



Ezekiel 19-20

Tape #7322
Ezekiel 19-20
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Ezekiel, chapter nineteen, where the Lord commands Ezekiel to...

Take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel (19:1),

Weeping over the conditions. May God give us hearts that weep over the conditions of a lost world, of people who are lost in sin. That we would have such a burden, and such a heart for them that we would weep for them before the Lord. So Ezekiel is commanded to take up this lamentation for the princes of Israel.

And say, What is your mother? A lioness: she lay down her lions, and she nourished her whelps among young lions (19:2).

Judah was known as the lioness, the tribe. The Messiah is to be the lion out of the tribe of Judah. The city of Jerusalem was called Ariel, which means, "the Lion of God". So the lion figure is one of Jerusalem, and of the tribe of Judah. "And she brought up her whelps among the young lions."

And she bought up one of her whelps: and it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men. The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit (19:4),

That is trapped, they would catch lions by digging a pit, and putting thatches over the top, and as the lion would pounce, or running, run on the thatches, they would of course give way, and the lion would fall into the pit. So this young lion that was catching prey, devouring men was taken in their pit...

and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt (19:4).

Now this was a reference to king Jehoahaz. This lamentation is really for the end of the Davidic kingdom. It is, it's about over. We are entering into the final years of the Davidic kingdom. So if you'll go to II Kings, twenty three, you'll get the historic background of how that Jehoahaz became king over Judah, and his father Josiah, if you remember, was slain in a battle against Pharaoh at Megiddo.

So it seems that Jehoahaz gathered together the men of Israel to go down and get revenge for his father's death. But he was captured by the Egyptians, and taken captive to Egypt. Jehoiakim was put on the throne in his stead, and became really subject to Egypt. They paid tribute to Egypt each year.

So now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion (19:5).

The hope was that Jehoahaz may return, and be king again. But he was captured, and when hope was lost of his return, another of her whelps was made ruler.

And he went up and down among the lions, and became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men. And he knew their desolate places, he laid waste their cities; the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof by the noise of his roaring. Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and they spread their net over him: and he was taken in their pit (19:6-8).

So this other king arose. He was powerful, he was going around and conquering, and destroying. But the nations gathered together. You read there in II Kings, that at the death of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin became the king over Judah. The Syrians along with the Moabites, and Ammon, and the Chaldeans, all of them came against him. So it's interesting the, the declaration of, "nations, plural, were set on against him on every side from the provinces, and they spread their net over him, and he was taken in their pit."

And they put him in the ward of the prison in chains, and they brought him to the king of Babylon: [That is, Nebuchadnezzar] and they brought him into the prisons, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel. [So Jehoiakim, chin, was taken to Babylon as a captive.] And so thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters: [Again, the vine being the symbol of the nation of Israel, and a nation that God had raised up for the purpose of bringing His salvation to the world.] and full of branches fruitful (19:9-10).

The potential was there. As there is always a tremendous potential for any nation who will serve the

Lord, any nation that will make Jehovah their God. For righteousness exalts a nation. Here they are a fruitful vine, and many branches going forth.

And she had these strong branches for sceptres [The house of David ruling] and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches. [So the growth, and the strength that God gave to the nation.] But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: and her strong rods were broken and withered; and the fire consumed them (19:11-12).

A nation with so much potential. Yet, now we see it destroyed, plucked up, withered, consumed by the fire.

And now this vine is planted in the wilderness, [That is, in Babylon] in a dry and thirsty ground. [No longer the beautiful strength that they once had, but now a broken, captive people.] The fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre [There's no king] no one to rule. [No one to reign over them.] And this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation (19:13-14).

So the, the weeping over the conditions. I wonder how many times as we look at what's happening in our nation, how many times we weep when we see what's going on. You know this isn't time for business as usual! Our nation is in it's crisis years.

