

## Each Person Is Responsible For Their Own Sins

### Ezekiel 18

Group <sup>1</sup>	C	V	Description
God Deals Justly with Individuals	18	1-4	All the souls of Israel are God's
		5-9	The righteous will surely live
		10-13	Each man must give account for his own actions
		14-18	A son can choose a life of righteousness, even if he has a sinful father
		19-20	"The person who sins will die."
		21-23	The sinner who repents will live
		24-29	The righteous who turn away from God will be cutoff, if a sinner turns from his sins he will save his life
		30-32	"Therefore, Repent and live."

Themes in the Chapter <sup>2</sup>	Faith, Family, History, Salvation
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### Reflections

It is not uncommon for people to blame someone else for their troubles or circumstances. Sometimes there is some truth to the matter but in this chapter God is trying to let the people who have been taken into captivity by the Babylonians that they always have a choice and that He deals justly with each generation.

### Questions

1. What proverb is Ezekiel told to respond to by the Lord? V1-2
2. What did God want the people to know about this proverb? V3
3. How does God view each soul? V4
4. How does God illustrate this idea? V5-9; 10-13; 14-18
5. How does Ezekiel then reinforce the concept of each generation being responsible for their own sins? V19-20
6. What hope does Ezekiel then offer to anyone who desires a new life? V21-23
7. How does Ezekiel illustrate the consequences of the choices we make? V24-29
8. What final appeal does God make through His prophet Ezekiel? V30-32

### Conclusion

God has made abundantly clear that each person and generation is responsible for their own choices and actions. If we don't like our current condition and circumstances, make a change. He also confirms that those who remain faithful throughout their life will be blessed with eternal life. Additionally, those who have lived a righteous life and then choose to turn their backs on God's and His design for life will die in their sins if they don't repent. A warning that should not be taken lightly.

1 (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.

2 (Full Color Bible) Theme suggestions without references to allow the reader to discover them in their reading.

## **Each Person Is Responsible For Their Own Sins**

We always have choices to make in every situation, so heed God's call to repent and live and in the process make all of heaven rejoice with us as we choose to live to honor God.

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### ***There and Then: Here and Now***

Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this part of our study<sup>3</sup>: *my LOG vs others SPECK. Here are some possible responses I've identified from the text that might apply to anyone.*

**S** - Are there *sins* for me to avoid or confess?

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**P** - Are there *promises* from God for me to claim?

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**E** - Are there *examples* for me to follow or avoid?

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**C** - Are there *commands* for me to obey?

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**K** - How has this passage increased my *knowledge* about God / Jesus / Holy Spirit?

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<sup>3</sup> *Navigator Bible Study Handbook* (The Navigators), with additions & Matthew 7:1-5.

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### Response to Questions

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1. The people were using the parable below to say that the reason the people were carried into captivity was the result of what their forefathers had done.

The fathers eat the sour grapes, But the children's teeth are set on edge

The common thought was that they were reaping God's judgment for the years of sinful actions by the generations before them. This was mentioned in Jeremiah and Lamentations.

**Jeremiah 31:29-30 NASB** "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge.' **30** "But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge.

**Lamentations 5:7 NASB** Our fathers sinned, *and* are no more; It is we who have borne their iniquities.

\* See table below for other translations of the verse to help clarify the meaning.

2. God, swearing by His very existence, wanted to make clear that they would no longer be able to use the idea expressed in this proverb as an excuse for their current conditions.
3. Every soul belongs to God—father and son alike—and each soul is responsible for their own sins. This is not a new concept. Consider the following.

**Exodus 20:5-6 NASB** "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, **6** but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

**Jeremiah 16:10-13 NASB** "Now when you tell this people all these words, they will say to you, 'For what reason has the LORD declared all this great calamity against us? And what is our iniquity, or what is our sin which we have committed against the LORD our God?' **11** "Then you are to say to them, '*It is* because your forefathers have forsaken Me,' declares the LORD, 'and have followed other gods and served them and bowed down to them; but Me they have forsaken and have not kept My law. **12** 'You too have done evil, *even more* than your forefathers; for behold, you are each one walking according to the stubbornness of his own evil heart, without listening to Me. **13** 'So I will hurl you out of this land into the land which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers; and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will grant you no favor.'

