

The LORD Is There

Exile, Glory, and the God Who Comes Back: A Study of Ezekiel

Session 8. For My Name's Sake

Reading: Ezekiel 20:1-44; 21:25-27

Part One

Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim

The group discovers that Israel's whole history is a story of rebellion met by mercy given for God's name's sake, and they meet the mysterious one whose right the crown is (21:27).

Catholic Touchstone

Grace precedes merit: God's saving commitment rests on his own name and covenant fidelity, not on our performance, and his glory and our salvation are wedded, which is why the Our Father begins with the hallowing of his name.

Tonight the elders of the exiles come to Ezekiel wanting an oracle, and God refuses to be consulted like a vending machine. Instead he retells Israel's entire history as a courtroom indictment with one astonishing refrain: at every point where the story should have ended, God says, I acted for the sake of my name. The chapter then swings forward to a second exodus, out of the nations this time, ending on God's holy mountain. Then 21:25-27 removes the crown from the last Davidic king and holds it in trust, until he comes whose right it is. The session's engine is the refrain; its destination is the heir. There is one genuinely hard passage, 20:25-26, and the steelman chain takes it head-on rather than around. Do not skip it; young adults have usually already met it online.

What You Need to Know

The scene: an inquiry refused

It is 591 BC, about a year after the temple vision of chapters 8 to 11. Elders of the exilic community sit before Ezekiel to inquire of the LORD, exactly the posture of chapter 14, where God said he would not be inquired of by men who had taken idols into their hearts. Your group met that scene in session 5; let them notice the rerun themselves. God refuses the consultation and instead files an indictment: let them know the abominations of their fathers. Chapter 20 is Israel's history told by God under oath, and it is far darker than the version Israel told itself.

The refrain that carries the chapter

The history runs in three rounds: Israel in Egypt, the exodus generation in the wilderness, and their children in the wilderness. Each round has the same skeleton: God gives himself and his statutes, Israel rebels, wrath is deserved and even resolved upon, and then the hinge: but I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations (20:9, 14, 22). Two surprises hide in round one. First, Israel was already idolatrous in Egypt, before the exodus, and refused God's command to cast the idols away. Second, God considered pouring out his wrath in Egypt itself. The exodus was therefore never a reward for fidelity. It was mercy given for the sake of God's name, from the very first page.

What acting for his name's sake means

God's name in Scripture is not a label; it is his revealed character and his public reputation among the nations, bound by covenant oath to this particular people. If Israel is destroyed for her sins, the nations will conclude either that the LORD is weak or that he is faithless. God has, so to speak, staked his reputation on Israel the way a bridegroom stakes his name on his bride (your group built the marriage frame in session 6). So his fidelity to Israel is fidelity to himself, and that is precisely why it cannot be exhausted by Israel's failure. Verse 44 lands the point: I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways. This is the Old Testament's deepest anticipation of what the Church calls grace.

The hard verse: statutes that were not good (20:25-26)

After the third rebellion God says he gave them statutes that were not good and defiled them through their gifts in making them offer their first-born. Read cold, this sounds as if God commanded child sacrifice. Be ready. Three anchors: first, Ezekiel himself condemns child sacrifice as a defiling abomination (16:20-21; 20:31), and Jeremiah says God did not command it, nor did it come into his mind (Jeremiah 7:31). Second, the Torah's actual firstborn law commands redemption, not sacrifice (Exodus 13:13; 34:20). Third, Scripture has a grammar of judicial handing over: God gave them over to what they insisted on choosing (Psalm 81:12; Romans 1:24-26). The Church has not defined a single reading of these verses; interpreters ancient and modern propose judicial abandonment to deadly customs, or the pagan statutes Israel adopted, or the law in its condemning function. What is fixed doctrinally is that God is in no way the cause of moral evil (CCC 311) and never commands intrinsic evil. Present the range honestly; do not flatten it.

