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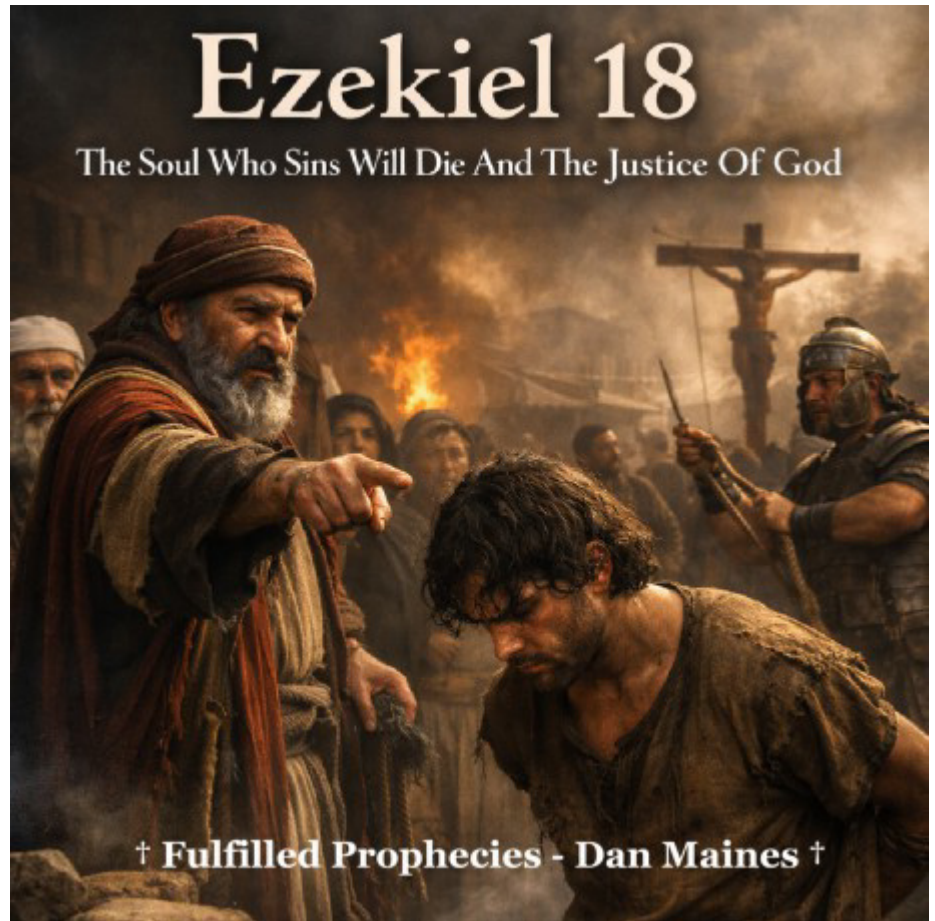
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Ezekiel 18 The Soul Who Sins Will Die And The Justice Of God



By Dan Maines

Ezekiel 18 The Soul Who Sins Will Die And The Justice Of God

Introduction

† Ezekiel 18 corrects a false proverb that blamed prior generations for present judgment, and God directly confronts that thinking.

† The people were saying they were suffering because of their fathers, but God makes it clear each person is accountable for

their own sin.

† This chapter is about individual responsibility, covenant accountability, and the call to repentance in their generation.

Ezekiel 18:1-4

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers eat sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, declares the Lord God, you are certainly not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore. Behold, all souls are Mine, the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

† God shuts down their excuse immediately, they can't blame past generations anymore (Ezekiel 18:1-4).

† Every soul belongs to God, meaning accountability is personal, not inherited guilt (Deuteronomy 24:16).

† The statement the soul who sins will die is about covenant judgment, not physical death alone (Romans 6:23).

Ezekiel 18:5-9

But if a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness, and does not eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period, and if a man does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, does not commit robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing, if he does not lend money at interest or take increase, if he keeps his hand from injustice and executes true justice between man and man, if he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully, he is righteous and will certainly live, declares the Lord God.

† God defines righteousness in real actions, not just words (Micah 6:8).

† This shows covenant faithfulness, not sinless perfection, but walking in God's ways (Psalm 15:1-5).

† He will certainly live refers to covenant life, being in right standing with God (Habakkuk 2:4).

Ezekiel 18:10-13

Then he may have a violent son who sheds blood and who does any of these things to a brother (though he himself did not do any of these things), that is, he even eats at the mountain shrines and defiles his neighbor's wife, oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore a pledge, but lifts up his eyes to the idols and commits abomination, he lends money at interest and takes increase, will he live? He will not live! He has committed all these abominations, he will certainly be put to death, his blood will be on himself.