As the young people were sharing, it just struck me, there seems to be a greater opportunity of sharing the gospel in Russia, than there is in the United States. The schools in Russia are begging us to send people over to teach the Bible in their public schools. The head of the education, the minister of education for Russia is begging for the church to send hundreds over to teach the teachers the Bible, so that they can teach the Bible in the public schools. Or, to come right in the public schools and teach the Bible. They realize that Russia is morally bankrupt, as the result of the atheism, the result of putting God out, and as the result of this lack of moral integrity, crime, graft, is so rampant in, in Russia that the society cannot function!

One of the big problems that has really destroyed them is that there are no moral values. Honesty, integrity means nothing to them. So they realize that there has been a tremendous failure in instilling moral values. They realize the only way that can come is by a belief in God, and by the teaching of the word of God.

So where we, in the United States are seeking more and more to get the mention of God out of the public schools, where more and more decisions are coming from the supreme court, eliminating prayers. Even now in baccalaureate services, well they eliminated the baccalaureate services, but they're seeking now to eliminate any prayers at graduation exercises. I mean, more and more, we're trying to push God out. It will result in the same thing here! In fact, it is resulting in the same thing here!

Homicides in Orange County are at a record high so far this year. They're at a record high. But the article in the LA Times today, or Santa Ana Register, one of the two, was talking about the number of homicides in Orange County. But, it said, "it is following the pattern that exists across the country". Violence, crimes of violence, homicides, it's, it's at epidemic proportion.

Time to take up the lamentation. Time to weep before the Lord in prayer, that we might see a mighty move of God that will shake this nation! What an important year an election year. O, would to God that we can get congressmen, senators, people into office who will really fear God, and bring about righteous legislation.

Chapter 20

In the twentieth chapter...

It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month (20:1).

This would be the seventh year of their captivity. Their captivity was to last for seventy years. From the prophecy of Isaiah, they recognized that it was gonna be seventy years in captivity. So they were counting the years. "There's only sixty seven more to go", you know! Or, sixty three, sixty, well, actually sixty two and seven months, be closer. But...

that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and they sat before him (40:1).

Now this happened on an earlier occasion where the elders came seeking the, the guidance from God. Seeking the word of the Lord. Here they are sitting before the prophet, and, and this looks good. People wanting to hear God's word, ostensibly. But though they had come to hear the word of God, they did not have a heart that was ready to obey God. Really, that puts a person in a, a position of greater condemnation. To hear the word of God and not to obey, is really worse than not even hearing. "Better that they had never heard the word of truth, than to have heard it, and turn away", the scripture says. So ostensibly they are there seated before the prophet, it looks good. But God said to Ezekiel...

The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Have you come to inquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you (20:2-3).

So God is just telling them flat out, "Have you come to hear me? I'm not gonna talk to you. I'm not gonna respond I'm not gonna, I'm not going to direct you, I'm not going to guide you." Then God said to Ezekiel...

Will you judge them, son of man, [And then He said, "Judge them. You will judge them?" [Actually, it says,] wilt thou judge of them? [It's a, put in a question, but in the Hebrew it's, "Will you judge them son of man?", and then, "You will judge them".] cause them to know the abominations of their fathers (20:4):

Now one thing about the Jews was their tremendous pride in their history. They were always making reference to their fathers. Sort of extolling their fathers as the paragons of righteousness, and of virtue. This pride in their heritage was something that really marked them. You remember in the New Testament, when Stephen was used by God to proclaim the gospel of Jesus to the Jews? They were so upset with him that they arrested him. But God gave him such wisdom, such anointing that they couldn't argue with him! I mean, it was just trying to argue with God! The Spirit of God was so on him, that the answers were just devastating to their position. So they arrested him, and he was given an opportunity to give his defense, to speak in his own defense before the court.

So he started out sort of rehearsing their history. How that the brothers of Joseph sold him. "Your, your marvelous fathers, they, the heads of all the tribes from which the tribe sprung, the sons of Jacob, they sold their brother Joseph as a slave to the Egyptians, not realizing that God had chosen Joseph to be a ruler." They missed the boat completely! They missed what God was doing fully. Because here's the man that God has chosen to be the leader, and they sold him for twenty pieces of silver as a slave to the traders going to Egypt. Yet, God raised him up to make him ruler.

