

## Single-Minded Determination

When Joey was just a teenager, he decided he wanted to become a doctor. This was his goal and his constant motivation. He worked hard through high school, college, and medical school. When obstacles and difficulties seemed to block Joey's path, he worked even harder and overcame them. Because of his single-minded determination, Joey fulfilled his dream and became a doctor.

We love stories like that, don't we? Our culture applauds such determination and drive to succeed.

The ancient Israelites also exhibited single-mindedness. In this week's lesson, God describes their determination.

**Eze. 20:1** This took place in the seventh year of Ezekiel's captivity (about 590 B.C.). Why did the elders of Israel come to him?

**Eze. 20:2-3** What did God tell Ezekiel to tell them?

**Eze. 20:4** "Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge them? Cause them to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_."

**Eze. 20:5** When did God make Himself known to Israel?

The phrase "*lifted up mine hand*" refers to God swearing an oath or promise to the children of Israel (like when the President takes the oath of office).

**Eze. 20:6** God promised to bring them out of the land of \_\_\_\_\_, and take them where?

**Eze. 20:7** What did God tell them?

**Eze. 20:8** What did the Israelites do?

What did God say?

**Eze. 20:9** Why didn't God destroy them in Egypt?

**Eze. 20:10-12** God brought them out of Egypt (v. 10). What instructions did He give them?

**Eze. 20:13** What did the Israelites do?

What did God say?

Eze. 20:14 Why didn't God destroy them in the wilderness?

The Israelites refused to enter the Promised Land, so God let them wander in the wilderness until the adults all died (Num. 14).

Eze. 20:18-20 What instructions did God give the younger generation?

Eze. 20:21 What did the younger Israelites do?

What did God say?

Eze. 20:22 Why didn't God destroy them?

Eze. 20:28 When God brought the Israelites into the Promised Land, what did they do?

Eze. 20:30 The Israelites in Ezekiel's time were as sinful as their ancestors.

Eze. 20:31 What sins were the Israelites committing?

"As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ of by you."

Chapter 23 is a lengthy parable about two adulterous sisters, who represented Samaria (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah; the Lord also compared Israel and Judah to sisters in Jer. 3:6-11). The sisters learned harlotry in Egypt. Rather than learn from Samaria's mistakes, Jerusalem became even more corrupt.

**Concluding Thoughts:** Single-minded determination can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your goal.

**The Israelites had a single-minded determination to sin.**

- God made wonderful promises to them, but they didn't let those promises deter them from sinning.
- God gave them clear instructions, but they still sinned.
- God miraculously delivered them from Egypt, but still they were determined to sin.
- God protected them from the Egyptian army and others, but they were still single-minded in their desire to sin.
- God provided their daily food, but they still chose to sin.
- God warned them about the dangers of sin and rebellion, but they didn't let that stand in their way.
- God gave them clear and dramatic examples of the bad results of sin, but even that couldn't shift their focus.

The Israelites' single-minded determination to sin was a very bad thing, which brought about very bad results.

If you look at the list above and think about your life, you will see that God has done all those same things for you. God has given you promises, instructions, deliverance, protection,

provision, warning, and examples. You have the choice to either ignore all those things and sin (like the Israelites did), or you can be single-minded in your determination to resist sin and obey God. The choice is yours.

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**Project:** Tell God every morning this week: “I am determined to resist sin and obey you.”  
Memorize **James 4:7**.