The second exodus and the holy mountain (20:32-44)

The exiles' secret plan surfaces in verse 32: let us be like the nations, and worship wood and stone. Assimilation, disappearance. God's answer is a sworn oath: with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you. That arm language is lifted straight from the exodus tradition; your group will find its source themselves in the discovery moment. The new exodus has a new wilderness, the wilderness of the peoples, a face-to-face judgment, a purge of rebels, and a destination: accepted worship on my holy mountain. Note verse 43: the restored people remember and loathe their ways. That is contrition inside mercy, after restoration, not a condition for it. Handle it pastorally; more below in the objection bench.

The crown in trust (21:25-27)

Chapter 21 is the song of the drawn sword against Jerusalem. Verses 25 to 27 address the unhallowed wicked prince of Israel, which is Zedekiah, the last Davidic king to sit in Jerusalem. The turban and crown come off; everything is overturned; a ruin, a ruin, a ruin. After roughly four centuries the throne of David goes empty. But the sentence does not end with ruin. It ends: until he comes whose right it is, and to him I will give it. The line deliberately picks up Jacob's deathbed blessing over Judah in Genesis 49:10, where the scepter stays with Judah until he comes to whom it belongs. Ezekiel is not destroying the crown; he is placing it in trust for the rightful heir. Your group finds the Genesis text themselves. Do not name the fulfillment for them; the room will get there, and Luke 1:32-33 is in your answer box when they do.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

The exodus retold, and an exodus promised

Ezekiel 20 reads Israel's founding story against the grain of national pride and finds grace at the bottom of it, then promises a second exodus in the same vocabulary. The mighty hand and outstretched arm of Exodus 6:6 and Deuteronomy 4:34 becomes the arm that gathers exiles from the nations. The New Testament inherits exactly this pattern: the prophets teach Israel, and then the Church, to read salvation as a new and greater exodus, which the Gospels present as accomplished in Christ's death and resurrection, the passover of the Lord.

Judah's scepter and the empty throne

Genesis 49:10 promised that the scepter would not depart from Judah until he comes to whom it belongs. Ezekiel 21:27 speaks at the precise moment that promise looks dead, and is commonly read as an allusion to it: until he comes whose right it is. Genesis 49:10 is textually difficult, so hold the link as a traditional reading rather than a quotation. The exile does not cancel the Davidic promise; it clears the stage for the heir. Gabriel's words to Mary, that God will give to Jesus the throne of his father David and his kingdom will have no end (Luke 1:32-33), are the New Testament claiming that the trust has been executed and the crown handed over.

The name hallowed

The logic of chapter 20, that God saves for the sake of his own name, flows directly into the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. Israel profaned the name among the nations; the just of the old covenant learned to hope that God himself would hallow his own name by saving his people (CCC 2811). When Jesus teaches us to pray hallowed be thy name before we ask for anything else, he is teaching us to pray Ezekiel 20 back to God.

Voices of the Church

Read these aloud where they land. Each is either a direct citation or an honest summary, labelled as such.

St. Augustine, d. 430

When God crowns our merits, he crowns nothing other than his own gifts.

Letter 194 (to Sixtus), 5.19.

For the group. This is verse 44 in one sentence: God deals with us for his name's sake, not according to our ways, and even the good we manage to do began as his gift.

St. Justin Martyr, d. c. 165

Justin argues, in substance, that Jacob's blessing over Judah, that the scepter would not depart until he comes to whom it belongs, is fulfilled in Christ: the visible kingship of Judah could lapse only because the one for whom it was held in trust had come, and the obedience of the peoples now gathers to him.

First Apology 32. Summary of his teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. When the group finds Genesis 49:10 tonight, they are standing in a reading of the text that Christians have made since the second century; this is not a modern connect-the-dots.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, d. 1897

St. Thérèse resolved, in substance, that in the evening of this life she would appear before God with empty hands, not asking him to count her works, since all our justice has stains in his sight, but asking instead to be clothed with God's own justice and to receive from his love the eternal possession of himself.