Then Moses came along. They rejected Moses, and Moses fled and spent forty years in the wilderness. But when Moses first came, they, they just failed to recognize that God has raised up Moses to lead. He goes on and shows how that through their history, they were always blind to God's plan. They didn't realize that these very ones that God had chosen for leaders, they were persecuting, they had rejected. "Your fathers that you brag so much about, they were pretty blind to the purposes of God, and to the plans of God in that they rejected every chosen leader of God!"

As Stephen was getting into his message, he really started getting into it. I mean, as, and probably just, he was filled with the Holy Spirit as he was speaking, and probably the thoughts were ministering to him as he spoke. He got to thinking about it. "That's right, wow!" He started really getting into it you know! Until he said, "Which of the prophets have your fathers not stoned? You know, just show me one of God's servants that they accepted!" Then he said, "But you are worse than all of them, because you crucified the one that all of the prophets were talking about. You're just like your fathers. You're blind to the one that God had chosen to be ruler, and leader."

But even though they were blind to Joseph, God raised him up to rule. They were blind to Moses, God raised him up to rule. Though they crucified the Son of God, God will raise Him up to rule. Well, of course they got so angry at Stephen, they began to just gnash their teeth, and they drug him out of the gate of the city, and stoned him there, as he raised up and said, "Lord don't charge them with this. Into your hands I commend my spirit." But here God is rehearsing for them their fathers. "You take pride in your fathers."

But say to them, Thus saith the Lord God; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up my hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, [When God revealed

Himself to them, His plan to deliver them out of their bondage in Egypt.] *when I lifted up my hand unto them, saying, I am Jehovah your God; In that day I lifted up my hand unto them to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had spied out for them, a land that was flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all the lands (20:5-6):*

A beautiful place! “Well watered, just a verdant, beautiful piece of property that I had spied out to give to them.”

Then I said unto them, Cast away every man the abomination of his eyes, and defile not yourself with the idols of Egypt: for I am Jehovah your God. [So God said, “Get rid of all of these Egyptian idols that you’ve been worshipping, the religious culture that you have picked up in Egypt, for I Jehovah, am your God.”] But they rebelled [God said] against me, they wouldn’t listen to me: they did not cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: and I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. [God was ready them to just dump them!] But for my name’s sake, [Not because they were deserving, they deserved judgment, but God said, “For my name’s sake”,] I wrought with them (20:7-9),

That is, He went ahead and worked in their behalf, in spite of their rebellion and disobedience, He did it for His name’s sake. The grace of God that has been bestowed unto us is not because we deserve it, but for God’s name’s sake, He has done these things.

God did not want that his name would be polluted before the heathen, [They would say, “Oh those are the people that served God, but look what’s happened to them!”, you know, and so for His name’s sake, that His name would not be polluted among the heathen, for they,] among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt. [“I’ve bought them out the land of Egypt, in spite of the fact that they didn’t deserve it, they were still hanging onto their idols.”] Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and I brought them into the wilderness. And there I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them (20:9-11).

There in the wilderness on mount Sinai, God gave the law to Moses. The judgments, the statutes of the laws, which were good, if a people will obey these! They will be blessed, they will be prosperous, they will be healthy. God said, “If you will keep my covenant, and do these things which I say unto you, then none of the plagues that were upon the Egyptians, will I bring upon you.” And as you read the laws, and the statutes and the judgments that God gave, you find out that it’s a tremendous code of law! You find out that it is covering many areas even health, sanitary laws. God, God covered all the bases, and gave them the rules for a healthy, prosperous, good life. Because God wants you to have a good life, the best life. “I have come”, Jesus said, “that you might have life, and that more abundantly!”

Moreover I also gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them (20:12).

Now God has made covenants with man throughout history. With each covenant that God made, there was a sign of the covenant. God made a covenant with Noah, that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. What was the sign that God gave for that covenant? The rainbow.

Now God is making a covenant, He made a covenant with Abraham, that Abraham would be the father of a nation that would bring forth the Messiah. “Through thy seed, all the nations of the world shall be blessed.” The sign of the covenant with Abraham was circumcision. The circumcising of the children, or the boys.

