this too your fathers have blasphemed Me by being unfaithful to Me. When I brought them into the land concerning which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them, and they saw all the high hills and all the thick trees, there they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings.

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There they also sent up their sweet aroma and poured out their drink offerings. Then I said to them, ‘What is this high place to which you go?’ So its name is called Bamah to this day,”

Bamah: meaning “high place.” What's going on here? So here God gives them the land, so they take possession of their land, their real estate that God gave them. And they're like, all right, cool, hey, by the way, did you notice that high place?

Do you know what they would do at these high places? Unspeakable. Unspeakable. I mean, literally; that's not hyperbole. It's unspeakable. I would blush from behind the pulpit and deem it inappropriate to even describe and even try to sanitize it. But it is unspeakable the immorality practiced in these high places.

Can you imagine? You give somebody a house, and they take possession of the house, and they start doing unspeakable acts of evil in that house that you gave them? How would you feel? How much more?

And it's almost like they're given this land, and God keeps His Word, brings them into this land. They take possession of this land, and then they commit this unspeakable evil in this land. And it's almost like they're thanking these false gods in this unspeakable, evil way for the land that they were given.

Man, if I'm God — and don't look at me all spiritual. If you were God.... Zap... Yeah, I'm —
Verse 30. “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: [Question] “Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your fathers, and committing harlotry according to their abominations?”

That's rhetorical. It's exactly what you're doing. And don't miss this. You're defiling yourself. Sexual sin: You sin against yourself, your own body. You're defiling yourself. You're committing harlotry. I don't want you to do that because of what doing that does to you when you do that.

Verse 31, “For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, [Child sacrifice] you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel?

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As I live,” says the Lord God, “I will not be inquired of by you. What you have in your mind [Verse 32] shall never be, when you say, ‘We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.’ ”

Listen, if your god is a god of wood or stone, I feel very sorry for you because you've got to take care of your god. The God I serve takes care of me. You know, you got problems when you got to take care of your god. I think about — I am sorry for the humor in this, but you remember when the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant and they put it in the temple?

I mean, how stupid are they, my people? Of course, there's not really Philistines anymore. But they captured the Ark of the Covenant, and they put it in their temple to their god Dagon.

And so they leave the Ark of the Covenant there. And then the next morning they go back into the temple, and their god is fallen face down before the Ark of the Covenant and is all buss-up. Dagon-it.

[Laughter]

Again, I'm sorry for the humor, but so what do they do? You would think that they would realize. Hello? That's our god, and this is... And it's laying on its face before the Ark of the Covenant. That should tell you something right there. And if that doesn't tell you something, the fact that you've got to pick your god back up and super glue him back together.

Anyway, the account — I would really encourage you — it even gets worse than that to where they're finally like, get thing out of here. Anyway, I — again, it's a long chapter. We've got to keep moving. So stop doing that.

“As I live,” [Verse 33] says the Lord God, “surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out.”

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Translated: I am going to spare you, but we're going to do this My way, and I will have the final word because I rule over all and overrule all. I'm going to bring you back. I'm going to restore you. I'm going to scatter you, but I'll bring you back after everything you did, with My mighty hand, My outstretched arm.

“And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, [Verse 35] and there [This is interesting] I will plead My case with you face to face.”

That's okay. No, I'm good now. I'm good now. I'm good now. Thanks for the coffee, Ezekiel. Would you look at the time? No, no. We're going to settle this.

“Just as I [Verse 36] pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,” says the Lord God.” *[What does that mean? How are You going to do that?]* *[Oh, verse 37]* **“I will make you pass under the rod.”**

Stop right there. This is — they would have got it because this is what shepherds would do. The shepherds rod. They would have the flock go under the rod, and the rod would assess, inspect, count the sheep in the flock and determine which ones to keep. And they would separate using the rod.

Okay, this one... under the rod. Oh, nah. Okay, go ahead. Nope. Go ahead.

“And I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge [Verse 38] the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me. I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

Wow! Okay, let me see if I got this straight. So God is going to have the final word. He rules over all, overrules all. He's got to settle this once and for all face-to-face, eyeball-to-eyeball, belly-to-belly. I like belly-to-belly better. More belly than eyeball.

And here's how I'm going to do it. I'm going to have you pass under the rod, and I'm going to determine which of you will enter the land and which of you will not. I'm going to rule. I'm going to make — watch this now, don't miss this. I'm going to make that ruling. I will rule. That's My ruling as I judge.

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“As for you, [Verse 39] O house of Israel,” thus says the Lord God: “Go, serve every one of you his idols, and hereafter, if you will not obey Me; but profane My holy name no more with your gifts and your idols.

For [Verse 40] on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel,” says the Lord God, “there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things.” [Case closed]

I will accept you [Verse 41] as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles.”

Here's the Gentile nations watching this whole thing play out, going, whoa, man, these guys are really in big trouble with their God. But their God made a promise to them, promised them land, this covenant, and there was even a symbol between them, and these statutes and judgments, and they did that. And what's their God going to do? Oh, He's going to spare them.

This word “hallowed” is not a word in our vocabulary. It's one of those words that's very misunderstood sadly. In all fairness, it's a hard word to really translate in its fullness, but it is an awe, a reverence, a holy fear of God. There's just such a reverent hallowing of this God before the Gentiles. I mean, they're just watching this and going: Who is like unto this God? Because see, you have to understand that all of these false gods, they had to — they had to sacrifice, human sacrifices to these gods, and these were gods of wrath. And this is new. This God is a God of mercy? Who is like unto the Lord?

