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Ezekiel 18

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Ezekiel 18.

Topics.

- Children suffer for the sins of their fathers.
- Everyone is accountable for their own sin.
- Fathers are not guilty for the sins of their sons.
- Sons are not guilty for the sins of their fathers.
- The soul who sins will die.
- When a wicked person turns from their wickedness they shall live.
- When a righteous person turns from their righteousness they shall die.
- If a righteous person does injustice they will be judged.
- When a wicked person does what is just and right they shall live.
- The house of Israel says the LORD is unjust.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Ezekiel, a prophet and priest, was exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. His ministry extended over at least twenty-three years. The book opens with his first dramatic vision of the "likeness" of the LORD". Ezekiel was keenly aware of God's presence and power in human affairs. He addressed both the exiles and the people left in Judah with messages of warning and judgment, predicting the fall of Jerusalem. After its fall (586), Ezekiel prophesied of hope and reassurance for the people of Judah, who had then lost the focus of God's covenant and the temple in Jerusalem. His vision of the valley of dry bones (chpt. 37) is a classic picture of God's ability to breathe new life into those who are spiritually dead.

Ezekiel is prophesying about the Jews that did not go into captivity to Babylon, but remained against the word of the LORD in Jerusalem. Ezekiel's message is primarily directed to the people in the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem (the two tribes), but often it is difficult to separate the message from Judah and Israel (the ten tribes) because much of what the LORD says can be applied to both Judah and Israel because the two are so intertwined and both nations were guilty of the same gross sins. For a greater overview of the entire book, visit the introduction to the book of Ezekiel in chapter one.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

EZEKIEL 18:1-2

Children Suffer for the Sins of their Fathers.

- **Ezekiel 18:1-2:** The word of the LORD came to me: ²"What do you (the House of Israel) (v29) mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'?"

This proverb: means the children suffer because of the sins of their fathers.

Sour grapes: taste unpleasant, in this context they are a symbol of a wicked lifestyle.

Children's teeth are set on edge: means they live in the fear of reaping the punishment of the sins of their fathers.

EZEKIEL 18:3-4

Everyone is Accountable for their Own Sin.

- **Ezekiel 18:3-4:** As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

Whoever sins will be accountable for that sin. This is way no one should judge the salvation of another faithful brother or sister since they will be held accountable for their own sin and not one of us can know the struggle that maybe going on within. Added to this the global Kingdom of God is made up of different cultures, nations and languages and many come from broken and abusive families, from drug addictions and maybe battling with all sorts of mental anguish and emotional turmoil within. Only God sees the true intent and motive of the heart and will judge each one of us accordingly. In the New Testament the apostle Paul wrote:

- No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—¹³each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

Jesus said:

- I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me (John 10:14).

If Jesus knows who the faithful are and who belongs to his family, we certainly do not need to concern ourselves with who is saved and who is not saved within the global Kingdom of God.

EZEKIEL 18:5-9

A Righteous Person.

- **Ezekiel 18:5-9:** "If a man is righteous and does what is just and right—⁶if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbour's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, ⁷does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, ⁸does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, ⁹walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully—he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord GOD.

A righteous person is one who:

- Does what is just and right to all humans.
- Is not looking to idols or bowing down to them.
- Will not have an affair with married woman or go into a woman in menstruation.
- Refuses to oppress anyone, does not steal and pays back what they owe.
- Gives food to the hungry and clothing to the poor.

- Refuses to lend at interest or take make a profit from a loan.
- Will not tolerate injustice, but executes true justice for everyone.
- Lives a lifestyle that is in harmony with God's ways.
- Is faithful to God no matter what the situation of circumstance.

NOTE: righteousness in this context does not mean without sin only one man has walked on this planet that has attained to that perfect standard of life and his name is the Lord Jesus Christ. If we were able to attain to the glorious state of a sin free life Christ died for no reason. Righteousness in this context carries the idea of being faithful to God and being a person who treats others with respect and decency. All of the above laws can be summed up in Jesus command, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," (Mark 12:31). This is because the spirit behind the law is love because each law protects another human from harm. In the book of Romans Paul states: "Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law," (Romans 13:10).

The spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from physical, financial, sexual, verbal and emotional and spiritual harm. Those who know God aim to keep the law because it is the right and loving thing to do. It fulfils the Ten Commandments regarding man, and the royal law, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Jas 2:8). It pleases God and brings a good testimony to His name and the name of, Jesus and the Christian faith. Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because they are saved.