God made a covenant with Moses. He gave them the law. “This is the covenant, this is how you can relate to me, and I will relate to you. You obey these laws, I will be your God, you will be my people, and I will bless you, and multiply you, and bring you into a good land”, and all. But the sign of the covenant was the Sabbath day.

Now that is why when the church began to spread among the Gentiles, the Sabbath day was not a part of the law, or the ordinances that they sought to put upon the Gentiles. Because that was the sign of the covenant between God, and Israel.

Now Jesus has made a covenant with us. What is the sign of the covenant? The cup that we take at

communion. "This cup is a new covenant in my blood shed for the remission of sins." But, people are confused sometimes about what day we should worship God. There are Seventh Day Adventists, and there are Seventh Day Baptists, and there is the Worldwide Church of God that advocates the, the worship on Saturday, as the Sabbath day. They have the tendency to judge, and to condemn those that don't worship on the Sabbath day. Even going so far at one time as to say that, "Worship on Sunday was really the mark of the beast"!

But when in the early church, the Gentile church at Antioch was growing and prospering, news came back to the Jews in Jerusalem, the church there, that these Gentile believers were not following the traditions of Judaism. So they sent down certain men to sort of spy out the liberty that these Gentile-Christians had in Jesus. So Paul got hold of them, and he said, "Okay let's settle this issue once and for all." He gathered these guys and they went back to Jerusalem, to the church there, and they gathered the church council together, to determine what relationship the Gentile believers would have to the law of Moses. For these Jewish teachers were saying, "You cannot be saved unless you become a Jew, and you are circumcised! Faith in Jesus isn't enough! You've got to become a Jew. You've got to be circumcised, because salvation is of the Jews, and it's for the Jews only." So, Paul said, "Let's get this settled."

They came back to Jerusalem, to determine what relationship the Gentile believers would have to the law. As Peter, first of all told how God called him to the Gentiles, how God worked sovereignly among the Gentiles, at the house of Cornelius, how Paul and Barnabas then gave their testimony of the marvelous miracles that they saw God working among the Gentiles around the world! Peter finally said, "I don't see why we should put upon them a yoke of bondage that neither we, nor our fathers were able to bear".

So James finally spoke up and he said, "Well let's just write them, and greet them in the Lord, and encourage them in the faith, and just suggest that they keep themselves from idolatry, from fornication, and things that have been sacrificed unto idols". So they wrote the letter, you know, "Greetings, and blessings upon you in the name of the Lord", and all, "we've heard of your faith and we rejoice what God is doing in your midst, and we just exhort you to keep yourself from fornication, and things offered to idols. If you do that, you've done well. God bless you."

But there was no mention at all about Sabbath day worship because that was a, a sign of the covenant between God, and the nation of Israel. It was never a sign of a covenant with God, and the Gentile believers. We're under the new covenant of Jesus Christ, the sign of that covenant being as we say, "The cup of communion that we drink".

So Paul then later writing to the Gentiles in Rome said, "One man esteems one day above another. Another man esteems every day alike. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. You know, don't, don't get in a big beef or argument over it. You know, one man says Saturday, another man says Sunday, another says Thursday. You know another man says every day the Lord's day. So let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind." Then, later writing to the Colossians, another Gentile church, he said, "Don't let any man judge you in meat, or drink, or holy days or Sabbath days, which all are a shadow of things to come." The substance really is of Jesus.

Now as we have said the Old Testament things all had their fulfillment in the New Testament, in Christ. He is the fulfillment of the law. How is Christ the fulfillment of the Sabbath day law? He is our rest, and he who has entered into Christ, has entered into the rest. So Jesus is my Sabbath, I rest in Him. Therein is my heart resting in Jesus, my Sabbath. I'm one of those guys every day's alike, every day's the Lord's day as far as I'm concerned. I don't see any difference between one day or another. I say this to my wife on our anniversary, and her birthday and all, but every day's alike.

So, "I gave them my sabbaths to be a sign, as I told you, between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that has set them apart". But those...

