

Dr. Leslie Allen, Daniel, Session 10, Part 3 – Exodus, Old and New (Ezek 20:1-44) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10, Part 3 – Exodus, Old and New (Ezek 20:1-44), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Leslie Allen's lecture focuses on Ezekiel 20:1-44, exploring the theme of Exodus in the Old and New contexts. The lecture analyzes Ezekiel's message to the elders of Israel, who sought good news about returning home from exile. **Allen highlights how Ezekiel challenges the traditional understanding of the Exodus, pointing out Israel's repeated faithlessness.** He contrasts a negative message about the Exodus with a positive message and emphasizes that even after the tragic events of 587, God's people will return. **The lecture discusses how God's actions, even in punishing Israel, are often motivated by a concern for His reputation among the nations.** Finally, Allen touches on the concept of a new Exodus and the future restoration of Israel, where pure worship will be re-established.

2. 10 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Ezekiel).



**Allen_Ezekiel_Sessi
on10.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10, Part 3 – Exodus, Old and New (Ezek 20:1-44)

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Dr. Leslie Allen's lecture on Ezekiel 20:1-44, focusing on the Exodus narrative and its reinterpretation:

Briefing Document: Ezekiel 20:1-44 - Exodus Old and New

Main Themes:

- **Re-evaluation of the Exodus Tradition:** The core of Ezekiel 20:1-44 involves a radical reinterpretation of the Exodus, a foundational event in Israelite faith. Instead of viewing it as a straightforward story of God's grace, Ezekiel, through divine inspiration, exposes Israel's persistent unfaithfulness throughout the Exodus narrative.
- **Divine Judgment and Exile as a Consequence of Persistent Unfaithfulness:** Ezekiel argues that the exile is not an arbitrary punishment but the culmination of generations of disobedience, dating back to the time of the Exodus itself. He emphasizes that God had exile in mind even during the wilderness period (interpreting Exodus 32:34).
- **God's Reputation and the Delay of Judgment:** A recurring motif is God's concern for his reputation (his "name") among the nations. This concern often compels Him to delay or modify the punishment that Israel deserves.
- **The Promise of a New Exodus and a Purified Future:** The second half of Ezekiel 20 (32-44) offers a message of hope, suggesting a "new Exodus" where God will again deliver his people. However, this future is contingent upon repentance and a commitment to pure worship. Not everyone will make it to the "promised land."
- **The Thematic Supplementation:** Allen posits that there are two messages in Ezekiel 20. The first is a negative, pre-587 message that discusses the failure of the exodus generation. The second is a post-587 message that offers a positive view of the exodus and a path to redemption.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Contextual Setting:** The lecture focuses on Ezekiel 20:1-44, situated within a larger section of the book (chapters 20-24) marked by a new date (August 591 BC) and a visit from the elders. The elders are representatives of the exiled community hoping for good news of returning home.
- "The date works out in our chronology as August 591 BC... the deportation of the elite citizens of Jerusalem... now lasted six long years, and we find that the elders come once again... and they come to Ezekiel acknowledging evidently his prophetic authority, and they come to consult him presumably hoping for good news about going home."
- **Structure:** Ezekiel's message is structured in two parts. The first part (verses 3-31) is largely negative, detailing Israel's failures during the Exodus. The second part (verses 32-44) offers a more positive outlook, suggesting a future restoration. Allen argues that the second message supplements the first.
- "Before we look at this first message, it might be useful to glance at the second one that comes in 32 down through 44. And that does speak about the return to the land... this latter message looks like a second edition addition... in which Ezekiel supplemented... the message that was concerned with the exodus... with a new message, and now it's an affirmative message after the negative message of the first message."
- **The Exodus as a Foundational Event:** The Exodus is traditionally seen as the cornerstone of Israel's relationship with God, comparable to the resurrection of Jesus in Christianity. Every Jew should consider themselves having participated in it.
- "The Exodus runs throughout the Old Testament as something wonderful and is the spiritual foundation for all of Israel's relationship with God... Like the resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament, in the Old Testament, the Exodus from Egypt is the basic evidence that justifies and prompts faith in God."
- **Israel's Unfaithfulness in Egypt:** Ezekiel challenges the idealized view of the Israelites in Egypt, pointing to Joshua 24:14 and Psalm 106 as evidence that they served other gods even before the Exodus began.
- "Joshua challenges the people of God to put away the gods that their ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt... And Ezekiel is seizing on this evidence, not in Exodus, but in Joshua, looking back."