They understand that righteousness that leads to eternal life is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort. One great scholar wrote: though the law is splendid as a guide to understanding God's will, as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure nevertheless both law and grace go together, the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the Good News of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment, the law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22).

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount: the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others. This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). Based on the commandment, love your neighbour

as yourself and the law it could be said that a wicked and evil person is one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and deliberately does harm to other humans. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5.

In Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

EZEKIEL 18:10-13

Fathers are Not Guilty for the Sins of their Sons.

- **Ezekiel 18:10-13:** If he fathers a son who is violent, a shedder of blood, who does any of these things ¹¹(though he himself did none of these things), who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife, ¹²oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination, ¹³lends at interest, and takes profit; shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.

Before the LORD, a father will not be held accountable for the sins of his son.

EZEKIEL 18:14-18

Sons are Not Guilty for the Sins of their Fathers.

- **Ezekiel 18:14-18:** Now suppose this man fathers a son who sees all the sins that his father has done; he sees, and does not do likewise: ¹⁵he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife, ¹⁶does not oppress anyone, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, ¹⁷withholds his hand from iniquity, takes no interest or profit, obeys my rules, and walks in my statutes; he shall not die for his father's iniquity; he shall surely live. ¹⁸As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.

Before the LORD, a son will not be held accountable for the sins of his father.

EZEKIEL 18:19-20

The Soul who Sins will Die.

- **Ezekiel 18:19-20:** Yet you (the House of Israel) (v29) say, 'Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?' When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. ²⁰The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

How amazing is this: the people of Israel actually believe their sons should suffer for the sins of their fathers, but God says everyone is accountable for their own sin, before the LORD no-one is going to be punished for the sin of another person.

EZEKIEL 18:21-23

When the Wicked Turns from their Wickedness they shall Live.

- **Ezekiel 18:21-23:** But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²²None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. ²³Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?

No matter how long a person has lived in sin, if they genuinely repent, turn to the LORD and do what is right they will inherit eternal life.

NOTICE: even though the LORD has to judge those who are corrupt He has no pleasure in doing it.

EZEKIEL 18:24

When the Righteous Turns from their Righteousness they shall Die.

- **Ezekiel 18:24:** But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.

No matter how long a person has lived a righteous life, if they turn from the LORD and do what is corrupt, they will be condemned.

EZEKIEL 18:25-26

If a Righteous Person does Injustice they will be Judged.

- **Ezekiel 18:25-26:** Yet you (the House of Israel) (v29) say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? ²⁶When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die.

How amazing is this: the House of Israel are accusing God of being unjust because He has said no matter how long a righteous person has been righteous if they turn to injustice it will not account, they will be condemned, but if a person has been wicked of all their life and turn to what is right God will favour them. This is a danger of a self-righteous person who does not know God.

A self-righteous person or one who thinks they can be saved by works view their years of good service like money being stored in a bank and accumulating interest that cancels out their wrongdoing, but God is saying doing right is not like interest that you can draw on later, it is what is expected of you each day, there is no righteous interest that accumulates to the next day that cancels out wickedness.

EZEKIEL 18:27-28

When a Wicked Person does what is Just and Right, they shall Live.

- **Ezekiel 18:27-28:** Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. ²⁸Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

No matter how long a person has lived in sin or how bad they have been if they genuinely turn to the Lord in repentance and forsake their wickedness the Lord will save them and grant them eternal life, such is the grace and mercy of God.

NOTE: when a sinner finds God's love in Christ through repentance their life is transformed, everything changes, motivations, desires, perspectives, goals etc. God's Spirit touches every area of the human heart when there is true repentance and sorrow toward God.

EZEKIEL 18:29-32

The House of Israel says the LORD is Unjust.

- **Ezekiel 18:29-32:** Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the LORD is not just.' O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? ³⁰"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."

God's own people accuse Him of been unjust He tells them to question their thinking and says He will judge all the people of Israel according to their faithfulness toward Him and how they have treated others.

God's remedy to everyone who sins: repent and turn from all their wrong doing and make themselves a new heart and a new spirit before their iniquity leads them to ruin. A new heart and a new spirit, means change the desires toward what is good and right instead of what is wrong and unjust.

NOTICE: this is the second time the LORD has said He has no pleasure in the death of anyone His desire is that everyone would turn from wickedness and live eternally.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