But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: [Now they rebelled in Egypt, now He gets them out of Egypt, and sets a covenant with them, establishes it with a sign, the sabbath day, and now they're rebelling against God in the wilderness.] *and they did not walk in my statutes,* ["I gave them my statutes, they wouldn't walk in them."] *they despised my judgments, which if a man does, he shall live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: and so I said, I'll pour out my fury upon them in the*

wilderness, and consume them. [“I’ll wipe them out here!”] *But for my name’s sake I wrought, that my name should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I have brought them out (20:13-14).*

The world had heard of the exodus, and the destruction of the Egyptian army, how God was with these people. The whole world was in awe of what God was doing. God said, “If I wipe them out in the wilderness, then the world, knowing what I have done, so for my name’s sake, I’ll, I’ll carry on, because they despised my judgments.” Well, yet, He wrought with them.

So I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all the lands. [“I, I didn’t want to bring them into the land.”] Because they had despised my judgments, they didn’t walk in my statutes, they polluted my sabbaths: for their heart was after their idols (20:15-16).

Remember while Moses was up on the mount getting the laws that the people came to Aaron, and they said, “We don’t know what’s happened to Moses. Make us a god that we might worship it”. He gathered all their gold, they made the golden calf and so forth, and began to worship it. As Moses came down with the two tables of stone, upon which God had inscribed the law. The very first one was, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me”. The second one, “Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image of any likeness of things in heaven or earth, to bow down to them and worship them”.

Here is Moses, comes and Joshua’s with him, he says, “Wow lot of noise. Sounds like maybe there’s a war going on!” Moses said, “No this isn’t the sound of war, it’s the sound of rebellion against God”. They came into the camp and here was this golden calf. The people all dancing around and all, and Moses took the two tables of stone and threw them on the ground, and they smashed. It was, it was symbolic of the, of the law broken before He could actually give them the law, they’d already violated and broken the law! So, “Their heart went after their idols”.

Nevertheless my eye spared them from destroying them, [God’s grace again, God’s mercy, justice demanded they be destroyed, but God said, “I spared them”] neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness. [“I didn’t wipe them out.”] But I said to their children (20:17-18),

To the parents He said, “Okay, I’ll not bring you into the land”, so because they despised His judgments and so forth, He declared that He wouldn’t bring them into the land. So the parents all died. They wandered in the wilderness for forty years. But He spoke to their children...

and he said to them, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourself with their idols. [In other words, “Make a break from the pollution of your parents”.] For I am Jehovah your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; And hallow my sabbaths, and they will be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am Jehovah your God (20:18-20).

So He is encouraging now the children to follow His statutes. To keep this covenant, sign of the covenant, the Sabbath day.

Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: and they did not walk in my statutes, nor did they keep my judgments to do them, which if a man does, he will live in them; and they polluted my sabbaths: and then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness. Nevertheless (20:21-22)

Grace of God, oh the longsuffering, the patience of God, the mercies of God, how God just allows people to go on, and on! This is the thing that troubles us. Why God allows wicked people to continue in their wickedness. Why doesn’t God cut them off? The patience of God!

and so I withdrew my hand of judgment, and I worked for my name’s sake, that it would not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth. And I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; [Which He was of a mind to do!] Because they had not executed my judgments, but they had despised my statutes, they had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols. Wherefore I gave them also the statutes which were not good, and the judgments whereby they should not live; [“I let them follow those others, I let them go after those other ways.”] And I (20:22-26)

“I gave them, really I gave them up unto these others, you know walk in them, but it’s gonna hurt you, it’s gonna destroy you!” That’s the terrible thing, when we, when we don’t come to God’s way, but we insist

on our way, when God finally says, “Okay, that’s what you want? Have it.” He gives you up to your own devices, to your own desires, to your own will. That’s a tragic day!

When in, Romans chapter one, it says, “Wherefore God gave them up to their vile affections. Because they did not want to retain God in their mind, God gave them over to reprobate minds.” Minds void of God. The worst thing that can happen to you many times is for God to say, “Okay that’s what you want? You can have it.”, and God let you go your own way.