- "Our ancestors, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wonderful works...they rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea." (Psalm 106:7)
- **The Wilderness Generation:** Ezekiel highlights the wilderness generation's failure to obey God's laws (Leviticus 18:5) and their worship of the golden calf, which led to their death in the wilderness and prevented them from entering the Promised Land.
- **God's "Laws That Were Not Good" (Verse 25):** Ezekiel 20:25 states that God gave Israel statutes that "were not good," referring to the practice of child sacrifice. Allen explains this seemingly contradictory statement by pointing to Exodus 13:12-13. The firstborn was to be set apart to the Lord, but was then wrongly interpreted to endorse child sacrifice. Allen also argues this is similar to Romans 1:24, where God permits humans to take the wrong route which leads to inevitable judgement.
- "Moreover, I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live... I defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up of their firstborn because there was child sacrifice."
- **The New Exodus and the Wilderness Experience:** The promised "new Exodus" will involve a similar "wilderness" experience where God will judge his people, separating the faithful from the unfaithful.
- "I will enter into judgment with you...As I entered into judgment with your ancestors in the wilderness, I will make you pass through the staff...There will be this examination. And I will find that some of you are rebels...You are going to die in the wilderness just as some of your forefathers died there in the wilderness."
- **The Future Purity of Worship:** In the restored land, only Israel's God will be worshipped, free of pagan practices, and this will finally vindicate God's reputation among the nations.

Quotes:

- "Ezekiel turns the conventional view of the Exodus upside down. Just as in chapter 16, he overturned the value of Jerusalem as an unalterable basis of faith and hope."
- "Not so fast, says Ezekiel, in God's name. There's a big obstacle that looms large in every episode of the Exodus story. It throws a wrench into the exile's expectations."

- "God had exile in mind even in the wilderness in the lifetime of the second generation of Israelites coming out from the wilderness."
- "That would be the final answer, and God's name would be upheld and honored by the return from exile."

Significance:

Ezekiel 20 offers a complex and challenging perspective on a central event in Israelite history. It serves as a warning to the exiles, urging them to repent and embrace true worship, while also offering hope for a future restoration predicated on faithfulness. The lecture highlights the ongoing relevance of these themes for understanding God's relationship with his people.

4. Study Guide: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10, Part 3 – Exodus, Old and New (Ezek 20:1-44)

Ezekiel 20: Exodus Old and New - A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the date given at the beginning of Ezekiel 20, and why is it significant?
2. Who are the elders mentioned in Ezekiel 20, and why do they approach Ezekiel?
3. Briefly explain the two major messages contained in Ezekiel 20 and how they relate to each other thematically.
4. How does Ezekiel's interpretation of the Exodus tradition differ from the conventional view held by the Israelites?
5. According to Ezekiel, what sins did the Israelites commit even while they were still in Egypt?
6. What does Ezekiel say about the laws given to the Israelites in the wilderness?
7. Explain Ezekiel's interpretation of the decree that God would scatter them among the nations?
8. In Ezekiel 20, what does the phrase "statutes that were not good" refer to?
9. How does the second half of Ezekiel 20 (verses 32-44) contrast with the first half in terms of tone and message?
10. What does God promise to do in the future for Israel, as described in the latter part of Ezekiel 20?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The date is August 591 BC. It's significant because it provides a chronological marker, placing the prophecy within the context of the Babylonian exile, specifically six years after the deportation of Jerusalem's elite.
2. The elders are Judean leaders from the labor camps in Babylon. They approach Ezekiel presumably hoping for good news about returning home, acknowledging his prophetic authority.

3. The first message (verses 1-31) is negative, focusing on Israel's historical disobedience and unfaithfulness during the Exodus. The second message (verses 32-44) is more positive, speaking about a future return to the land and a renewed relationship with God.
4. The conventional view sees the Exodus as a testament to God's grace and Israel's faithfulness. Ezekiel, however, deconstructs this view, highlighting Israel's repeated willfulness and disobedience throughout the Exodus story, finding justification for their exile.
5. While still in Egypt, the Israelites refused to abandon the detestable things their eyes focused on and they did not forsake the idols of Egypt.
6. Ezekiel states that God gave them statutes and ordinances by whose observance everyone shall live.
7. Ezekiel interprets God's allowing the Israelites to enter the promised land as an ominous sign; He has something against them, and they will be exiled from it.
8. "Statutes that were not good" refers to laws interpreted wrongly by the Israelites that are contrary to Leviticus, specifically their practice of child sacrifice and their mistreatment of the firstborn. God permitted it to happen.
9. The first half is largely negative, recounting Israel's sins and God's judgment, while the second half offers hope for a future restoration.
10. God promises to gather them from the nations, bring them back to the land of Israel, and establish a pure worship free from pagan practices.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the structure of Ezekiel 20, focusing on the distinct messages and how they contribute to the chapter's overall purpose.
2. Discuss the role of historical memory in Ezekiel 20, particularly how Ezekiel uses the Exodus tradition to challenge the exiles' expectations.
3. Explore the tension between divine grace and human responsibility in Ezekiel 20, considering both God's initial acts of grace and Israel's repeated acts of disobedience.

