Today's study:

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

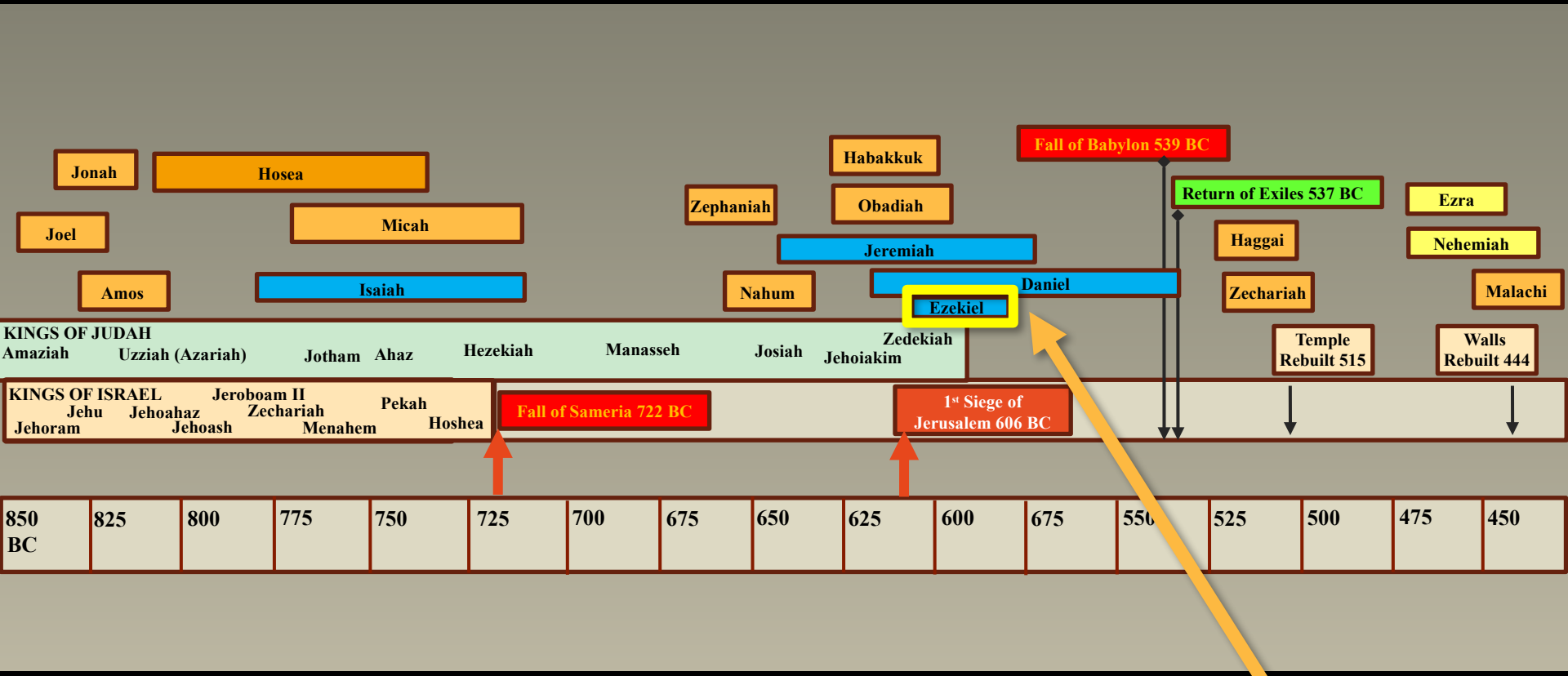
a verse-by-verse study

Pastor Barry

LIVE & ONLINE via TEAMS

Timeline of Israel's Kings & Prophets

Final (longest reigning) Kings Leading Up To Captivity



Ezekiel written 593-571 B.C.

Introduction to Ch 18

- Chapter 14
  - The prophecy against the idolatry of the elders
  - The certainty of the destruction of Jerusalem

…emphasized by 3 parables:

- Chapter 15 (shortest chapter in Ezekiel)
  - The **parable** of the worthless vine
- Chapter 16 (longest chapter in Ezekiel)
  - The **parable** of the abandoned baby
- Chapter 17
  - The **parable** of two eagles and a vine,
- Chapter 18
  - The **justified verdict!**

Introduction to Ch 18

- Israel were starting to listen to Ezekiel (the three parables Chapters 15-17 had got their attention!
- But as is typical of human nature, they tried justify themselves and shift the blame!
  - Our sin always looks worse on someone else!
- Their Argument was:
  - *If* God were to bring judgment, it wasn't their fault!
  - They were the victims!
  - To support this, they quoted a well-known proverb to 'prove' their innocence.

Introduction to Ch 18

- The concept they had invoked, both from the proverb and from the Torah, was that the iniquity of the fathers was visited upon the children.
- They are going to use that as an excuse and say in effect, *"OK, you're judging us; but you are judging us for the sins of our fathers."*
- This chapter is a rebuttal to their argument!
- God is going to emphasize that these people are going to be judged for their personal sin.
- It is also a lesson in miss-applying scripture to support our 'cause'

A Biblical Foundation

- You don’t have to accept or believe the Bible!
  - There is overwhelming evidence to support it in every way!
- But if you do ‘accept’ the Bible, it is all or nothing.
- You don’t get to pick and choose the bits that suit your own ‘personal theology’
  - Theology is the study of God:
  - We can deduce certain things about God simply by looking at the world.
    - Creation, conscience, and the design of the universe.
  - It is available to everyone, everywhere.
  - It tells us that a powerful, creative, and orderly Creator exists, but it doesn't tell us His name, His history, or His plan for salvation.
  - As many theologians argue, nature is like a silhouette; you can see the shape, but you can’t see the face.

A Biblical Foundation

- But all we really know of God comes from the Bible:
  - His character, His promises, and His specific commands.
- John Calvin famously used the metaphor of *"The Spectacles (Glasses) of Scripture."*
- He argued that human sin has made our "eyesight" blurry.
- When we look at the world, we see beauty, but also confusion and suffering.
- However, when we put on the "spectacles" of the Bible, the blurred images of the world come into sharp focus.
- We finally understand *why* the world is beautiful (Creation) and *why* it is broken (The Fall).

Introduction to Ch 18

- What God is going to do here through Ezekiel is emphasize their personal responsibility.
  - They are getting judged for their sin, and he is going to use several examples in rebuttal to their hereditary arguments.
- This whole idea of personal responsibility is obviously not a new idea.
- Ezekiel talked about it in Chapters 3 & 14.
  - It is also dealt with in the Torah in Deut 24 and in 2 Kings 14.
- NOTE: We hear a lot in today's church about 'ancestral sin' and 'hereditary curses' – this chapter is a 'must read'!

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Chapter 18

The Justified Verdict

The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on

Ezekiel 18:1,2

- In Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9, God describes Himself as *"...punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me."*
- The Israelites took this warning about the long-term consequences of idol worship and turned it into a rigid, fatalistic rule. They believed they were essentially "locked in" to a destiny written by their ancestors.

A False Proverb

- We see how deep rooted this idea had become as Jeremiah highlights it twice:
  - *"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge"* Jer 31:29
  - *"Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities "* Lam 5:7
- But the point of these passages was that the effects of sin are serious and long-lasting, not that God capriciously punishes the innocent for their ancestors' evil ways.

A False Proverb

- The issue here is that the proverb they had derived from these verses (Ex 20:5 / Deut 5:9) was incorrect.
- This is the danger in lifting a verse out of Scripture without considering its context!
- *"The fathers ate the grapes, and the children paid the penalty."*
- That is true to a certain extent, but God judges the individual, father or son, according to *his* conduct.
- There is a distinction between *legal guilt (personal)* and *practical consequences (corporate)*:
  - This is not a judgment for eternal life, but a judgment in *this* life according as a man obeys or disobeys Him.

Israel's Reasoning/Justification

- The generation in exile looked back at the horrific reign of King Manasseh (who practiced child sacrifice and gross idolatry) and the failures of their fathers. They concluded that God was finally "settling the bill" for the last 400 years of failure, and they just happened to be the ones left holding the invoice.
- Just as the modern Jews attribute their present dispersion, not to their own sins, but to those of their forefathers.
- Compare Gen 3:12, where Adam transfers the blame of his sin to Eve, and even to God, *"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."*

Israel’s Reasoning/Justification

- In Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31, the proverb is used as a *psychological shield*.
- By saying "the fathers ate the grapes," the exiles were effectively saying:
  - "This isn't our fault."
  - "God is being unfair (*unjust*)."
  - "Repentance is useless because the 'curse' is already in motion."

As I *live, saith the* Lord GOD, *ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in* Israel.

Ezekiel 18:3

- 'As I live…' this is how certain this is!
- The word *live* or some form of it occurs 13 times in this chapter, and the word *die* occurs 14 times.
- This is a chapter about living & dying!
  - but it is not eternal life or eternal death that God is talking about.
- Jesus came to give us abundant life – here & now
  - John 10:10
    - You can live in a state of death or life – you choose!