So many times people say, “God just leave me alone! Get off my case! This is what I want to do! Leave me alone!” God just continues to deal with you, and continues to speak to you, and continues to put barriers in your path, until you say, “God would you please leave me alone?” The worst thing that can ever happen to you is that, God listen to you, and just say, “Okay, I will.” Boy! Then is when you know, tragedy!

So that’s basically what was happening here. They said, “God you know this is what we want to do. Just leave us alone. We’re not interested in your statutes. These are the things we want to do.” God said, “Okay, I’ll give you up to them.” “So I gave them also the statutes, I gave them up to the statutes.” Which was not good!

I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that opened the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am Jehovah (20:26).

So He allowed them to, to do these abominable practices. Sacrificing the first born children unto the god Molech.

Therefore (20:27),

Now God said, “the firstborn, whoever opens the womb, belongs to God”. They were to, they were to be given to God, the firstborn belonged to God. But they began to offer their firstborns unto the pagan gods. “Therefore”...

son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith [Jehovah] the Lord God; Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed trespass against me. For when I had brought them into the land, for which I lifted up my hand to give it to them, and they saw every high hill, and all of the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offerings: and there also they made their sweet savour, and poured out their drink offerings (20:27-28).

So they began when they saw the beautiful mountains, the high hills, they began to make places of worship for the pagan gods on the tops of these beautiful mountains, in Jerusalem. They’re called the Jerusalem mountains that go from Samaria, on down to Hebron. They offered these sacrifices to the pagan gods, provoking the living God.

Then I said unto them, What is the high place where you go? And the name thereof is called Bamah to this day (20:29).

Bamah literally means high place. So they kept talking about the Bamah, the places of worship, when, which became an abomination actually.

Wherefore say to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Are you polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit whoredoms after their abominations (20:30)?

So now here are the elders, they’ve come to inquire of the Lord. He tells them how rotten their fathers were. But he said, “You are polluted after the manner, you, you’re no better! You’re doing the same things that your fathers did! You’re following the same abominations!”

For when you offer your gifts, when you make your sons pass through the fire, [Sacrificing their children in the fire of Molech] you pollute yourself with all of your idols, even unto this day: and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you (20:31).

“I mean, here you are sending to get my counsel, to get help and advice. When you’re doing these horrible things, should I, no way!” God said, “I will not be inquired of by you!” The idea is this. God had given His statutes, God had given His law, God had given His judgments, and they wouldn’t listen. You know, when you warn a person, and warn a person, and warn a person, and they, they keep doing it!

I had a young fellow that was calling me up for advice. So I would say, “Well now don’t do that. That’s not wise.” He was a young minister. Then, he would go ahead and do the very thing I told him not to do! Then he’d call and say, “Oh man things are really a mess here! You know, I don’t know what to do!” I said,

“Well what happened?” “Well, I did...”, I said, “I told you not to do that!” “Well, I thought, you know, but what should I do now?” I said, “Well the best thing to do now is...”, and I’d lay it out for him. Then he’d just do the opposite again! Then he’d call me up and say, “Oh I don’t know what to do things are really bad now! You know, they want to kick me out!” I said, “Well what happened?” “Well I did...”, I said, “I told you not to do that!” The last time he called me, I said, “Hey I have nothing to say.” “You gotta help me!” I said, “No, I can’t.” “You got to! They’ve asked me to resign!” I said, “Well, then you should.” I said, “I’m not gonna give you any more advice! Why should I give you advice, you don’t listen to it.”

That’s basically what God is saying, “Why should I give you advice? You’re not gonna listen. Why should I waste my time? You’re not gonna pay any attention to it. You’re gonna do your own thing anyhow.” So, God said, “Shall I be inquired of you? I swear, as I live, I’m not gonna be inquired of by you. I mean, I’ve had it, you’re through! You’re dust!”

And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all what you say, But you will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, just to serve wood and stone (20:32).

You know, you say, “Well we want to seek the Lord!” He said, “Nah, you really don’t. You’re just gonna go ahead and serve the idols of wood and stone. You’re gonna do just like the heathen.”