God has always been sending his prophets and messengers to people, calling them to repentance. Jesus made clear that God was still doing the same in His generation.

**Matthew 23:32-36 NASB** "Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.  
**33** "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?  
**34** "Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, **35** so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the

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temple and the altar. 36 "Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

4. Ezekiel then tells a story of three generations of men: a father, son, and grandson, and how each had a choice in how they chose to live their lives, either following the example of the previous generation or not.

<i>Generation 1 – Father</i> – a man who is righteous and practices justice and righteousness: Contrast v5-6 & v7-9
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<i>Generation 2 – Son</i> – his violent son: things he does, v10-13
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<i>Generation 3 – Grandson</i> – a son who chooses a different path: Contrast v15-17 & v18
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5. By answering the question of whether a son should bear the punishment for the father's sins, God is reinforcing the concept of each person is responsible for their own actions: the righteous for theirs and the wicked for theirs.
6. If a sinner turns from his wicked ways and begins to follow God's prescription for life and fellowship, his sins will no longer be remembered and he will live. God then declares a very important truth about His nature.

**Ezekiel 18:23 NASB** "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"

God's wrath is only poured out on those who refuse His pleadings to return to Him and His design for living. He doesn't want to do this but in essence each person brings it on themselves for choosing to live outside of God's designed.

**Romans 1:28-32 NASB** And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are gossips,* 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

7. Ezekiel illustrates this by speaking about two men: a righteous man who chooses a life of sin and a wicked man who repents and comes to God. Wiersbe<sup>4</sup> makes this observation, "...people determine their own character and destiny by the decisions they make." Additionally, Twice God makes sure to point out that it is not man's ways that are right, but God's ways are the right ones.

**Ezekiel 18:25 NASB** "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Hear now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?"

**Ezekiel 18:29 NASB** "But the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Are My ways not right, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right?"

8. God's appeal and conclusion to this matter is clearly expressed in the following.

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<sup>4</sup> (Wiersbe on Ezekiel 18)

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**Ezekiel 18:30-32 NASB** "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. **31** "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? **32** "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

**Ezekiel 18:2** – Most translations are similar to the one found in the NASB but the following are a little different and they might help clarify the original meaning of the parable. ([Translations](#))

(ABP+)	O son of man, What to you <i>is</i> this parable concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers ate an unripe grape, and the teeth of the children have a toothache?
(CEV)	Ezekiel, I hear the people of Israel using the old saying, "Sour grapes eaten by parents leave a sour taste in the mouths of their children."
(ERV)	"Why do you people say this proverb: 'The parents ate the sour grapes, but the children got the sour taste?'
(GNB)	and said, "What is this proverb people keep repeating in the land of Israel? 'The parents ate the sour grapes, But the children got the sour taste.'
(ISV)	"Why do you cite this proverb when you talk about Israel's land: 'The fathers eat sour grapes but it's their children's teeth that have become numb.'
(LEB)	"What do you mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel, saying, 'The fathers, they ate unripe fruit, and the teeth of the child became blunt.'
(LITV)	What is it to you that you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the teeth of the sons <i>are</i> dull?
(MKJV)	What is it to you that you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the teeth of the sons <i>are</i> dull?
(MSG)	"What do you people mean by going around the country repeating the saying, The parents ate green apples, The children got stomachache?
(NET)	"What do you mean by quoting this proverb concerning the land of Israel, " 'The fathers eat sour grapes And the children's teeth become numb?'
(NIV)	"You people have a proverb about the land of Israel. What do you mean by it? It says, "'The parents eat sour grapes. But the children have a bitter taste in their mouths.'
(NLT)	"Why do you quote this proverb concerning the land of Israel: 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children's mouths pucker at the taste?'
(TS2009)	"What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Yisra'ĕl, saying, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are blunted?'
(YLT)	'What—to you, ye—using this simile Concerning the ground of Israel, saying: Fathers do eat unripe fruit, And the sons' teeth are blunted?'

**Key Words:** Old Testament, Prophecy, Ezekiel, God, Sin, Judgment, Repentance, Righteousness

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