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Ezekiel 18:4

20 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?
21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same
lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another
unto dishonour?
22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make
his power known, endured with much longsuffering
the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

Romans 9:20-22

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Ezekiel 18:4

- God is speaking of the way in which He judges individuals in this life. We need to look at this entire chapter from that viewpoint.
- Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.
- *"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."* Deut 24:16
- Ezekiel anticipates here, and more fully in ver. 32. the teaching of Paul, that *"God willeth that all men should be saved"* (1 Tim 2:4).

The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

- "Live" (vv. 9, 17, 19) and "die" (vv. 4, 13, 18) are used in both a literal and an eschatological sense.
  - "To live" is to enter into the perfect kingdom of the Lord which is, and is about to come Chapters 37-48
  - "to die" is to have no share in it.
  - Ezekiel, like the other OT writers, sees this kingdom as an earthly one.

Three Generation Example

- In this chapter, Ezekiel uses a three-generation case study to make his point. While this is a rhetorical example, it mirrors the real-world history of three Judean kings:
  - The Godly Grandfather: Hezekiah
  - The Ungodly Son: Manasseh
  - The Godly Grandson: Josiah

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

Ezekiel 18:5

- I.e., The Just Grandfather, Hezekiah

And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

Ezekiel 18:6

- "Eaten" refers to the feasts which were connected with the sacrifices
  Exo 32:6; Deut 32:38; Jdg 9:27; 1 Cor 8:4, 10; 10:7
- "Upon the mountains" here had reference to the places where their idol worshiping was conducted; and eating of that implied the partaking in the idol festivities and rites. Deut 12:13-14

And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

Ezekiel 18:6

- The respecting of marriage rights

  Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10 and Deut 22:22

  Laws respecting unclean women

  Lev 15:24; 18:19; and 20:18

And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;

Ezekiel 18:7

- Restoring the debtor's pledge
  - Ex 22:26,27; Deut 24:10-13; Amos 2:8 et al.
- Distributing food to the hungry
  - Isa 58:7; Mt 25:35, 36

He *that* hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, *that* hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

Ezekiel 18:8

- Jews were forbidden to take interest from their needy brethren

  Ex 22:25; Lev 25:25-37; Deut 23:19

  but were permitted interest on loans to foreigners

  Deut 23:20

Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he *is* just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 18:9

- He is talking about this life, not eternal life.
- God will bless him in this life—this is the blessing of the Old Testament.

The Just Grandfather

- So, the first character introduced here idiomatically is “The Just Grandfather.”
  - He is a just man.
  - The son, in contrast, is going to be ungodly: a robber, a murderer, and a lot of other horrible things.
  - But then the grandson, vv. 14-18, is going to be just, and that point is to put to silence the idea that you are being punished for your father’s sins.

If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,

Ezekiel 18:10

- '…the like' Those sins listed in verses 6-9
- Here the focus shifts to 'The Ungodly Son', of whom Manasseh is a fitting example

And that doeth not any of those *duties*, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,

Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

Ezekiel 18:11,12

Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

Ezekiel 18:13

- A good father cannot pile up merit for his son.

  cf. 14:16, 18

- This confirmed the fallacy of the people's proverb

  18:2

  and the truth of God's principle 18:4

Now, lo, *if* he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,

That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife,

Ezekiel 18:14,15

- The Just Grandson, Josiah

Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, *but* hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

Ezekiel 18:16

That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

Ezekiel 18:17

As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did *that* which *is* not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

Ezekiel 18:18

Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

Ezekiel 18:19

- It's almost a consolation to them to think the son might suffer for his father's misdeeds!
  - It would justify their notion of themselves as innocent sufferers for the guilt of others and would justify them in their present course of life, which they choose continue in!
  - If we are going to be punished for it, we might as well do it!

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Ezekiel 18:20

- Repeated (for emphasis) from verse 4.
- Ezekiel points out that neither son nor father will be held responsible for the other's iniquity, but each person is individually responsible to God.

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Ezekiel 18:21

- God is long suffering, not willing that any should perish! 2 Peter 3:9
- The chapter emphasises that the moment a person turns from their own sin to God, the "past" (even their own past, let alone their father's) no longer determines their standing before God.

All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Ezekiel 18:22,23

- There is no better analysis of the effect of the blood of Christ on a repentant soul!
- This is only possible looking forward to the Cross!
  - The OT sacrificial system was temporary
  - The Cross is eternal!

All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Ezekiel 18:22,23

- This is a gracious call to repentance.
- This question reflects God's mercy and his desire to save all. *"The most precious word in the whole Book of Ezekiel"* CM

But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Ezekiel 18:24

- Righteous man = good man, upright, moral, noble, but <u>not</u> one who is saved and sanctified!

The Plight of the Ungodly

- If men perish, it is because they *will not* come to the Lord for salvation; not that the Lord is not willing to save them

  1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9 John 5:40

- They trample on not merely justice, but mercy; what further hope can there be for them, when even mercy is against them?

  Heb 10:26–29

Eternal Security

- *18:24, (and similar passages: 3:17-1; 33:10-20) have been understood by some that a Christian may lose his righteous standing before God.*
- *But in support of the security of the believer, it should be observed that these passages in Ezekiel do not teach the eternal loss of a saved person, because the word "righteous" may refer to ceremonial religion (cf. Matt 5:20) and not the "the righteousness which is of God by faith*

Cf Phil 3:7-9

Chuck Missler

Eternal Security

- *Moreover, the punishment threatened refers only to physical death rather than to eternal death.*
  - *In any case, these texts in Ezekiel must be considered in the light of such NT affirmations as John 10:28,29; Rom 5:8,9; Phil 1:6, et al. that so clearly teach the security of the believer.*

Chuck Missler

Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal.
Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?
When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

Ezekiel 18:25,26

- Literally, *adjusted to the standard*.
  A figure from the mercantile exchange
  - How often do we hear this today!
  - "God's not fair…." "Why would a good God allow….."

Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

Ezekiel 18:27

Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Ezekiel 18:28

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 18:29,30

- Can there be a more frightening proposition?!

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 18:29,30

- In the *Hebrew* there is a play of like sounds, "*Turn* ye and *return.*"

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 18:29,30

- Not as being perfect; but sincerely *aim* at perfection, so as to not be habitually and willfully on terms with any sin

see 1 John 3:6–9

Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Ezekiel 18:31,32

- God alone can make us a new heart

  Ez 11:19; 36:26; Psa 51:10

Conclusion

- Everyone stands alone. You can't blame it on environment or upbringing…
- The teaching of this chapter answers the new psychology we have today, which argues that a person is the way there are through no fault of their own.
- Here in Ezekiel God sets the record straight: You are a sinner because you are a sinner yourself.
- Every individual will stand before God, and won't be able to blame parents (or others) at that time.
- Ezekiel makes it very clear that the Israelite will be judged in this life on the basis of the life he lived, whether he was a believer or not.

Conclusion

- This chapter emphasises that the moment a person turns from their own sin to God, the "past" (even their own past, let alone their father's) no longer determines their standing before God.
- The "generational curse" teaching in some modern charismatic or Pentecostal circles (the idea that you are legally "bound" by a demon or a curse because your grandfather was a Freemason et al) is here rebutted
- For those in Christ, even if a "curse" existed, Galatians 3:13 states that *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."*
- Therefore, for a believer to be "cursed" by an ancestor's sin would imply Christ's work was insufficient.

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 8:1

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Cor 5:17

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them
which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the
flesh, but after the Spirit.
2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath
made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:1,2

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new
creature: old things are passed away; behold, all
things are become new.

2 Cor 5:17

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

Chapter 19

The Justified Verdict

Chapter 19

- We now have two lamentations:
  - The lamentations over the Princes of Judah v.1–9
  - The lamentation over the Land of Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel v.10–14
- The whole chapter finds a parallel in Jeremiah's review of Josiah's successors Jer 22:10-30
- This is not the lamentation of Ezekiel, as some Bible commentators have attempted to say.
- This is the lamentation of the LORD…
- the lamentation of the same One who later wept over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37–39).

1 Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the
princes of Israel,
2 And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay
down among lions, she nourished her whelps
among young lions.

Ezekiel 19:1-2

- The lioness is Israel,
  - the kingdom idealised and personified.
- The lionesses among whom she had lain down are the heathen kingdoms.
- The question asks why she had become as one of them and adopted their cruelty and ferocity.

3 And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men.

Ezekiel 19:3

- The whelp, as v.4 shows, is Jehoahaz, who *"did evil"* in the sight of the LORD - 2 Kings 23:32
- The implication is that he was responsible for great cruelty and oppression, like that of Zedekiah.

4 The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

Ezekiel 19:4

- Pharaoh Necho marched against Jerusalem and took Jehoahaz prisoner, and brought him to Egypt.