Act of Oblation to Merciful Love (1895). Summary of her teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. This is what it looks like when a soul actually believes Ezekiel 20:44: not laxity, but a total confidence that rests on God's character rather than her own record.

Catechism Connection

The Catechism says

CCC 2811. Despite the holy Law given again and again, the people profaned God's name among the nations, and so the just of the old covenant came to hope that God himself would act to hallow his own name by saving his people. This is the Catechism reading exactly the situation of Ezekiel 20.

CCC 122. The Old Testament, even with things imperfect and provisional in it, shows us the true pedagogy of God: he teaches his people the way a patient father teaches, over centuries. Chapter 20's three rounds of rebellion and mercy are that pedagogy in story form.

CCC 210-211. After the golden calf, God reveals the meaning of his own name by proclaiming himself merciful and gracious, keeping steadfast love even for a sinful people. God's name and God's mercy are disclosed together.

CCC 2008. Merit in the Christian life exists only because God freely chose to associate us with the work of his grace; his fatherly action comes first, our free collaboration second. Grace precedes everything we could ever put on the scale.

CCC 2011. The charity of Christ is the source in us of all our merits before God; the Catechism illustrates this with St. Thérèse's offering of herself with empty hands to merciful Love.

Thread Watch

Thread Watch

Whose right it is (plant). New thread planted tonight at 21:27. The crown comes off the last Davidic king and is held in trust for a rightful heir. Let the group feel the ache of the empty throne; do not resolve it fully. It develops in session 11 with my servant David and pays off across sessions 13 to 16.

The everlasting covenant (develop). Chapter 20 shows the covenant surviving on God's side alone: he swears by himself and speaks of bringing the purged people back under his rod and into covenant again (20:37). Connect quietly to 16:60 from session 6, yet I will remember my covenant. Do not hang the point on the exact wording of 20:37; see the uncertainties list, the translations diverge there.

The heart of stone (develop). Verse 43, they shall remember and loathe their evil ways, shows hearts beginning to feel again, but only after restoration. The transplant itself is still four sessions away. If someone asks how people this stubborn could ever change, smile and say hold that question; it is the best question in the book.

Son of man (develop). God again addresses Ezekiel as son of man (20:3-4, 27). One mortal man is made to carry God's word to the whole house of Israel; keep the title warm without unpacking it.

Follow the glory (rest). No glory movement tonight. The glory left in chapters 10 and 11 and has not moved since. Let the absence sit; it makes chapter 43 land harder.

The opened mouth (rest). Nothing tonight; the mouth thread resolves at the hinge next session. Do not preview it.

Sealed guess (develop). Leader only: verse 40, all Israel serving God on my holy mountain, is a live clue for the sealed guesses written in session 1. You may say, without explaining, hold verse 40 somewhere safe in your mind. Do

not connect it aloud to the guesses; they open at session 12.

Objection Bench

Leader only. Do not raise these unless someone in the room does.

A God who saves people to protect his own reputation is an egotist. Real love acts for the beloved, not for the lover's brand.

For a creature, self-promotion is theft, because the glory belongs elsewhere. God is not one being among others competing for credit; he is the source of all good, so drawing us to himself and giving us our deepest good are the same act. If God acted for anything less than himself, he would be pointing us at something less than the best. And notice what acting for his name's sake concretely produced in chapter 20: not abandonment but rescue, three times over, for people who had earned none of it. His glory and our salvation are not rivals; in the covenant he has wedded them.

Verse 43 says the restored people will loathe themselves. Isn't that exactly the toxic religious shame we should be helping young adults escape?

Watch the order of events. They are restored first, accepted first, brought home first, and then, safe inside mercy, they remember and grieve what they were. That is contrition, and it heals; shame that comes before mercy, or instead of it, crushes. Session 7 already established that God takes no pleasure in the death of anyone (18:32). If someone in the room carries real self-hatred, name the difference gently: godly sorrow looks at the wound in the light of the Physician; shame looks at the wound in the dark. The confessional exists precisely to keep sorrow in the light.