As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you (20:33):

“You’re, you’re going to go through a period of, of judgment. You’re gonna be scattered among the nations. You’re going to taste of my judgment, of my wrath, because of your disobedience, because of your failing to follow me.”

One of the worst things that could ever happen to a nation, happened to Israel. When Pilate was determined to release Jesus, as he should have, a free man, the Jews were insisting on His crucifixion. Led by the high priests and the rulers, they were chanting, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate was arguing, saying, “Why what evil has He done?” But they only chanted all the more, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” Until there was such a tumult, that Pilate ordered that they bring a basin of water. He began to wash his hands before them, and he said, “I wash my hands of this man’s innocent blood. See ye to it.” Then that fateful cry, “His blood be on us, and on our children!”

A few years later when Titus came in with the Roman troops, and that tremendous slaughter, and the Jews that remained, were scattered throughout the world. They have experienced through the years the consequences of that horrible cry of their fathers.

So God said, “I will rule over you with a mighty hand, a stretched out arm, and fury poured out.” They have tasted of that. And yet, amazingly enough, they have survived as a national ethnic group. Two thousand years without a homeland, two thousand years without a government, scattered in little pockets all over the world, and yet, they maintain their national identity. A Jew, was a Jew, whether he was in Russia, or Yemen, or South Africa, or the United States, or China, a Jew, was a Jew. So God speaking about ruling over them in this fury and all, yet speaks of...

And I will bring you out from among the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein you have been scattered, with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. [That is, “You were scattered with this stretched out arm, and fury”.] And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God (20:34- 36).

God is stubborn! He’s not gonna let them go! He’s gonna shake them up a bit, He’s gonna take them and, and rake them over the coals, but then He’ll say, “Now will you say Uncle?”, you know. I love that stubbornness of God, how that He just won’t let you go. You may try to run, but He’ll be there, and He’ll shake you up a bit, if necessary, if you insist on that. As I’ve always said, “There’s an easy way to learn, and a hard way to learn, and the smart people learn the easy ways. Though others, they’ll learn, but they’ll learn the hard ways.

And I will cause you to pass under the rod (20:37),

That is, when the shepherd would bring the sheep into the fold at night, he would stand in the opening of the, of the little walled in area, and he would hold his rod down, so that the sheep would have to come under

the rod. He would stand there in the, in the doorway, and he would hold the rod down, and the sheep would have to come under his rod. As they would come under the rod, he would count them to make sure that they were all there.

You remember Jesus gave us the story of the shepherd who had the ninety nine? He said, “Uh oh! The hundredth is missing!” He went out and searched until he found that lost sheep. You know, but they would hold the rod down, and the sheep coming in, and they would count them. They would also examine the sheep to see if there were any ticks, or any kind of cuts or whatever that needed attending to. So God is saying, “I’ll count you. I’ll bring you under the rod, you know, I’ll make sure you all get safely into the fold.”

and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: [“I will bind you with this covenant.”] And I will purge [or cleanse] out from among you the rebels, [“I’ll get rid of those.”] and those that trespass against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and you shall know that I am Jehovah (20:37-38).

“Though you rebelled, and in my fury I scattered you around the world, yet I will number you, I will put you under the rod, and I will bring you back. I will separate the rebels from you, those that transgressed.”

As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; Go ye, and serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if you will not hearken unto me: but pollute my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols (20:39).

So God is saying, “Stop! No more of this idolatry.”

For in my holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God, there shall all the house of Israel, and all of them in the land serve me: and there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all of your holy things (20:40).

“I’ll bring you back, but I want you to forsake your idols”, and then the Lord says, “I will accept you then”. Now God was rejecting. The whole chapter is one of rejection of these men. “Will I be inquired of you? No way! I will not be inquired of you. As the Lord”, He said, “as I liveth saith the Lord, I will not be inquired of by you!” He was rejecting them. But He is telling of a day when He will accept them. A day when they will be bound by this new covenant to Him.