  2 Kings 23:33,34; Jer 22:11

- Chains = literally, ‘nose rings’, such as were put into the nostrils of animals

  Ez 38:4; 2 Kings 19:28; Isa 37:29

5 Now when she saw that she had waited, and her
hope was lost, then she took another of her
whelps, and made him a young lion.
6 And he went up and down among the lions, he
became a young lion, and learned to catch the
prey, and devoured men.

Ezekiel 19:5-6

- The second lion whelp, Jehoiachin, became as the pagan kings round about, and made Judea as idolatrous as any of the surrounding nations.

7 And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid
waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and
the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring.

Ezekiel 19:7

8 Then the nations set against him on every side
from the provinces, and spread their net over
him: he was taken in their pit.

Ezekiel 19:8

- Nebuchadnezzar used Jehoiachin's allies against him
  - Chaldeans, Syrians, Moab, and Ammon
    2 Kings 24:2

9 And they put him in ward in chains, and brought
him to the king of Babylon: they brought him
into holds, that his voice should no more be heard
upon the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel 19:9

- Nebuchadnezzar carried off Jehoiachin to Babylon as Jehoahaz had been to Egypt.
- The ‘young lion’ was to roar in chains, not on the mountains of Israel.

10 Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted
by the waters: she was fruitful and full of
branches by reason of many waters.

11 And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them
that bare rule, and her stature was exalted
among the thick branches, and she appeared in
her height with the multitude of her branches.

Ezekiel 19:10-11

- The vine, of course, was Israel, as we saw in Chapters 15 & 17. Cf. Ps 10; Isa 5

12 But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast
down to the ground, and the east wind dried up
her fruit: her strong rods were broken and
withered; the fire consumed them.
13 And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a
dry and thirsty ground.

Ezekiel 19:12-13

- “East Wind” - here is Nebuchadnezzar.
- Chaldea was well watered and fertile; but it is the condition of the captive people, not that of the land, which is referred to here.

14 And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

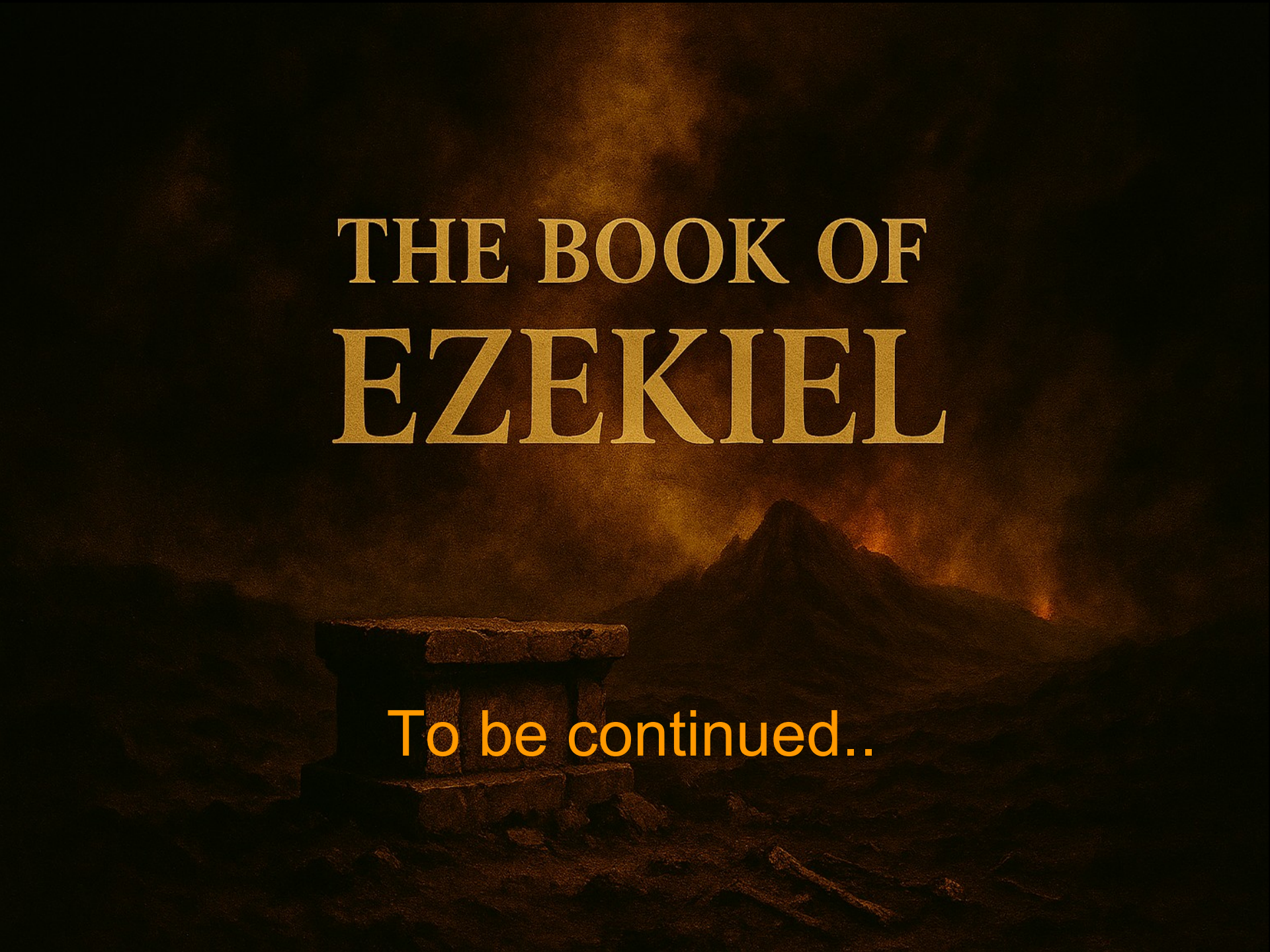
Ezekiel 19:14

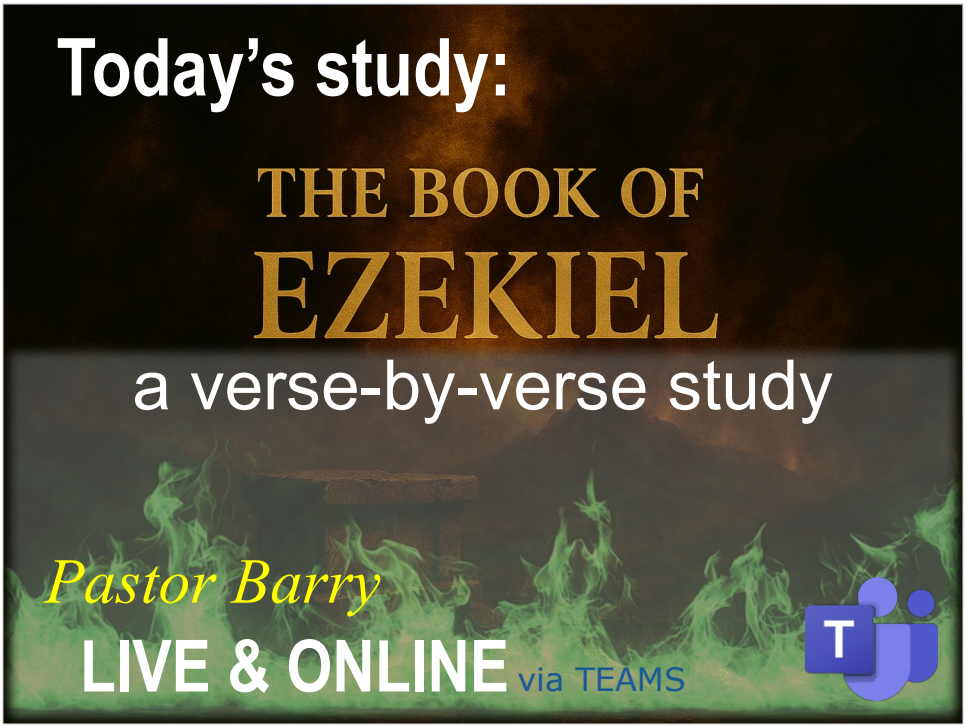
- God's wrath was kindled by the perjury of Zedekiah who by his perjury brought about the destruction of Jerusalem by fire.
- This marked the end of the monarchy in Israel…
- This has lasted for 2500 years as foretold by Hosea (3:4)

The End of the Dynasty

- There was no lawful king left. The royal line was cursed Jer 22:30
- Following the exile, no one was willing or able to take up the mantle
  - That leaves only One who can be heir to the Throne of David.
  - It has to be One from the royal line of David ‘legally’, but not from that blood line.
  - The only rightful King left is the Messiah Himself!
  - He was a descendant of the royal line through Joseph, but not of his blood!
  - He will sit on David’s throne as the Gabriel promised Mary. Luke 1:32

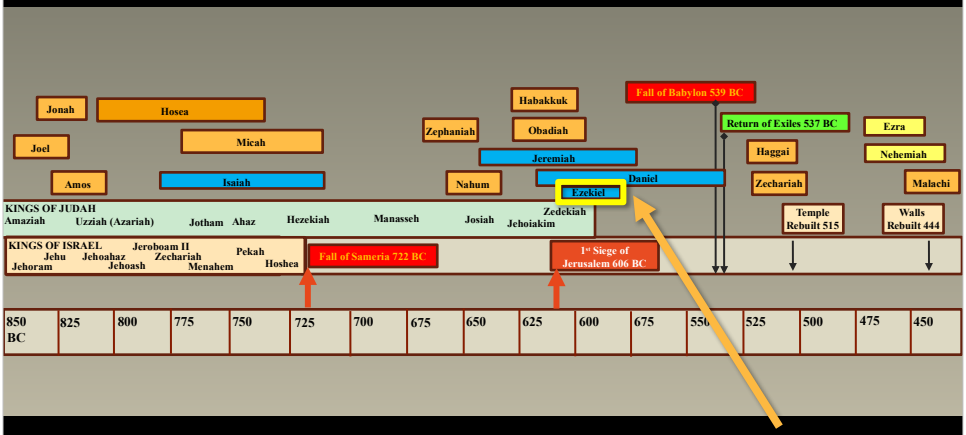
Acts 15:13-18; q.v. Amos 9:11,12


THE BOOK OF
EZEKIEL
To be continued..


