

- I) V1-2 INTRO: The word of the LORD came to me again saying What do you mean when you use this
 - a) In this chapter, Ezekiel is dealing with the subject of individual responsibility before God
 - 1) As he does so, he emphasizes judgment that comes upon people while they are still on earth
 - 2) FACT: He prophesied concerning national judgment, but now speaks of *personal responsibility*

- II) EZEKIEL ASKS: Concerning a popular proverb that has been circulating amongst them
 - a) They were complaining that they were being punished for things their parents did
 - 1) They believed their exile in Babylon was unfair because *their parents sinned*, and not them!
 - 2) This proverb actually reflected the fact that they did not see their own sin
 - 3) Because of this, they think that God is unfair because they are in Babylonian exile

- III) GOD MAKES IT CLEAR: You are being punished for what you have done, and not your fathers sins
 - a) Your self-assessment is not correct, because you have personal guilt for what you have done
 - 1) You are in exile because you have been guilty of idolatry, and are reaping the consequences

- IV) V3 AS I LIVE SAYS THE LORD GOD: You shall no longer use this proverb in Israel
 - a) God rejects their shifting of blame, and tells them that they reap the consequences of their sin
 - 1) POINT: Stop blaming me for what you have done to yourselves
 - 2) Somebody drinks, drives, gets into an accident, and then says Why did you do this, God?

- V) V4 BEHOLD: *All souls are Mine* the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine
 - a) FIRST: God makes it clear that as God, every human being belongs to Him
 - 1) Naturally, this would include the evil as well as the good:
 - 2) Because this is true, when it comes to judgment He will be just and deal with each one fairly
 - 3) Because He is just and fair, people have personal responsibility for their own lives

- VI) NOTICE: All souls are Mine
 - a) SOUL: Nephesh, is used in various ways in the Old Testament
 - 1) Speaks of life, a person, mind, heart, an appetite, desire, or an emotion

- VII) KEY: Here, it is in reference to a person's *physical life*
 - a) HE IS SAYING: The person who sins must *physically die*
 - 1) Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- VIII) POINT: All souls belong to Him
 - a) God says He owns each person, and to Him they are ultimately accountable
 - 1) Ro 14:12 Each of us shall give account of himself to God.
 - 2) Heb 4:13 There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.
 - 3) 1 Pe 4:5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

- IX) V5-9 BUT: If a man *is* just and *does* what is lawful and right if he has not eaten on the mountain
 - a) Interestingly, Ezekiel speaks of three generations in the next few verses
 - 1) V5-9 is a *father*
 - 2) V10-13 is *his son*
 - 3) V14-17 is *his grandson*

- I) IMPORTANT: The just man spoken of in this passage is just by Old Testament requirements

- a) He is the one whose heart and conduct are right before God
 - 1) Notice, the man *is* just and *does* what is right
 - 2) *Doing* what is right begins with a heart that *is* just, or justified and righteous before God

- II) NOTICE: The just man before God is the one who has kept God's judgments faithfully over a lifetime
 - a) He has not eaten on the mountains (immoral idolatrous feasts) or worshiped idols
 - b) He has not defiled his neighbor's wife: He has honored God's word concerning adultery
 - c) He has not approached a woman in her impurity:
 - 1) Lev 18:19 You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity.

- III) V7 CONTINUING: He has not oppressed anyone (Because he genuinely cares for others)
 - a) He has restored the debtor his pledge: often, a poor person would use clothing as collateral
 - 1) Dt 24:10-13 When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. And if the man *is* poor, you shall not keep his pledge overnight. You shall in any case return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and bless you; and it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.
 - b) Has robbed no one by violence, but rather he is generous and concerned for the poor
 - 1) Jas 2:15-17 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- IV) V8 IF HE: has not exacted usury nor taken any increase
 - a) Lending at interest to foreigners was allowed, but not to countrymen because they were family
 - 1) Dt 23:19-20 You shall not charge interest to your brother--interest on money *or* food *or* anything that is lent out at interest. To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, that the LORD your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess.