† A righteous father doesn't make a wicked son righteous, accountability is individual (Ezekiel 18:10-13).

† His blood will be on himself means the guilt is his own, not inherited (Joshua 2:19).

† This destroys the idea that lineage determines standing with God (John 8:39-44).

Ezekiel 18:14-18

Now behold, he has a son who has observed all his father's sins which he committed, and observing does not do likewise. He does not eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife, or oppress anyone, or retain a pledge, or commit robbery, but he gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing, he keeps his hand from the poor, does not take

interest or increase, but executes My ordinances and walks in My statutes, he will not die for his father's wrongdoing, he will certainly live. As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what was not good among his people, behold, he will die for his wrongdoing.

† A righteous son isn't condemned for his father's sin, again proving personal responsibility (Ezekiel 18:14-18).

† Repentance and turning from sin breaks generational patterns (2 Chronicles 7:14).

† God judges based on what each person does, not their background (Romans 2:6).

Ezekiel 18:19-20

Yet you say, Why should the son not bear the punishment for the father's wrongdoing? When the son has practiced justice and righteousness and has kept all My statutes and done them, he shall certainly live. The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's wrongdoing, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's wrongdoing, the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

† God repeats it clearly so there's no confusion, responsibility is individual (Ezekiel 18:20).

† This directly corrects their misunderstanding of covenant judgment (Jeremiah 31:29-30).

† Each person stands before God on their own actions (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Ezekiel 18:21-24

But if the wicked person turns from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all My statutes and practices justice and

righteousness, he shall certainly live, he shall not die. All his offenses which he has committed will not be remembered against him, because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, rather than that he would turn from his ways and live? But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and commits injustice and does according to all the abominations that a wicked person does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed, for them he will die.

† God shows His heart, He wants repentance, not destruction (Ezekiel 18:23).

† Turning from sin brings life, past sins aren't held against the one who repents (Isaiah 55:7).

† But turning away from righteousness brings judgment, showing consistency in God's justice (Hebrews 10:26-27).

Ezekiel 18:25-29

Yet you say, The way of the Lord is not right. Hear now, house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and commits injustice, then he will die in it, for his injustice which he has committed he will die. But when a wicked person turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all his offenses which he had committed, he shall certainly live, he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, The way of the Lord is not right. Are My ways not right, house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right?

† They accused God of being unfair, but God shows their thinking is the problem (Ezekiel 18:25).

† God's justice is consistent, He responds to repentance and rebellion the same way every time (Psalm 18:25-26).

† The issue isn't God's fairness, it's their refusal to repent (Isaiah 5:20).

Ezekiel 18:30-32

Therefore I will judge you, house of Israel, each according to his conduct, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn away from all your offenses, so that wrongdoing does not become a stumbling block to you. Cast away from you all your offenses which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why should you die, house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, declares the Lord God. Therefore, repent and live.

† God calls them to turn, showing judgment wasn't inevitable if they repented (Ezekiel 18:30).

† Make yourselves a new heart points forward to transformation, later fulfilled in Christ (Ezekiel 36:26).

† God doesn't desire their destruction, but their life, that's always been His purpose (2 Peter 3:9).

Historical References

† Josephus records the moral corruption and accountability of individuals in Israel before Jerusalem's fall, confirming this pattern of judgment.

† Irenaeus emphasized that God judges each person according to their deeds, aligning with Ezekiel 18.

† Tertullian wrote that personal responsibility before God is foundational, rejecting inherited guilt as an excuse.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We can't blame our past, our family, or others, God holds each of us accountable.

† Repentance still matters, turning from sin brings life.

† God isn't unjust, His ways are consistent, and He always calls us to turn and live.

† This chapter shows that fulfillment was about real covenant accountability, not abstract theology.

Q & A Appendix

Q Does this chapter teach inherited guilt?

A No, Ezekiel 18:20 clearly says the son will not bear the punishment for the father's wrongdoing.

Q What does the soul who sins will die mean?

A It refers to covenant judgment, Romans 6:23.

Q Can a wicked person change?

A Yes, Ezekiel 18:21 says if he turns, he shall live.

Q Can a righteous person fall away?

A Yes, Ezekiel 18:24 shows turning from righteousness brings judgment.

Q Does God want people to die?

A No, Ezekiel 18:23 says He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Ezekiel 18:1-32

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews; Irenaeus, Against Heresies;
Tertullian, Apology

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