4. Examine the significance of the "statutes that were not good" in Ezekiel 20, considering their implications for understanding God's relationship with Israel.
5. Compare and contrast the themes of judgment and hope in Ezekiel 20, paying attention to how these themes are interwoven throughout the chapter.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exodus:** The event of the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, led by Moses, which serves as a foundational event in Israelite history and theology.
- **Elders:** The Judean leaders, the elite citizens of Jerusalem, from the labor camps in Babylon who represent the exiles and seek guidance from Ezekiel.
- **Babylonian Exile:** The period in Israelite history when many Judeans were deported to Babylon following the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 BC and the destruction of the city in 587 BC.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or treaty between God and his people, outlining the terms of their relationship and mutual obligations.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods, a practice strongly condemned in the Hebrew Bible as a violation of the covenant with God.
- **Paganism:** A derogatory term used to describe religions other than Judaism and Christianity, often associated with polytheism and practices considered immoral or impure.
- **Leviticus 18:5:** A key verse for Ezekiel: "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances, by doing so a person shall live." A reference to the Mosaic Law and the promise of life for those who obey God's commands.
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or rescuing someone or something from captivity, slavery, or sin.
- **Transgenerational:** Involving or affecting multiple generations.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the end times or the ultimate destiny of humanity.

5. FAQs on Allen, Ezekiel, Session 10, Part 3 – Exodus, Old and New (Ezek 20:1-44), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Ezekiel 20:1-44

1. What is the main theme of Ezekiel 20, and how is it structured?

Ezekiel 20 centers on the theme of the Exodus, but presents two contrasting messages. The first part (verses 1-31) offers a negative reinterpretation of the Exodus tradition, highlighting Israel's repeated unfaithfulness. The second part (verses 32-44) presents a more positive outlook, envisioning a new Exodus and a return to the land. The chapter begins with a date and a visit from the elders, followed by these two distinct messages.

2. What is significant about the date mentioned in Ezekiel 20:1?

The date, August 591 BC, is significant as it marks six years after the deportation of Jerusalem's elite to Babylon in 597 BC. The elders visit Ezekiel, likely seeking reassurance about returning home. This date anchors the first, more negative message about the Exodus in a specific historical context of exile.

3. Why does Ezekiel present a negative view of the Exodus tradition in the first part of Ezekiel 20?

Ezekiel deconstructs the traditional positive view of the Exodus to demonstrate Israel's persistent rebellion and idolatry from the very beginning, even while in Egypt and during their wilderness journey. He emphasizes that this history of unfaithfulness is the reason for their current exile, challenging the elders' hopeful expectations of a swift return.

4. How does Ezekiel reinterpret the Exodus narrative to highlight Israel's sinfulness?

Ezekiel draws on other Old Testament texts, such as Joshua 24 and Psalm 106, to portray the Israelites as idolaters even while in Egypt. He emphasizes their rejection of God's statutes and ordinances in the wilderness, including profaning the Sabbath and worshipping idols. He also interprets Exodus 32:34 as a foreshadowing of their eventual exile.

5. What is the meaning of Ezekiel 20:25 where God says he gave Israel statutes "that were not good"?

This refers to the perversion of God's laws regarding the firstborn. While the law stipulated the redemption of firstborn sons through monetary payment, some Israelites practiced child sacrifice, wrongly interpreting the idea of "setting apart" the firstborn to God (using the same Hebrew verb). God "gave them up" to this misinterpretation as a form of judgment, similar to how Paul describes God "giving up" people to their sinful desires in Romans 1.

6. What is the significance of the second message in Ezekiel 20:32-44, and how does it relate to the first message?

The second message, a later addition to the chapter, offers a contrasting message of hope, envisioning a "new Exodus" and a return to the land after the destruction of 587 BC. While still incorporating elements of judgment and warning, it affirms God's intention to reclaim his people and establish pure worship in the restored homeland, mitigating the despair conveyed in the initial message.

7. What is the "passing through the staff" mentioned in Ezekiel 20:37, and what does it symbolize?

The "passing through the staff" refers to a process of judgment and selection that will occur during the new Exodus. God will examine the returning exiles, separating the faithful from the rebels. Just as the first generation failed in the wilderness, some will be excluded from the promised land due to their continued rebellion.

8. How does Ezekiel 20 address God's concern for his reputation among the nations?

Throughout Ezekiel 20, God expresses concern that punishing Israel too harshly would lead other nations to question his power and faithfulness. God withholds his anger and acts "for the sake of my name" (verses 9, 14, 22). The ultimate resolution to this problem will be the restoration of Israel, which will demonstrate God's holiness and power to the nations, as reflected in Psalm 126.