Today's study:
THE BOOK OF
EZEKIEL
a verse-by-verse study
Pastor Barry
LIVE & ONLINE via TEAMS

Timeline of Israel's Kings & Prophets

Final (longest reigning) Kings Leading Up To Captivity



Ezekiel written 593-571 B.C.

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  - *If* God were to bring judgment, it wasn't their fault!
  - They were the victims!
  - To support this, they quoted a well-known proverb to 'prove' their innocence.

Introduction to Ch 18

- The concept they had invoked, both from the proverb and from the Torah, was that the iniquity of the fathers was visited upon the children.
- They are going to use that as an excuse and say in effect, *"OK, you're judging us; but you are judging us for the sins of our fathers."*
- This chapter is a rebuttal to their argument!
- God is going to emphasize that these people are going to be judged for their personal sin.
- It is also a lesson in miss-applying scripture to support our 'cause'

A Biblical Foundation

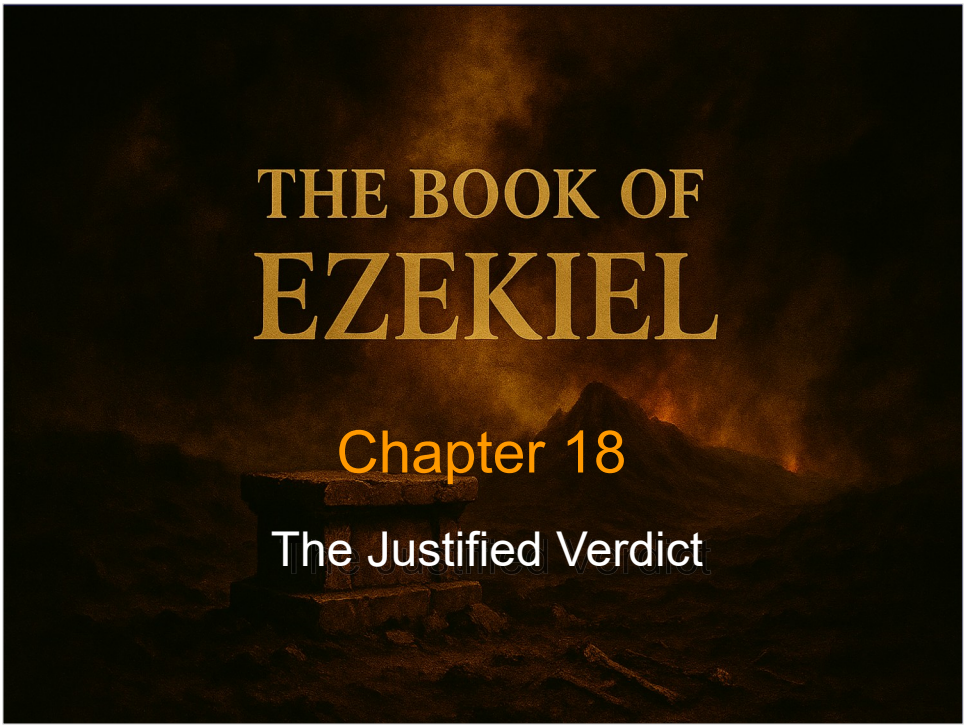
- You don’t have to accept or believe the Bible!
  - There is overwhelming evidence to support it in every way!
- But if you do ‘accept’ the Bible, it is all or nothing.
- You don’t get to pick and choose the bits that suit your own ‘personal theology’
  - Theology is the study of God:
  - We can deduce certain things about God simply by looking at the world.
    - Creation, conscience, and the design of the universe.
  - It is available to everyone, everywhere.
  - It tells us that a powerful, creative, and orderly Creator exists, but it doesn't tell us His name, His history, or His plan for salvation.
  - As many theologians argue, nature is like a silhouette; you can see the shape, but you can’t see the face.

A Biblical Foundation

- But all we really know of God comes from the Bible:
  - His character, His promises, and His specific commands.
- John Calvin famously used the metaphor of *"The Spectacles (Glasses) of Scripture."*
- He argued that human sin has made our "eyesight" blurry.
- When we look at the world, we see beauty, but also confusion and suffering.
- However, when we put on the "spectacles" of the Bible, the blurred images of the world come into sharp focus.
- We finally understand *why* the world is beautiful (Creation) and *why* it is broken (The Fall).

Introduction to Ch 18

- What God is going to do here through Ezekiel is emphasize their personal responsibility.
  - They are getting judged for their sin, and he is going to use several examples in rebuttal to their hereditary arguments.
- This whole idea of personal responsibility is obviously not a new idea.
- Ezekiel talked about it in Chapters 3 & 14.
  - It is also dealt with in the Torah in Deut 24 and in 2 Kings 14.
- NOTE: We hear a lot in today's church about 'ancestral sin' and 'hereditary curses' – this chapter is a 'must read'!


THE BOOK OF
EZEKIEL
Chapter 18
The Justified Verdict

The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying,

What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on

Ezekiel 18:1,2

- In Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9, God describes Himself as *"...punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me."*
- The Israelites took this warning about the long-term consequences of idol worship and turned it into a rigid, fatalistic rule. They believed they were essentially "locked in" to a destiny written by their ancestors.

A False Proverb

- We see how deep rooted this idea had become as Jeremiah highlights it twice:
  - *"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge"* Jer 31:29
  - *"Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities "* Lam 5:7
- But the point of these passages was that the effects of sin are serious and long-lasting, not that God capriciously punishes the innocent for their ancestors' evil ways.

But the point of these passages was that the *effects* of sin are serious and long-lasting, not that God capriciously punishes the innocent for their ancestors' evil ways.

A False Proverb

- The issue here is that the proverb they had derived from these verses (Ex 20:5 / Deut 5:9) was incorrect.
- This is the danger in lifting a verse out of Scripture without considering its context!
- *"The fathers ate the grapes, and the children paid the penalty."*
- That is true to a certain extent, but God judges the individual, father or son, according to *his* conduct.
- There is a distinction between *legal guilt (personal)* and *practical consequences (corporate)*:
  - This is not a judgment for eternal life, but a judgment in *this* life according as a man obeys or disobeys Him.

Israel's Reasoning/Justification

- The generation in exile looked back at the horrific reign of King Manasseh (who practiced child sacrifice and gross idolatry) and the failures of their fathers. They concluded that God was finally "settling the bill" for the last 400 years of failure, and they just happened to be the ones left holding the invoice.
- Just as the modern Jews attribute their present dispersion, not to their own sins, but to those of their forefathers.
- Compare Gen 3:12, where Adam transfers the blame of his sin to Eve, and even to God, *"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."*

Compare Gen 3:12, where Adam transfers the blame of his sin to Eve, and even to God, "The *woman* whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