Session Goals

1. Trace the three-round cycle of rebellion and mercy in Ezekiel 20 and name its engine: God acting for the sake of his own name.
2. Face 20:25-26 honestly, presenting the strongest form of the objection and the range of faithful readings without flattening the difficulty.
3. Discover the second-exodus promise by tracing the mighty hand and outstretched arm back to its source.
4. Meet the one whose right it is in 21:27 and connect the crown held in trust to Jacob's blessing over Judah.
5. Land the pastoral point: God's covenant fidelity rests on his name and character, not our performance, and it does not fail; that is not the same as final salvation without repentance and perseverance, and the chapter's judgment on rebels is part of the same oracle.

Time Note

Planned for 75 to 90 minutes

Roughly: prayer and Win questions 12 minutes; the chapter 20 reading in three blocks 12 minutes; questions 1 to 5 about 30 minutes, of which the steelman on 20:25-26 deserves a full 10; the discovery and questions 6 to 7 about 15

minutes; the 21:25-27 reading and questions 8 to 10 about 15 minutes; Send, Live It, and closing 10 minutes. Those blocks total 94 minutes, which is over the ceiling: plan to take the first cut below before you start, not during.

If you are running long, cut in this order.

1. First cut: the Dig Deeper boxes on questions 4 and 9. Point to them on the Take-Home instead.
2. Second cut: compress question 7 by folding its content into your shared answer after question 6, keeping only the pastoral note on verse 43.
3. Third cut: compress question 2 by summarizing the Egypt scene yourself in two sentences after the reading, and move straight to the pattern in question 3.

Part Two

Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Pray together

Father, you swore by your own name to a people who kept breaking their word, and you kept yours. You acted for the sake of your name in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Babylon, and you have acted for the sake of your name in every one of our lives. Retell our history tonight in the light of your mercy. Open the Scriptures to us, and open us to the Scriptures, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Win

Open questions. No wrong answers. Let everyone speak before you move on.

W1. Think of a story your family retells every time you gather. Why that story? What does the retelling actually do to the people in the room?

W2. Has your name, or your family's name, ever made you do the right thing when you did not feel like it? What is it about a name?

Both questions are loading tonight's two big ideas, retold history and the weight of a name. Do not explain that; just enjoy the answers.

Read

Read aloud

Ezekiel 20 is long and it builds by repetition, so let it be heard as repetition. Three readers: 20:1-17, 20:18-32, 20:33-44. Before you start, ask everyone to raise a finger silently each time they hear God act or refrain for the sake of my name. Hold 21:25-27 back; it gets its own dramatic reading at question 8.

Build

Numbered inductive questions. Ask, wait, let the group work the text. The ANSWER boxes are for you to share after the discussion, not before it.

The refused inquiry

1. Look at 20:1-4. What do the elders come for, what does God refuse, and what does he give them instead?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

They come to inquire of the LORD, wanting an oracle, probably reassurance. God flatly refuses: as I live, I will not be inquired of by you. We have seen this exact scene before: in chapter 14 God refused the elders because they had taken idols into their hearts. Instead of a consultation he opens a trial: let them know the abominations of their fathers. God will not be treated as a service you consult while your heart belongs elsewhere. What he gives instead of the answer they wanted is the history they needed.

Egypt, before the exodus

2. Read 20:5-9 again slowly. What does this passage tell us about Israel in Egypt that the version of the story we usually tell leaves out? And what stopped the story from ending right there?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Two shocks. First, Israel was already worshiping idols in Egypt, and when God commanded them to cast the idols away, they refused. Second, God says he considered pouring out his wrath on them in Egypt itself, before any exodus. What stopped him: but I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations. So the exodus was never a reward for faithfulness. From the very first page, rescue was mercy given for the sake of God's own name.

The pattern

3. Now trace 20:10-26 as a group. How many rounds of the cycle do you count, and what are the fixed elements that repeat every time?

Take it as far as the room wants

Floor. If the room is quiet, just ask: who keeps this story going, Israel or God? How do you know?

