

# Clean House

Ezekiel 20:39-42

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## I. You'll See v. 39

### a. Go **Serve** Idols

#### i. Serve – to serve God in the cult, **honour him**

1. Though Israel was serving **idols** in Ezekiel's day (to her own defilement, vv. 25–26), in the future God will not permit such sin among His people (**you will ... no longer profane My holy name**; cf. 39:7; 43:7).
2. begins with an appeal for repentance strongly couched in ironic and threatening terms. Idolatrous worship among the exiles is implied
3. "Go and serve your idols every one of you" is a remarkable command (v. 39). Like v. 25, this is a parallel to Rom 1:24, 26, 28, which refers to those who consistently rejected God. Paul stated that "God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done" (v. 28). At some point God gives in to those who consistently reject him and allows them to become wholly devoted to the destructive power of sin. Israel and Judah had repeatedly rejected God in favor of worshiping Baal, Molech, and other idols. Ezekiel's message was a declaration of the inevitability of judgment that results from such a disposition toward idols. God was therefore saying, "Go and serve your idols" because judgment is irrevocable

#### ii. Idols both words are related to the verb *pāsal*, "to hew or carve"

1. These images were occasionally made of stone (Hab 2:19) or wood (Isa 40:20; 45:20), and stone statues of deities, sometimes life-size, are known from elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Often they were made of wood carved into the shape of the deity, overlaid with gold and silver, and then fastened to a base (Hab 2:18–19; Isa 30:22; 40:19–20; Jer 10:3–5).
2. The use of such images was strictly forbidden by biblical law. However, the context in which the prohibition occurs in the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:2–6; Deut 5:6–10)
3. Instead of making offerings that create a "pleasing aroma" (see Gen 8:21) and demonstrate proper action toward God, this food and drink is tied to the belief that the gods require regular meals (seen in the famished gods in the Gilgamesh flood epic). See the comments on Ezekiel 6:13 for other condemnations of idolatrous worship practices and the use of high places and sacred groves

4. Baal worship was popular and difficult to eradicate from Israel because it fed on the people's lust, fear, and the desire to conform to their neighbors. It was encouraged by natural concerns for food, farms, families, and flocks, believing that Baal could help them insure the best in each of these areas. By embracing polytheistic forms of worship, the Hebrews conformed to the standards and lifestyle of their neighbors and thus created the social, moral, and spiritual problems that brought about their judgment
- b. Later You'll Listen
  - i. Listen
- c. My Holy Name
  - i. No Longer Profane
    1. Profane *be polluted, defiled*, of holy places
    2. With Gifts present rejected (idolatrous) offerings
    3. Idols

## II. This House v. 40

- a. Holy Mountain
  - i. Mountain of Israel (v. 40). This is a reference to Zion, Jerusalem, and the temple as used elsewhere (e.g., Isa 27:13; 56:7; 66:20; Joel 2:1; 3:17; Zeph 3:11; Zech 8:3).
- b. High Mountain of Israel (Difference adjectives to
  - i. High Mountain of Israel
    1. Location Matters- Only here in the book of Ezekiel do we find in the mouth of Yahweh the expression **הר קדשי**, which is particularly evident in the book of Isaiah (11:9; 56:7 57:13 65:11 25 66:20 *but which is also found in Ps 2:6 Joel 2:1 4:17 Ob 16; Zeph 3:11 Peculiar to Ezekiel, however, is the **הר מרום ישראל** 17:23), plural 34:14 which points to the temple mount in the light of the mythical mount of God*
    2. They will **Serve Me**
  - ii. I will **Accept**
    1. Accept to **take pleasure in, be favourable to someone, be well disposed**
      - a. The OT prophets inveighed against the notion, so congenial to the natural man, that God can be persuaded to accept a man's person through accepting a correctly-offered ritual worship. They constantly affirmed that the divine order was the reverse. The offerings were acceptable only when the persons were acceptable (Ho. 8:13; Mal. 1:10, 13). Throughout the Bible the teaching is underlined that God does not accept a man's person because of his social status or importance. He does not respect persons (Gal. 2:6). This

is a virtue which all are to imitate. However, it was not till the Cornelius incident that the early church apprehended the truth that God does not require Jewish nationality, nor circumcision, as a prerequisite for acceptance with him (Acts 10:35).

- b. The well-doing that God requires for acceptance must not in any point fall short of his perfections. Only those who by patience persist in well-doing may claim the reward of eternal life for their works (Rom. 2:6–7). None achieves this. All fall short of the glory of God through sin (Rom. 3:9–23). Our Lord alone is accepted. He alone has merited God’s Verdict: ‘With thee I am well pleased.’ Ezekiel foretold that it would be the work of God to make sinners acceptable to him (Ezk. 20:40–41; 36:23–29). It is through incorporation into Christ, and the gift of his righteousness (Rom. 5:17), that believers are accepted with God. This is the work of God, who through his grace makes us ‘accepted in the beloved’ (Eph. 1:6)

iii. **Seek Your Contribution**

- a. Seek - God requires
- b. Contributions rendering it as **contribution**, but without abandoning the idea of offering wherever that appears to be appropriate
  - i. “lifting up, taking away” of the offering that is to be consecrated, is found

2. Choicest Gifts

- a. Choicest - the first of your contributions
- b. Gifts

3. Holy Things

- a. Holy (*qōdēš*) means “set apart,” the opposite of “profaned” or “made common.” Israel had profaned her God by debasing her worship with sin and idolatry (20:39).
- b. Things – money for votive offerings, meaning a votive offering of silver (silver brought as holy gifts, money offered as sacred donations
  - i. “holy dues” (v 40) as part of Israel’s acceptable worship

**III. Bring You Back Home vs. 41-42**

- a. Soothing Aroma
  - i. I will accept You
    - 1. When I bring you
      - a. From the People
    - 2. Gather You

- a. From the Lands
  - b. You were scattered
- ii. I will Prove Myself
  - 1. In the Sight of Nations - Yahweh, would be sanctified or *show* himself holy among his people in such a way the non-Israelite nations would recognize God's hand on them
  - 2. And Israel's restoration to the land would spell the vindication of Yahweh's holiness on the international scene
- b. You will Know
  - i. I am the Lord
  - ii. When I bring into the Land of Israel- Israel and Judah would again know Yahweh as God when he fulfills this promise and restores them to the land
    - 1. The emphasis here is on "knowing" or experiencing God and therefore a reaffirmation that Yahweh is the only true God
    - 2. I swore to your forefathers