

Spiritual Declension
Ezekiel 20:1-32

Main Point:

Learn from Israel's decline so that you avoid spiritual declension.

1. There is much for you to learn from Israel's decline.
2. Learn from Israel's decline not to despise the Bible.
3. Learn from Israel's decline not to profane the Sabbath.
4. Learn from Israel's decline not to let your heart go after idols.
5. Learn from Israel's decline not to desire likeness to the world.
6. Learn from Israel's decline not to forget God's wonderful grace.

Christopher Wright "The sins of the fathers had followed the present generation right into exile, and the same sins were still being practiced there."

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (NKJV)

Deuteronomy 30:15-16 15 "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. (NKJV)

Kenneth Mathews "Disciplined restraint nourishes life, producing a more meaningful life. God gave his people moral boundaries so they would thrive under his approval and blessing."

Christopher Wright "Those actions which people insist on pursuing against God's revealed will eventually become actions to which he "gives them up", and in the end such persistent inversion ... becomes self-destructive."

Psalms 119:97, 101 97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day ... 101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word. (NKJV)

Derek Thomas "Keeping the sabbath was to be the Israelites' way of demonstrating their identity as the Lord's people."

Joseph Pipa "The very practice of not pursuing our work and recreation ... keeps us from becoming obsessed with them. It deals the death-blow to our becoming workaholics or to our being obsessed with our favorite ... activity."

Isaiah 58:13-14 13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, *From* doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight ... 14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken." (NKJV)

Matthew Henry "The profanation of the sabbath day is an inlet to all impiety ..."

J.C. Ryle "I should as soon expect a farmer to prosper in business who contented himself with sowing his fields and never looking at them till harvest, as expect a believer to attain much holiness who was not diligent about his Bible reading, his prayers, and the use of his Sundays."

Deuteronomy 6:13-14 13 You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him ... 14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you (NKJV)

Matthew Henry "The bias of the mind towards the world and the flesh ... is the root of bitterness from which springs all disobedience to the divine law."

Leviticus 18:3-4 3 According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwell, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4 You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I *am* the LORD your God. (NKJV)

Christopher Wright "Israel's persistent sin is met and will be overcome by Yahweh's persistent grace ... God will not be defeated by Israel's stubbornness."

Iain Duguid "He may and indeed does chastise them and judge them, but he can never abandon them utterly. His divine nature requires faithfulness to his promise, even in the face of unrelenting human sin..."