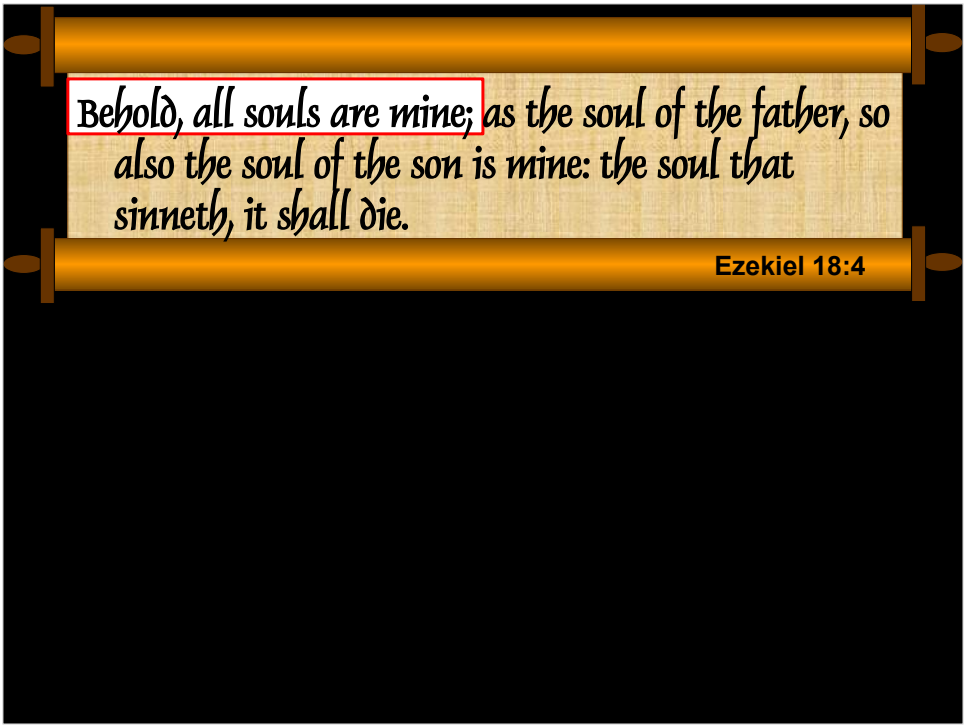
Israel's Reasoning/Justification

- In Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31, the proverb is used as a *psychological shield*.
- By saying "the fathers ate the grapes," the exiles were effectively saying:
  - "This isn't our fault."
  - "God is being unfair (*unjust*)."
  - "Repentance is useless because the 'curse' is already in motion."

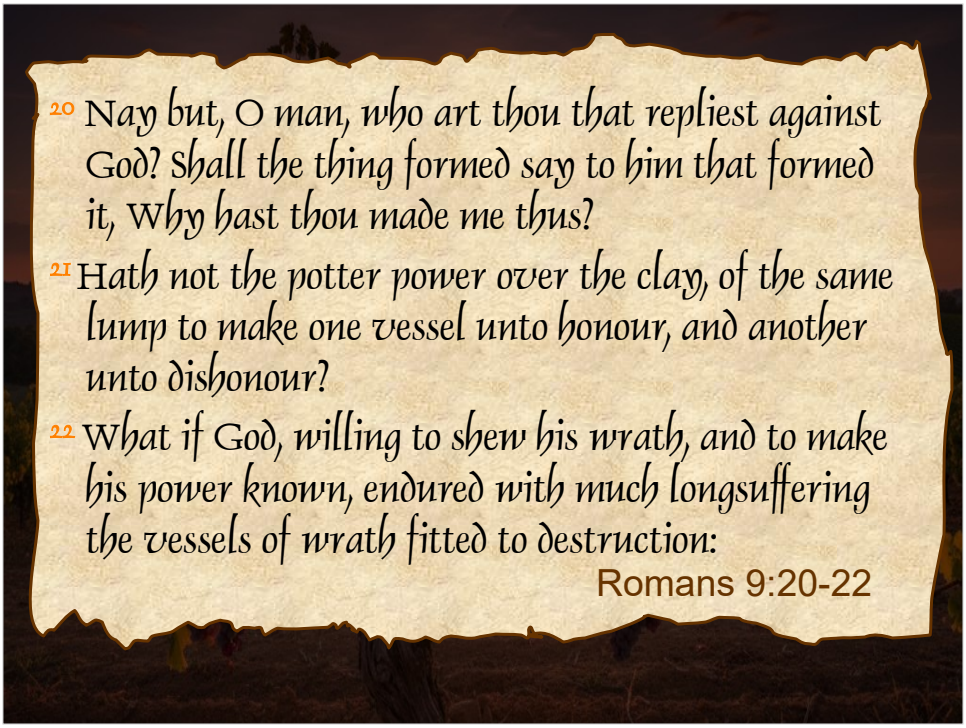
As I *live, saith the* Lord GOD, *ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in* Israel.

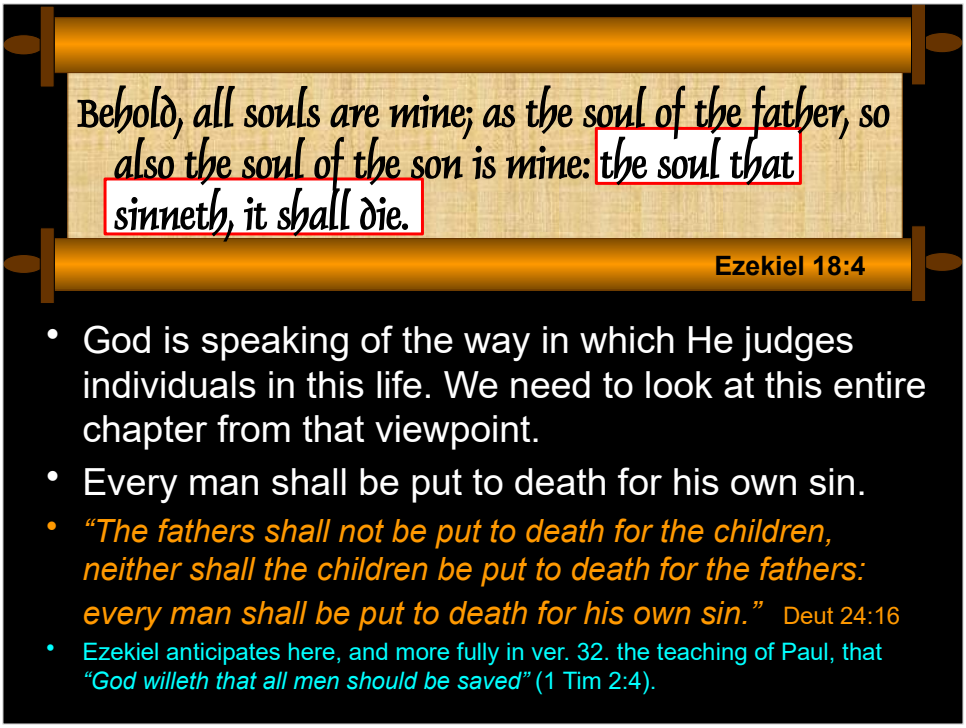
Ezekiel 18:3

- 'As I live…' this is how certain this is!
- The word *live* or some form of it occurs 13 times in this chapter, and the word *die* occurs 14 times.
- This is a chapter about living & dying!
  - but it is not eternal life or eternal death that God is talking about.
- Jesus came to give us abundant life – here & now
  - John 10:10
    - You can live in a state of death or life – you choose!



Ezekiel anticipates here, and yet more fully in ver. 32. the teaching of St. Paul, that “God willeth that all men should be saved” (1 Tim 2:4).


20 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?
21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?
22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:
Romans 9:20-22



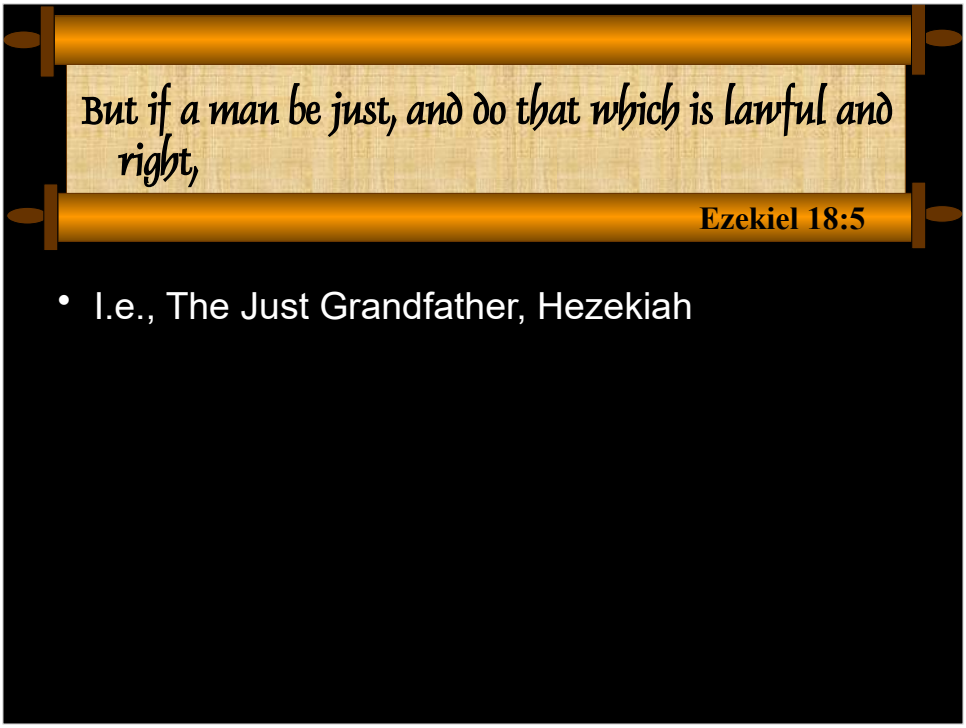
Ezekiel anticipates here, and yet more fully in ver. 32. the teaching of St. Paul, that "God willeth that all men should be saved" (1 Tim 2:4).