Ground. Ask what a name means in Scripture: not a label but God's revealed character and his public reputation among the nations, bound to this people by oath. If Israel is destroyed, the nations conclude the LORD is weak or faithless.

Depth. Ask why mercy anchored in God's name is more secure than mercy anchored in our repentance. If the cycle proves anything, it is that mercy resting on performance would have ended in Egypt, in round one.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Three rounds: Israel in Egypt, the exodus generation in the wilderness, and their children in the wilderness. The fixed elements: God gives himself and his statutes, the ones by whose observance man shall live; he gives the sabbaths as a sign; Israel rebels; wrath is deserved and even resolved upon; and then the hinge, but I acted for the sake of my name, or I withheld my hand for the sake of my name (verses 9, 14, 22). The engine of Israel's history is not Israel's fidelity. It is God's fidelity to his own name.

4. Of all the commandments, the sabbaths get singled out twice as a sign (20:12, 20). Why the sabbath? And why might that matter enormously to people sitting in Babylon?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The sabbath is the covenant made visible in time: a weekly badge that says these people belong to the LORD, given, verse 12 says, that they might know that I the LORD sanctify them. And notice what a sign in time means for exiles: you cannot take the temple to Babylon, but you can keep the sabbath anywhere. It is a portable sign of belonging. That fits what we discovered in session 1: God is not confined to his temple, and neither is membership in his people.

Dig Deeper

The Church receives this instinct in the Lord's Day. Sunday is not simply the sabbath moved a day; the Catechism

explains that Sunday fulfills the sabbath in Christ's resurrection (CCC 2175). Ask: what does our keeping of Sunday actually signal to the people who watch our lives?

The hard verse

5. Verses 25-26 are among the hardest in the book: I gave them statutes that were not good. Before we answer anything, let's state the objection as strongly as we can.

Build then press

The strongest form of the objection. Here is how a serious skeptic reads this passage, and it deserves a serious hearing. In God's own voice, the Bible admits that God gave Israel laws that were not good, and defiled them through the sacrifice of their first-born. This is not an enemy's slander; it is Ezekiel reporting the LORD's own words. And Exodus 22:29 looks like exactly such a law: the first-born of your sons you shall give to me. So the critic concludes: either the God of the Old Testament really did command child sacrifice at some stage, or the Bible contradicts itself about what God commanded. Either way, the claim that God's law is always good collapses from inside the text.

Answering from the text. Take the objection seriously and answer from the text. First, Ezekiel himself, in this very book, condemns child sacrifice as a defiling abomination that God punishes (16:20-21, and verse 31 of this chapter), and Jeremiah says of it, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind (Jeremiah 7:31). Second, the Torah's actual firstborn law commands redemption, not sacrifice: every first-born son is bought back (Exodus 13:13; 34:20). Third, Scripture has a grammar for what verses 25-26 are doing, the grammar of judicial handing over: God gave them over to their stubborn hearts (Psalm 81:12), and St. Paul uses the same verb three times in Romans 1, at verses 24, 26 and 28: God gave them up to what they chose. Notice where verses 25-26 sit: immediately after the third rebellion, as sentence, not as origin. God let a people determined to have pagan customs go to those customs, so that the horror itself would teach them what they had chosen. The Church has not defined one single reading of these verses, and faithful interpreters differ: some read judicial abandonment, some read the not-good statutes as the pagan laws Israel adopted, some read the law in its condemning function. What is fixed is this: God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil (CCC 311), and he never commanded the abomination he everywhere condemns.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The principal Catholic reading is that the statutes that were not good are not God authoring evil, but God, after three rounds of rebellion, letting a determined people go to the deadly customs they insisted on, as judgment, the same handing over Psalm 81 and Romans 1 describe. Ezekiel and Jeremiah both explicitly deny that God commanded child sacrifice, and the Torah's firstborn law commands redemption, not death. Catholics are free to weigh several readings of the verse's exact mechanics, because the Church has not defined one; what no reading may say is that God commands evil. It is honest to add: this verse stays hard. Scripture does not owe us comfort on every line, and a faith that can sit inside a hard text without panicking is stronger, not weaker.

