

## Ezekiel Chapter 18.

April 21, 2024.

### The Big Picture.

When we read in the scripture, we should always consider the context. Where are we in the big picture? Chapters 4 through 24 of Ezekiel are prophecies about, or related to, the destruction of Jerusalem. The prophecy has two fulfillments: one when the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem just a few years after this prophecy. These chapters are also a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century by the Romans. Chapter 18 is about some who were charging God with being unfair by bringing this destruction on them.

### Introduction to Chapter 18.

Have you ever in your heart and mind charged God with being unfair? Have you ever thought that God is obligated to treat everybody the same? Have you ever thought that God blesses those living ungodly more than those that are trying to live right? Have you for any reason ever felt like God is unfair? If so, then you should be able to relate to these complainers in chapter 18 who are questioning God in His treatment of the Jews in Ezekiel's day.

### Overview of Chapter 18.

Ezekiel declares that his message came from God, Vs 1. Some have quoted a saying which charges God with being unjust by punishing the present generation for the sins of their fathers, Vs 2. God says He will put that idea to rest, Vs 3. God sets forth arguments that He is not being unfair by pouring out His wrath on the present generation. Vs 4- 29. In view of these arguments, verses 30-32 admonished the people to repent and turn from their sins.

### Verse by Verse.

Verse 1.

Ezekiel says that what he is saying came from God.

Verse 2.

A popular saying is floated in verse two suggesting that God is unfairly punishing Ezekiel's generation for the sins of previous generations: ..... *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? Eze 18:2.*

Verse 3.

God says He is going to put that idea to rest.

Verse 4.

All souls belong to God. The first argument set forth against these complainers is the sovereignty of God.

Verses 5-9.

If a man refrains from certain numerated sins and also does certain righteous duties, that man will live.

Verses 10-13.

If a man begets a son that does not keep the law, and also does not other duties, that son will die.10-13.

Verses 14-17.

If a man begets a son that considers his father's sins and refrains from sin and does the required duties, that son will live.

Verse 18.

The unjust father of the righteous son shall die.

Verses 19-20.

The son will not suffer the consequences of his father's sins, and the father will not suffer the consequences of the sins of his son. It works both ways.

Verse 21-22.

If a wicked man turns from his sins and then keeps God's statutes, that man shall not die.

Verse 23.

God does not get pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Verse 24.

If a righteous man turns to a sinful course and takes a wicked course, he shall die.

Verse 25.

The complainers continue to charge God with being unjust in spite of all the arguments.

Verse 26-28.

The previous arguments are repeated for emphasis.

Verse 29.

In spite of the defense, the complainers continue to charge God with being unjust in His judgements.

Verses 30-31.

Based on all the foregoing arguments, Israel is admonished to repent and turn from their sins.

## **Lessons from this chapter.**

### **God is Sovereign.**

As a first response to those that question the fairness of God, God simply says, "All souls are mine".

Everybody belongs to God because He created all things. God doesn't really have to give reasons for why He does what He does.

Many times, the sovereignty of God is the only reason given to those who challenge whether God is fair. Job wanted to stand before God and argue with Him. Job 23:1-4. When God came to Job, the answer He gave to Job was that He was sovereign and all powerful. Job was made to be ashamed and reduced to silence. Job 40:1-4.

In Romans 9 the doctrine of the sovereignty of God is set forth. In view of this truth, the question is raised as to how God could find fault in anyone because no one could resist His will. The scripture does not reason with us about the controversy. It simply says, *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* Ro 9:20.

### **No Matter our Circumstances We Have the Opportunity to Obey God and be Blessed.**

Regardless of our previous circumstances, whether rich or poor, whether we were raised in church or otherwise, whether we are in prison, or in the nursing home. We can't successfully argue that God is unfair because we have the opportunity to start today living in obedience to God. Everyone has that option.

### **Sin has consequences.**

One of the primary principles in chapter 18 is that there are consequences to sin. Some of those consequences are bad, and some are rewards. It appears to me this principle is lost in our world today. My generation has probably seen the most rapid change in our culture in the history of mankind. The fear of God is based on the fact that sin has consequences. We should fear sin the same way we fear a rattle snake. Just looking at a rattle snake strikes me with fear.

Consider the following verses concerning consequences.

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 2 Cor 5:10.*

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal 6:7.*

*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Mat 12:36.*

The punishment will be severe enough to make us wish we had not taken a sinful course.

We are held accountable for our sins. We cannot blame circumstances, friends or family. We made the decision and we did the deed. We should fear sin like we fear a rattle snake.

My own experience confirms to me that sin has consequences. My observation of other people's lives confirms to me that sin has consequences.

Our society seems to have lost sight of the fact that sin has consequences. Living together outside of marriage is a major sin. Sex outside of marriage is a sin. Killing babies is a sin. Homosexual practice is a sin. Stealing is a sin. Lust is a sin. Immodesty is a sin. If it is a sin for a man to lust, it is a sin for a woman to entice him to lust.

Sin not only brings about consequences it also robs us of the blessings of godliness. There is no real joy in life outside of a true knowledge of God. As you observe people, which ones have joy, believers or unbelievers.

### **Sins of Omission.**

In chapter 18 there is a list of things to not do, but there is a list of things we should do, such as giving bread to the hungry, and covering the naked with a garment. Doing the don'ts is a sin, but failure to do the required things is also a sin.

Consider what James said about pure religion: *.....To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. James 1:27.*

### **Repent.**

In the last three verses of chapter 18 God offers a solution to those that would question whether He was fair in punishing the generation that lived at that time. That solution was repentance. Repentance is brought about by having godly sorrow in your heart. Not just sorrow that we got caught, but sorrow that we offended God that loves us, sorrow that we offended Jesus that died for us. Repentance is turning from the sin to walk in the Spirit, to walk in the light of God's word. Repentance results in experience forgiveness.