The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

- "Live" (vv. 9, 17, 19) and "die" (vv. 4, 13, 18) are used in both a literal and an eschatological sense.
  - "To live" is to enter into the perfect kingdom of the Lord which is, and is about to come Chapters 37-48
  - "to die" is to have no share in it.
  - Ezekiel, like the other OT writers, sees this kingdom as an earthly one.

Three Generation Example

- In this chapter, Ezekiel uses a three-generation case study to make his point. While this is a rhetorical example, it mirrors the real-world history of three Judean kings:
  - The Godly Grandfather: Hezekiah
  - The Ungodly Son: Manasseh
  - The Godly Grandson: Josiah



The verses that follow are noticeable as forming one of the most complete pictures of a righteous life presented in the Old Testament.

And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

Ezekiel 18:6

- "Eaten" refers to the feasts which were connected with the sacrifices
  Exo 32:6; Deut 32:38; Jdg 9:27; 1 Cor 8:4, 10; 10:7
- "Upon the mountains" here had reference to the places where their idol worshiping was conducted; and eating of that implied the partaking in the idol festivities and rites. Deut 12:13-14

And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman,

Ezekiel 18:6

- The respecting of marriage rights
  Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10 and Deut 22:22
  Laws respecting unclean women
  Lev 15:24; 18:19; and 20:18

> And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment;
>
> **Ezekiel 18:7**

- Restoring the debtor's pledge
  - Ex 22:26,27; Deut 24:10-13; Amos 2:8 et al.
- Distributing food to the hungry
  - Isa 58:7; Mt 25:35, 36

He *that* hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, *that* hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man,

Ezekiel 18:8

- Jews were forbidden to take interest from their needy brethren

  Ex 22:25; Lev 25:25-37; Deut 23:19

  but were permitted interest on loans to foreigners

  Deut 23:20

Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he *is* just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 18:9

- He is talking about this life, not eternal life.
- God will bless him in this life—this is the blessing of the Old Testament.

The Just Grandfather

- So, the first character introduced here idiomatically is “The Just Grandfather.”
  - He is a just man.
  - The son, in contrast, is going to be ungodly: a robber, a murderer, and a lot of other horrible things.
  - But then the grandson, vv. 14-18, is going to be just, and that point is to put to silence the idea that you are being punished for your father’s sins.

If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things,

Ezekiel 18:10

- '…the like' Those sins listed in verses 6-9
- Here the focus shifts to 'The Ungodly Son', of whom Manasseh is a fitting example

10] {robber: or, breaker up of an house} {that doeth...: or, that doeth to his brother besides any of these}

And that doeth not any of those *duties*, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife,

Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

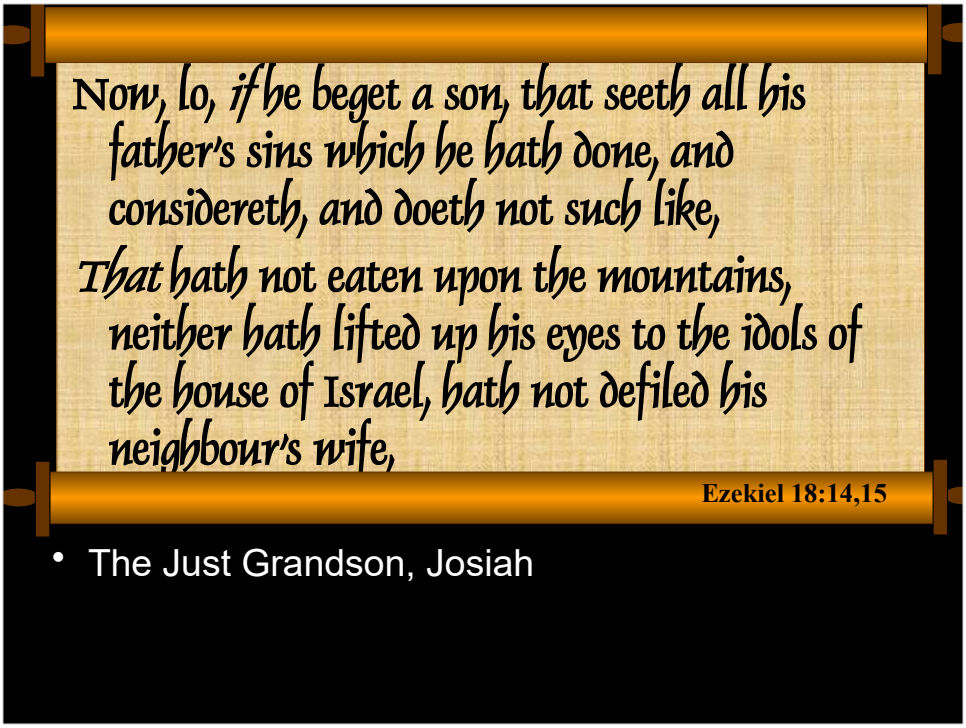
Ezekiel 18:11,12

Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

Ezekiel 18:13

- A good father cannot pile up merit for his son.
  cf. 14:16, 18
- This confirmed the fallacy of the people's proverb
  18:2
  and the truth of God's principle 18:4

{blood: Heb. bloods}



Josiah, the pious son of guilty Amon (the son of Manasseh); Hezekiah, of Ahaz (2Ki 16:1–20; 18:1–37; 21:1–22:20)

Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, *but* hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment,

Ezekiel 18:16

That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

Ezekiel 18:17

As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did *that* which *is* not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.

Ezekiel 18:18

Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

Ezekiel 18:19

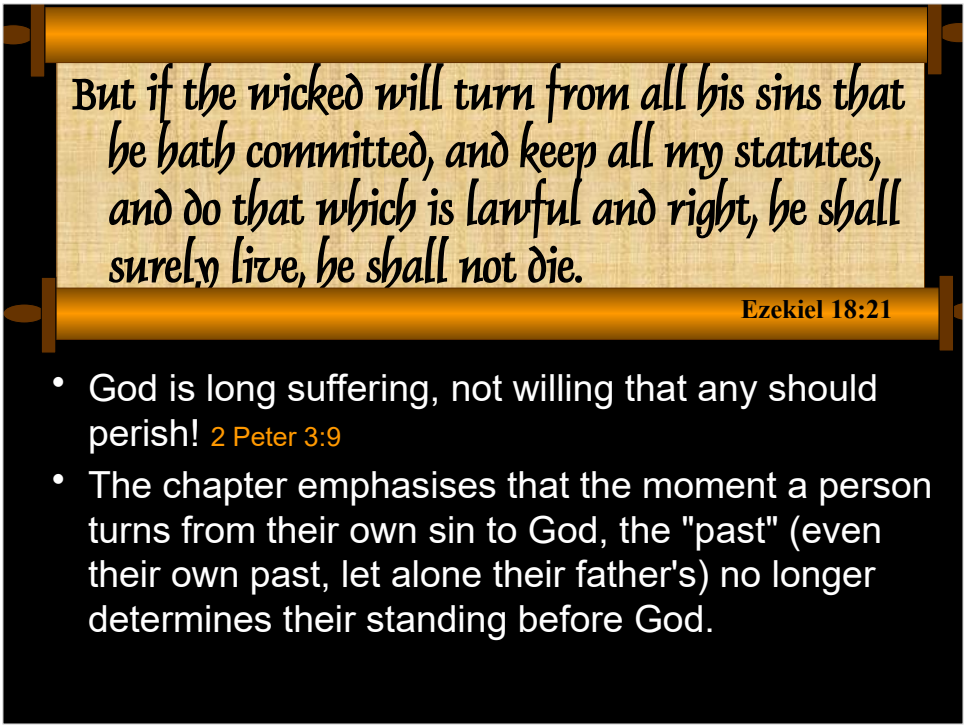
- It's almost a consolation to them to think the son might suffer for his father's misdeeds!
  - It would justify their notion of themselves as innocent sufferers for the guilt of others and would justify them in their present course of life, which they choose continue in!
  - If we are going to be punished for it, we might as well do it!

Here the Jews object to the prophet's word and in their objection seem to seek a continuance of that very thing which they had originally made a matter of complaint.