The second exodus

Live discovery

Split into pairs. Hunt down where the phrase about God's mighty hand and outstretched arm comes from. Two pairs take the first passage, two take the second, one takes the third. Report back: who first acted with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and to do what?

Let them find it. Exodus 6:6; Deuteronomy 4:34; Deuteronomy 5:15

6. In 20:32 the exiles' secret plan finally surfaces: let us be like the nations, and worship wood and stone. Just disappear into Babylon. Now read God's answer in 20:33-38. There is a borrowed phrase in verses 33 and 34, and it comes from somewhere specific.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

It is exodus language, word for word: the arm that broke Egypt and pulled Israel out. God is announcing a second exodus, out of the nations this time. The exiles' plan is assimilation; God's answer is, you will not disappear, because with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm I will be king over you. And like the first exodus, this one runs through a wilderness, the wilderness of the peoples, with a face-to-face judgment and a purging of rebels, before it comes home. Homecoming and judgment are not alternatives in this book; the road home runs through the refining.

7. Follow the new exodus to its destination in 20:39-44. Where does it end, what do the restored people feel, and what do they finally know?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

It ends in accepted worship: on my holy mountain, all the house of Israel, all of them, shall serve me, and God says there I will accept them (verse 40). What they feel, verse 43, is remembrance and grief: they remember their ways and loathe what they did. Notice the order carefully: they are restored first, accepted first, and then, safe inside mercy, they grieve what they were. That is contrition, not shame; shame crushes because it comes before mercy or instead of it. And what they know, verse 44, is the whole session in one verse: you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways. Session 7 told us God takes no pleasure in anyone's death; tonight tells us why his mercy holds: it is anchored in him, not in us.

The crown comes off

8. Now turn to 21:25-27 and have one strong reader read it aloud, slowly. Who is this unhallowed wicked prince, and what exactly happens to the crown?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The prince is Zedekiah, the last Davidic king to reign in Jerusalem, the one who will see the city fall. The turban and the crown are removed; things shall not remain as they are; the low is exalted and the high abased; a ruin, a ruin, a ruin. After roughly four centuries, the throne of David goes empty. But listen to the last clause: there is an until. The crown is not melted down. Until he comes whose right it is; and to him I will give it. The crown is taken off and held in trust, like an inheritance in escrow, waiting for a rightful heir.

Live discovery

Everyone find Genesis 49:8-10, Jacob's deathbed blessing over Judah, the tribe of the kings. Read it in pairs and answer two things: what did Jacob promise about the scepter, and what is Ezekiel doing with that promise at the exact moment the throne falls?

Let them find it. Genesis 49:8-10

9. That last line, until he comes whose right it is, is quoting something. It reaches back to a blessing spoken over one of Jacob's sons at the very beginning of the Bible.

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Jacob promised that the scepter would not depart from Judah until he comes to whom it belongs, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Ezekiel quotes that promise at the precise moment it looks dead. That is the point: exile does not cancel the promise, it clears the stage. The crown is off every unworthy head and reserved for the one it was always for. Christians have read it this way since the second century, and the New Testament claims the trust was executed: the angel tells Mary that God will give to Jesus the throne of his father David, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:32-33). Let the group make that last connection themselves; someone will.

Dig Deeper

The Hebrew of Genesis 49:10 is famously difficult; the traditional reading is until Shiloh comes, and translations differ. What has been steady across ancient Jewish and Christian readers alike is the messianic direction of the verse: the scepter waits for someone. The wording is a crux; the hope is not.