- V) V9 IF HE: Has *walked* in My statutes and *kept* my judgments faithfully he is just *he shall surely live*
 - a) This is a man who has kept the requirements of God, revealing a heart of obedience
 - 1) God says he is just and shall surely live, both in a spiritual and in a physical sense
 - 2) He has a genuine faith in God, and God says that he is justified before Him
 - 3) Gal 3:11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

- VI) V10-13 IF HE: Begets a son who is a robber or a shedder of blood, who does any of these things
 - a) Though the man is righteous, does his personal righteousness extend to an unrighteous son
 - 1) NO: Because a person is saved by personal faith, and not the faith of someone else

- VII) HIS SON: Did none of the things the father did but rather was ungodly in every way
 - a) Should he live because his father is righteous: no, as natural relationship will not profit him
 - 1) Mt 3:8-9 Bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones
 - 2) I cannot believe on behalf of anybody else, and my testimony does not save my children

- I) V14-18 IF HOWEVER: He begets a son who sees all the sins which his father has done and considers
 - a) This is the grandson, and he is like his grandfather: he is godly

- 1) Instead of following a bad example, the grandson has followed the example of godliness
 - 2) He considered (weighed) the issues and decided to pursue his grandfather's example
- II) **QUESTION:** Would God judge a godly son for the deeds of an ungodly father
- a) **AGAIN:** Judgment occurs on the basis of each individual's life
 - 1) Jn 5:28-30 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.
- III) **V18 AS FOR HIS FATHER:** Because he has cruelly oppressed robbed his brother by violence and did
- a) The ungodly father reaps what he has sown both in this life and after he dies
 - 1) He dies physically and eternally, because he dies in unrepentant sin and there are no 2nd chances
 - 2) Heb 9:27
 - 3) **REMEMBER THE CONTEXT:** God is bringing physical judgment on the nation and this is why
- IV) **V19-20 YET YOU SAY:** Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father Because the son has done
- a) They are arguing with God on this matter, thinking the sons are punished because of the father
 - 1) They think they should not be judged because they have been righteous as a nation
 - 2) God makes it clear: you are being judged on the basis of your own evil, as you are idolaters
 - 3) Ezek 12:2 Son of man you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they are a rebellious house
- V) **V21-23 BUT:** If a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed keeps all my statutes
- a) How do you know if somebody is truly saved
 - 1) He turns from all his sins, and keeps all His statutes
 - 2) In other words, he has a change of heart that is consistent over the rest of his life
- VI) **KEY:** This is not an outward righteousness, but an inward change of heart that creates a new life
- a) In Jesus' day, Pharisees had an outward righteousness that was hard to match
 - 1) Mt 23:25-26 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.
 - 2) Mt 15:8 These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with *their* lips, But their heart is far from Me.
- VII) **CONVERSION:** Results from turning away from your sins and turning to God
- a) A person can repent, and God forgives him of all his sins (2 Co 5:17)
 - 1) Repentance and conversion cancels all prior debts (1 Jn 1:9)
 - 2) Ps 103:11-13 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him.
- VIII) **V23 DO I:** Have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die says the LORD GOD and not that he
- a) 2 Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness...
- I) **V24-26 BUT:** When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity
- a) This is a man who has had a reputation for being righteous, who turns away from God

- 1) The true test of righteousness is how your life ends:
 - 2) You can appear righteous, but in reality it is not one of faith but of personal effort
- II) PAUL: Spoke of his own righteousness that was derived from observing the Law of Moses
- a) HE WROTE: Phil 3:6 concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
 - 1) Outwardly, he observed the Law but it did not save him
 - 2) Phil 3:7-9 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God *by faith*
- III) THIS MAN: Is one who turns from the appearance of righteousness to pursue evil
- a) In this pursuit, he reveals his true heart, as somebody genuinely saved remains with the Lord
 - 1) They can have down times, even seasons of backsliding, but they are saved
 - 2) 1 Jn 2:3-5 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. *By this we know that we are in Him.*
- IV) V27-28 AGAIN: When a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed
- a) Repentance is recognized by God and he is totally forgiven
- V) V29-32 YET: The house of Israel says The way of the LORD is not fair O house of Israel
- a) He gives them a call to repentance, and lets them know the road to blessing is clearly marked
 - 1) Cast away your sins, and get a new heart and a new spirit
 - 2) Ps 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
 - 3) 2 Co 5:17