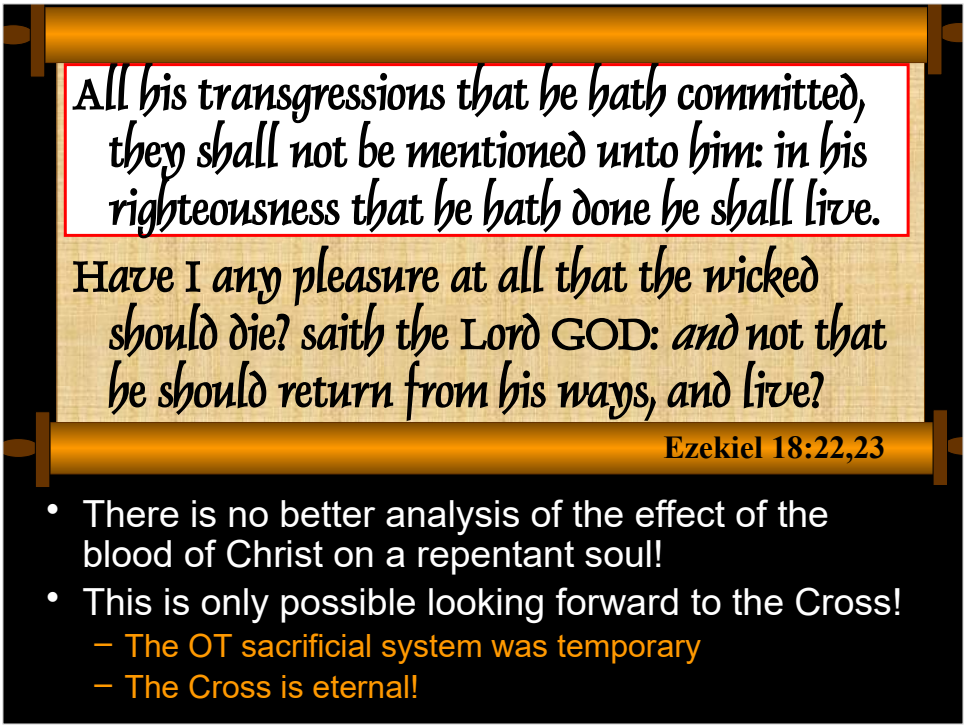
The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Ezekiel 18:20

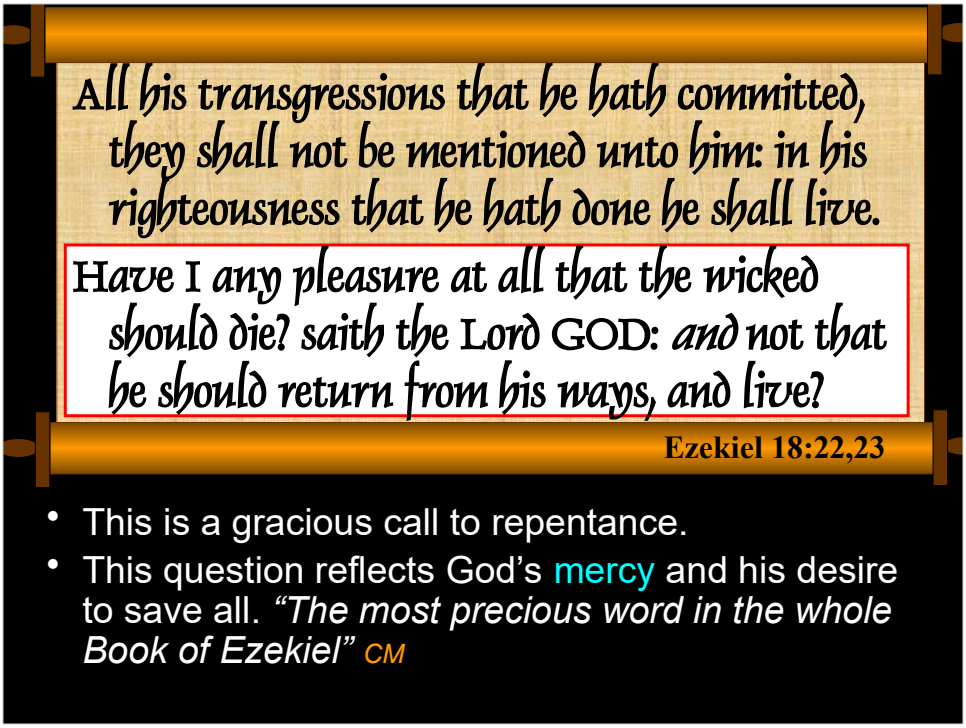
- Repeated (for emphasis) from verse 4.
- Ezekiel points out that neither son nor father will be held responsible for the other's iniquity, but each person is individually responsible to God.



The chapter emphasises that the moment a person turns from their own sin to God, the "past" (even their own past, let alone their father's) no longer determines their standing before God.



To Ezekiel, as afterwards to Paul (1 Tim 2:4) and Peter (2 Pet 3:9), the mind of God is presented as being at once absolutely righteous and absolutely loving.



To Ezekiel, as afterwards to Paul (1 Tim 2:4) and Peter (2 Pet 3:9), the mind of God is presented as being at once absolutely righteous and absolutely loving.

But *when* the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Ezekiel 18:24

- Righteous man = good man, upright, moral, noble, but <u>not</u> one who is saved and sanctified!

The Plight of the Ungodly

- If men perish, it is because they *will not* come to the Lord for salvation; not that the Lord is not willing to save them

  1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9 John 5:40

- They trample on not merely justice, but mercy; what further hope can there be for them, when even mercy is against them?

  Heb 10:26–29

Eternal Security

- *18:24, (and similar passages: 3:17-1; 33:10-20) have been understood by some that a Christian may lose his righteous standing before God.*
- *But in support of the security of the believer, it should be observed that these passages in Ezekiel do not teach the eternal loss of a saved person, because the word "righteous" may refer to ceremonial religion (cf. Matt 5:20) and not the "the righteousness which is of God by faith*

Cf Phil 3:7-9

Chuck Missler

Eternal Security

- *Moreover, the punishment threatened refers only to physical death rather than to eternal death.*
  - *In any case, these texts in Ezekiel must be considered in the light of such NT affirmations as John 10:28,29; Rom 5:8,9; Phil 1:6, et al. that so clearly teach the security of the believer.*

Chuck Missler

Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

Ezekiel 18:25,26

- Literally, *adjusted to the standard*.
  A figure from the mercantile exchange
  - How often do we hear this today!
  - "God's not fair…." "Why would a good God allow….."

Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

Ezekiel 18:27

Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Ezekiel 18:28

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 18:29,30

- Can there be a more frightening proposition?!

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 18:29,30

- In the *Hebrew* there is a play of like sounds, "*Turn* ye and *return*."

Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 18:29,30

- Not as being perfect; but sincerely *aim* at perfection, so as to not be habitually and willfully on terms with any sin see 1 John 3:6–9

Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Ezekiel 18:31,32

- God alone can make us a new heart

  Ez 11:19; 36:26; Psa 51:10

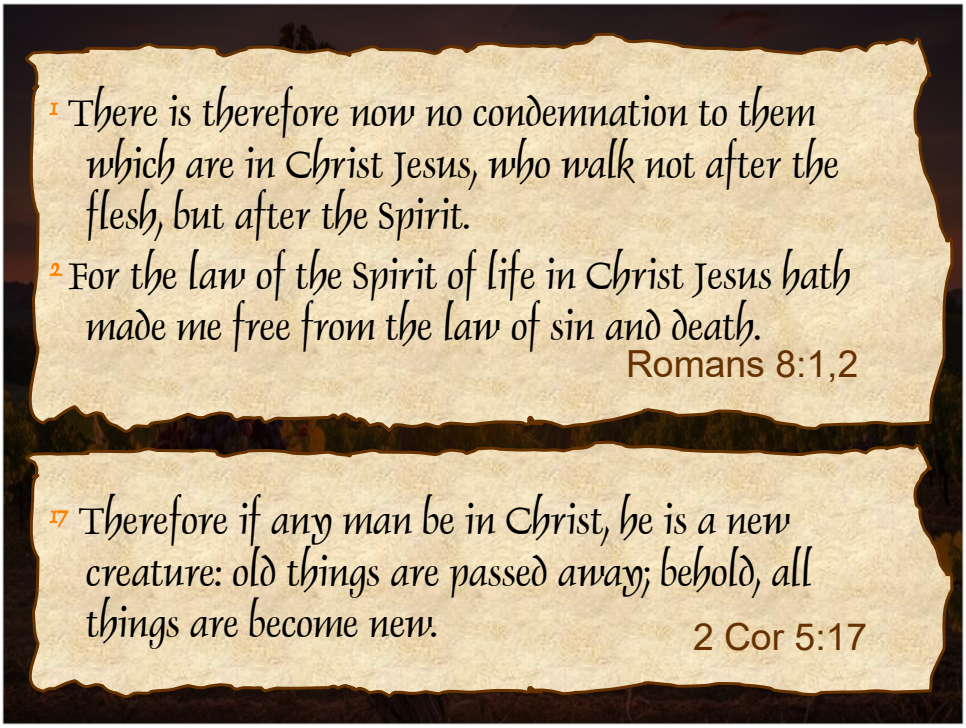
Conclusion

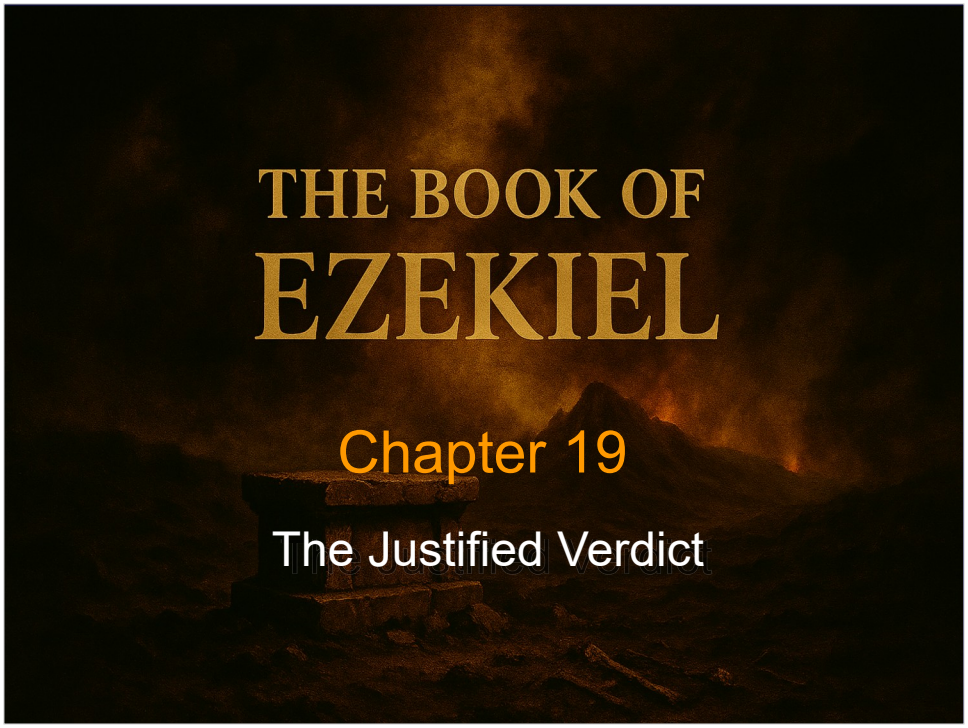
- Everyone stands alone. You can't blame it on environment or upbringing…
- The teaching of this chapter answers the new psychology we have today, which argues that a person is the way there are through no fault of their own.
- Here in Ezekiel God sets the record straight: You are a sinner because you are a sinner yourself.
- Every individual will stand before God, and won't be able to blame parents (or others) at that time.
- Ezekiel makes it very clear that the Israelite will be judged in this life on the basis of the life he lived, whether he was a believer or not.

Conclusion

- This chapter emphasises that the moment a person turns from their own sin to God, the "past" (even their own past, let alone their father's) no longer determines their standing before God.
- The "generational curse" teaching in some modern charismatic or Pentecostal circles (the idea that you are legally "bound" by a demon or a curse because your grandfather was a Freemason et al) is here rebutted
- For those in Christ, even if a "curse" existed, Galatians 3:13 states that *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."*
- Therefore, for a believer to be "cursed" by an ancestor's sin would imply Christ's work was insufficient.


1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
Romans 8:1
17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
2 Cor 5:17


1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
Romans 8:1,2
17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.
2 Cor 5:17


THE BOOK OF
EZEKIEL
Chapter 19
The Justified Verdict

Chapter 19

- We now have two lamentations:
  - The lamentations over the Princes of Judah v.1–9
  - The lamentation over the Land of Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel v.10–14
- The whole chapter finds a parallel in Jeremiah's review of Josiah's successors Jer 22:10-30
- This is not the lamentation of Ezekiel, as some Bible commentators have attempted to say.
- This is the lamentation of the LORD…
- the lamentation of the same One who later wept over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37–39).

[1] Moreover take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel,

[2] And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions.

Ezekiel 19:1-2

- The lioness is Israel,
  - the kingdom idealised and personified.
- The lionesses among whom she had lain down are the heathen kingdoms.
- The question asks why she had become as one of them and adopted their cruelty and ferocity.

3 And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men.

Ezekiel 19:3

- The whelp, as v.4 shows, is Jehoahaz, who *"did evil"* in the sight of the LORD - 2 Kings 23:32
- The implication is that he was responsible for great cruelty and oppression, like that of Zedekiah.

4 The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

Ezekiel 19:4

- Pharaoh Necho marched against Jerusalem and took Jehoahaz prisoner, and brought him to Egypt.
  2 Kings 23:33,34; Jer 22:11
- Chains = literally, 'nose rings', such as were put into the nostrils of animals
  Ez 38:4; 2 Kings 19:28; Isa 37:29

5 Now when she saw that she had waited, and her
hope was lost, then she took another of her
whelps, and made him a young lion.
6 And he went up and down among the lions, he
became a young lion, and learned to catch the
prey, and devoured men.

Ezekiel 19:5-6

- The second lion whelp, Jehoiachin, became as the pagan kings round about, and made Judea as idolatrous as any of the surrounding nations.

7 And he knew their desolate palaces, and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring.

Ezekiel 19:7

> 8 Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit.
>
> **Ezekiel 19:8**

- Nebuchadnezzar used Jehoiachin's allies against him
  - Chaldeans, Syrians, Moab, and Ammon
    2 Kings 24:2

[9]And they put him in ward in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into holds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel 19:9

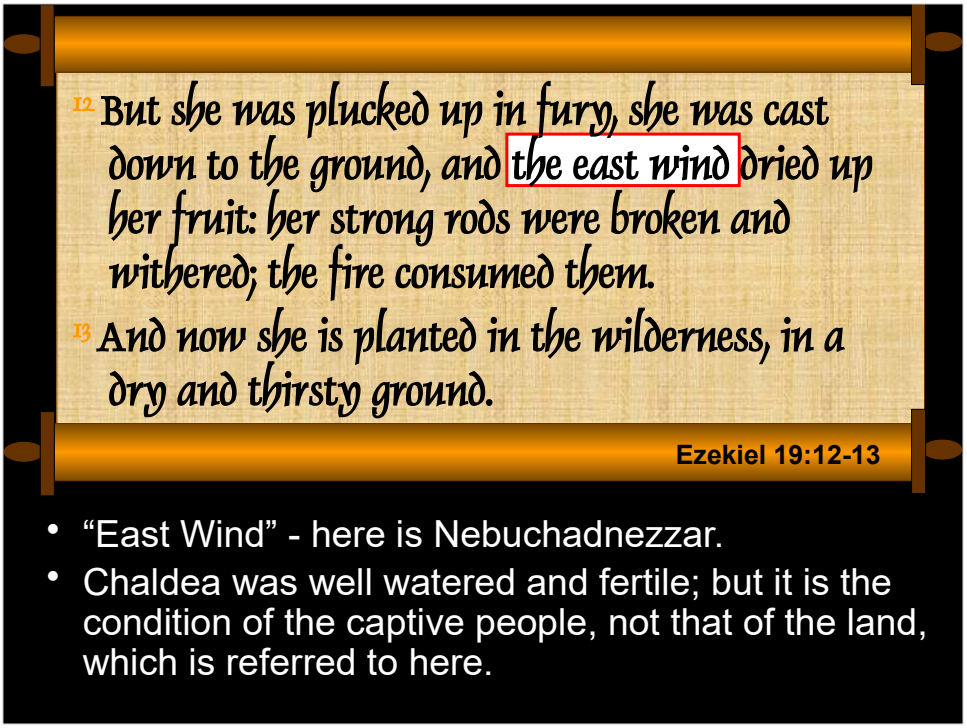
- Nebuchadnezzar carried off Jehoiachin to Babylon as Jehoahaz had been to Egypt.
- The ‘young lion’ was to roar in chains, not on the mountains of Israel.

10 Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted
by the waters: she was fruitful and full of
branches by reason of many waters.

11 And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them
that bare rule, and her stature was exalted
among the thick branches, and she appeared in
her height with the multitude of her branches.

Ezekiel 19:10-11

- The vine, of course, was Israel, as we saw in Chapters 15 & 17. Cf. Ps 10; Isa 5



plucked up—not *gradually* withered. The *sudden* upturning of the state was designed to awaken the Jews out of their torpor to see the hand of God in the national judgment.

14 And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches,
which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath
no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a
lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.

Ezekiel 19:14

- God's wrath was kindled by the perjury of Zedekiah who by his perjury brought about the destruction of Jerusalem by fire.
- This marked the end of the monarchy in Israel…
- This has lasted for 2500 years as foretold by Hosea (3:4)

The End of the Dynasty

- There was no lawful king left. The royal line was cursed Jer 22:30
- Following the exile, no one was willing or able to take up the mantle
  - That leaves only One who can be heir to the Throne of David.
  - It has to be One from the royal line of David 'legally', but not from that blood line.
  - The only rightful King left is the Messiah Himself!
  - He was a descendant of the royal line through Joseph, but not of his blood!
  - He will sit on David's throne as the Gabriel promised Mary. Luke 1:32

    Acts 15:13-18; q.v. Amos 9:11,12

[As we reviewed in the last session…]`


THE BOOK OF
EZEKIEL
To be continued..