“Then you [Verse 42] shall know that I am the Lord, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers.”

In other words, I'm going to do that which only I can do, and I'm going to do it in such a way so there's no mistaking that it was Me who did it. I mean, you didn't do it. No, I am doing this.

Why are You doing this?

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So that you'll know that I did this. I am the Lord your God. I'm the one who raised My hand in an oath. And I'm doing this, keeping this oath that I gave to your fathers.

“And there [Verse 43] you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed.”

Let's work through this just a little bit if you don't mind. There is a healthy loathing, a sanctified shame, not condemnation, but conviction. In other words, I'm gonna — I'm doing this, I'm reminding you of this, all that you did. And I'm going to allow you to just remember how you defiled yourself, and you're going to loathe yourself.

And that's a good thing because you're going to realize what you did and you're going to see yourself as I see you in your own sight, all of the evils that you have committed. Because apparently at some point along the way, you did not see it that way. But now you do because of the self-loathing.

This is not turning inward and, you know, that's self-destructive. That's not what God is saying here. What God is saying here is there's a healthy introspection where you let the Lord search your heart and see if there be anything at all that is keeping you from loving Him, hearing Him, knowing Him, serving Him that's grieving Him, actually. And you're going to hurt because you realize that you've hurt the heart of God.

You know **“the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.”** You know what that means? It means when you fear God that way, you fear doing anything evil that would hurt the heart of God. That's the fear of the Lord.

You fear — okay, I'll use this illustration, a marriage illustration. I love My wife very much. I don't want to do anything to hurt her. I fear, in that sense, doing anything that would hurt her heart. The fear of the Lord. When you love the Lord that way, you love someone so much you don't — you fear doing anything that would hurt them.

And when you realize — and again, in the marriage context — that you hurt that person that you love — even in parenting — I've gone to my children on many occasions, more than I would ever care to admit, and asked them to forgive me for the unkind words that I spoke to them or my disciplining them in anger.

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I mean, I love my children more than I ever thought I could ever love. You know what I mean, parent? You love your children so deeply. And then when you realize that you've really hurt them, oh, you just — the loathing — you loathe yourself, you're angry at yourself for hurting them. That's what God is saying here in *verse 43*. It's a good thing. It's a good thing.

“Then [Verse 44] you shall know that I am the Lord.”

Just a side note. Sorry to give you a whiplash. Just — I don't know. I didn't count. You could do it in Word, do a search or some, you know, software. Just — **“I am the Lord.”** I wonder if — are we at like 9 or 10 already? 9 or 10 times? Is that about right? Do you get the impression that the Lord wants us to know that He is the Lord our God?

“Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel,” says the Lord God.”

Oh, that's how God deals with His people. He doesn't deal with it — aren't you glad? Could you imagine? Could you imagine if *verse 44* said, I am the Lord, and when I have dealt with you “according to your wicked ways?”

Uh oh, I'm toast right there. We haven't even got to “according to your corrupt doings.”

Aren't you glad that God doesn't deal with us according to our wicked ways or our corrupt doings? Aren't you glad that He spares us, has mercy on us and doesn't deal with us according to our wicked ways and our corrupt doings? Who here among us would even be here tonight if that were the case?

Now, beginning in *verse 45*, through the end of the chapter is believed that it should have actually been the beginning of *Chapter 21* because we kind of turn a really sharp corner.

Verse 45, “Furthermore the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land, the South, and say to the forest of the South, ‘Hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, [I'm sorry about this] I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every

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green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it.

All flesh [Verse 48] shall see that I, the Lord, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched.”

Then I said, [Verse 49] “Ah, Lord God! They say of me, ‘Does he not speak parables?’”

Now, Lord willing, next week, *Chapter 21*, this will make more sense and fit because it's like Ezekiel is saying, Lord, they dismiss everything I say because they say of me that he doesn't make any sense. He's speaking in riddles. He's speaking in parables. We don't understand what He's saying.

So *Chapter 21*? Okay. They have phrases: Real Talk. Straight Talk. Boy, are they going to regret saying that You speak in parables.

Oh, you want Me just to.... okay.

And so you have to come next week now because *Chapter 21* is going to be just straight in your face, there's no parable here, there's no riddle here. There's no — what are you saying? No, no, no. You think you don't understand?

I'm going to help you understand. I'm kind of confused. I'm going to unconfuse you.

[Laughter]

Yeah, you're speaking in these kind of puzzles, riddles.

Yeah, no — we're gonna — I'm going to unpuzzle you. I'm going to unriddle you. You will not have any excuse for not understanding. I'm going to say it exactly as you need to hear it. So that's next week, so yeah!

That's the end of the Bible study and the chapter. So Kaponono, come on up. You can stand up. We made it! By the grace of God. He spared us!

Father, thank You so much. God, You're — hallowed be Thy name. Oh, God. Who is like — who is like unto You O God? There is none Like you. You are Holy, God, and Your judgments are right. They're righteous; they're true.

Lord, thank You! Though a very tough chapter, this was good because we needed to hear this and we needed to be reminded of this, and we needed to be shown this because in the

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end, it's not about how disobedient we are or sinful we are or how bad we are. It's about how good You always are.

You are good, God, despite how bad we are. And thank You for that. Thank You for Your eye sparing us, Your mercy on us, Your grace to us. We're so grateful to You, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.