

Israel's Proverb

In 597 BC, God would use the prophet Ezekiel to speak to people captive from Judah. God would call him to speak to rebellious people and explain why they were suffering in a foreign land. In Ezekiel 18, the prophet was called to address a false idea circulating among the nation. This theory had taken the form of a proverb (Ezekiel 18:1-2).

This proverb promoted the belief that the current generation was suffering because of the sins of their forefathers.

What was God's response to the proverb?

- God did not want this proverb spoken any more (Ezekiel 18:3). It was wrong!
- All souls belong to Him (Ezekiel 18:4). Only God has the right to speak of why men suffer for their sins. He has complete control and authority!
- "The soul who sins will die" (Ezekiel 18:4). The people of Judah were suffering for their sins, not the sins of their forefathers (Ezekiel 18:4).
- God provides a powerful illustration to drive His point of personal accountability home. There was a good man who was blessed because he lived righteously (Ezekiel 18:5-9). This man had a wicked son. The son was judged as wicked by God based on his own choices (Ezekiel 18:10-13). This son also had a son. The grandson of the first man was judged as righteous because he walked in the ways of God (Ezekiel 18:14-18).

What can we learn?

- God judges all people on an individual basis (Ezekiel 18:19-20). The Calvinistic doctrine of "Original Sin" is blown away by Ezekiel's teaching. God judged each son based on their actions. Sin is not passed from one generation to the next!
- God will not accept excuses for disobedience. People do not have to follow in the footsteps of wicked parents or grandparents!
- Righteous people can raise evil children, and evil people can raise righteous children. We are not raising programmed robots. God made people with the ability to choose if they will serve Him (Joshua 24:15).
- People can change (Ezekiel 18:21-29). Just like a righteous person can change and become wicked, a wicked person can also change and become righteous. When the wicked man changes, God's evaluation of Him also changes.

Conclusion:

We serve a just and holy God! If our lives are not right with the Lord, it is no one's fault but our own.

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