I will accept you with your sweet savour (20:41),

That sweet savour is Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of Jesus was a sweet savour to God, whereby we are acceptable unto God. God, by His divine holiness, and purity, and justice, must reject us. God does reject you if you try to come to Him on the basis, or the merits of your own goodness, or your own righteousness, you don’t have a chance. If you come to sit before God, and the basis, “Well I’m a pretty good person, well I do my best. I keep the boy scout oath, and you know, my scout’s honor and so forth, and I, I do all these things! I help little ladies across the street. I’ve earned my merit badges”, and all.

So here I am sitting there in my righteousness before God, God will reject me. Even as these elders of Israel. God just rejected them. But God said, “I will accept you with your sweet savour”. That is, when you come in the sweet savour of Jesus Christ, that sacrifice that He made of Himself unto God for us, in Christ, I am accepted. Paul in Ephesians one says, “We have been accepted in the Beloved”. In the beloved Son of God, Jesus Christ God accepts me. Jesus brings me to the Father. The Father accepts the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for me. He has imputed to me, because of my faith in Jesus Christ, He has imputed to me, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So He sees me not in my works, or in my righteousness, but He sees me in the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness which God accepts. “And I will accept you with your sweet savour”...

when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein you have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen (20:41).

Then they’ll be His people, and they will obey the covenant. They will follow after Him.

And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up my hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall you remember your ways, and all of your doings wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all of your evils that you have committed (20:42-43).

There will be a national repentance. During the great tribulation there will be a tremendous turning to Jesus Christ, by the Jews. Jesus said, "You're not gonna see me again until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" They'll begin to pray for the return of the Messiah. They'll recognize Jesus is the Messiah. A great work of God's Holy Spirit to be wrought among the Jews. When they finally come to the recognition that Jesus is the Messiah, and they realize that the long rejection of God's grace, and mercy offered towards them, through Jesus, they will loathe themselves for all of the evils that they've committed.

And you shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, saith Jehovah God (20:44).

It is interesting, Calvin, that great theologian of the reformation period, was doing a commentary on the whole Bible. Of course, Calvin has set for us the grace of God, like no other teacher. Came to an understanding, an appreciation of the grace of God. As he was doing his commentary on the Bible, when he finished his commentary on this verse, he went to bed, and died. But this was sort of the capstone of his marvelous teaching. "You shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, and not according to your wicked ways."

There's the grace of God. He works with you according to His grace, His name's sake. Not according to your wicked ways. "He has not rewarded us according to our iniquities, but as the heavens are high above the earth, so high is His mercy over those that fear Him." Oh how wonderful is God's work in our lives! By His grace, not according to my wicked ways, but according to His grace, does He work with me.

Now most commentators will tell you that at this point the chapter should have ended. When the men were making the chapter and verse distinctions to help us to reference scriptures, they really should've ended the chapter there. Because the next verses belong to the twenty first chapter, rather than to the twentieth chapter. So we will refer back to these. But, because they are in the twentieth chapter, we will go ahead and just look at just a few verses here. A parable...

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set your face toward the south, and drop your word toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field; And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the Lord, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it will devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree, the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all of the faces of the south to the north, shall be burned therein. And all flesh shall see it, and I the Lord have kindled it: and it shall not be quenched. Then I said, Ah Lord God! they're already saying, He always speaks in parables (20:45-49)?

So here is another parable and he is to face the south. Of course, they were in the north, in Babylon, he was to turn to face the south. He was to make this prophesy against the forest. That there would be a fire that would not be quenched that would really consume the land. So his complaint that the people already were accusing Him of just speaking in parables. "We don't understand it." But, God didn't pay any attention, because He gives him a parable the very next thing, in the next chapter!

So God's grace. You know, He'll listen to your complaints, but then He'll do what He wants to do anyhow! That's good for you! Be careful when God starts doing what you ask Him to do. You know, when He starts listening to your complaints, then you're in trouble! I have an agreement with God. "You know, no matter what I say, you do what's right! You know, I may scream, I may holler, I may complain, but Lord, you do what's right. Don't listen to me! If I'm out of line God, just don't pay any attention. I want you to do what you know is best."