Why this is good news

10. Last one. Some people hear for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways and feel almost insulted: so he doesn't do it for us? Why is this actually the safest ground in the world to stand on?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Run the alternative. If God's commitment rested on Israel's performance, chapter 20 shows exactly where the story ends: in Egypt, round one, before there was ever an exodus. Because it rests on his own name, his character and his sworn covenant, it cannot be exhausted by our failure. And this is not God loving his brand instead of us: in the covenant he has tied his name to his people the way a spouse ties a name to a ring, so that his glory and our salvation are wedded and cannot be separated. That is why the first thing Jesus teaches us to ask for is hallowed be thy name: we are asking God to do again what he did in Ezekiel 20, to glorify his name by saving his people. It is the prayer of people who know their history and trust his character more than their own.

Send

Open questions. Let these land in silence if they need to.

S1. Tonight God retold Israel's whole history with the refrain, but I acted for the sake of my name. If God retold your history, where would that refrain fall?

S2. Where in your life this week are you still trying to earn something God wants to give for his name's sake?

Live It This Week

Practices

1. Write your own Ezekiel 20. One page, private, no one sees it: a timeline of your history with God, marking the

rebellions honestly and the mercies honestly. Over each mercy you did not earn, write for his name's sake. Bring what the exercise taught you, not the paper.

2. Wear the sign in time. The sabbath was the covenant badge Israel could keep even in Babylon. This Sunday, keep the Lord's Day deliberately: Mass, plus one honest hour of rest with no screen, chosen in advance and kept like an appointment.

3. Pray the Our Father slowly once a day this week, and stop for ten full seconds after hallowed be thy name. In the silence, ask God to hallow his name in you, the way he hallowed it in Israel: by mercy.

Scripture Memory

Ezekiel 20:44

"And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel, says the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 20:44

Closing Prayer

Pray together

Lord God, you dealt with your people for your name's sake, not according to their evil ways, and you have dealt so with us. You took the crown from every unworthy head and kept it for the one whose right it is, and you gave it to your Son. Hallowed be your name: in your Church, in this room, in each of our histories. Give us this week the honesty to remember, the sorrow that heals, and the confidence of children who stand on your character and not on our own. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Part Three

Leader Reference Card

Every passage used in this session, in order. Print this page and keep it in front of you.

Primary text

- **Ezekiel 20:1-44** read in three blocks: 1-17, 18-32, 33-44
- **Ezekiel 21:25-27** held back; read aloud at question 8

Discovery sources

- **Exodus 6:6** mighty hand, outstretched arm
- **Deuteronomy 4:34** exodus formula
- **Deuteronomy 5:15** exodus formula, sabbath grounds
- **Genesis 49:8-10** Judah's scepter, until he comes

Bench for the hard verse (20:25-26)

- **Ezekiel 16:20-21** child sacrifice condemned
- **Ezekiel 20:31** condemned within this chapter
- **Jeremiah 7:31** nor did it come into my mind
- **Exodus 13:13** first-born redeemed, not sacrificed
- **Exodus 34:20** redemption law repeated
- **Psalms 81:12** gave them over to stubborn hearts
- **Romans 1:24-26** God gave them up, judicial handing over

Fulfillment and continuity

- **Luke 1:32-33** the throne of his father David
- **Ezekiel 14:1-3** the earlier refused inquiry, session 5
- **Ezekiel 18:32** no pleasure in death, session 7
- **Ezekiel 16:60** yet I will remember my covenant, session 6

Terms

- *****lema'an shemi***** for the sake of my name, the refrain of chapter 20
- *****shabbat***** the sabbath, given as the portable sign of the covenant in time
- *****Shiloh***** traditional rendering of the crux in Genesis 49:10, until Shiloh comes, read messianically by ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters

Catechism

- **CCC 2811.** the name profaned, and the hope that God will hallow it himself
- **CCC 122.** the Old Testament as true divine pedagogy
- **CCC 210-211.** God's name revealed as mercy after the golden calf
- **CCC 2008.** merit exists because grace comes first
- **CCC 2011.** Christ's charity the source of all merit; Thérèse's empty hands
- **CCC 311.** God in no way the cause of moral evil

- **CCC 2175.** Sunday fulfills the sabbath in Christ