

The Lord Confronts a False Worldview

Ezekiel 18

1. **The Prevalence of a False Worldview** (vs.1-3)

The nation of Judah was in the initial years of its captivity in Babylon which God had brought about because of their idolatry and disobedience (Dt. 28:15ff; cf. 2 Ki. 17:7-23). The faithful in Israel were an exception (cf. Dan. 1:6), and the nation as a whole was ungodly. They believed that they were being unfairly punished for the sins of their ancestors (v.2).

2. **God's Just Standard Stated** (v.4)

The sins of individuals could have a lasting impact upon the life and experience of those around them and for those who come after them (Ex. 20:5-6), but God's standard had always been to hold individuals accountable for his or her own sin and not to hold the son accountable for the sin of the father (Dt. 24:16). This is a bedrock principle necessary for a biblical worldview (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

3. **God's Just Standard Illustrated** (vs.5-18)

The Lord gives Ezekiel a multi-generational example of just how His justice is applied to individuals.

A. A Righteous Grandfather (vs.5-9)

B. An Unrighteous Father (vs.10-13)

C. A Righteous Son (vs.14-17)

4. **A Refutation of the Objections of a False Worldview** (vs.19-29)

Ezekiel's contemporaries do not understand or agree with the principle that God has established.

A. A Question of Incredulity (v.19a)

"What is this nonsense?" This question exposes the depth of their false worldview. The clear statement of biblical categories of justice did not make sense with the way that they viewed the world or themselves.

B. Clarifying Examples (vs.19b-24)

I. A Careful Restatement of the Principle (vs.19b-20)

II. A Wicked Man's Repentance (vs.21-23)

III. A Wicked Man's Revelation (v.24)

C. A Condemnation of God's Justice (vs.25a, 29a)

"This is unjust!" The people responded to God's standard by declaring that it is unjust, and therefore further condemning God for being unjust or capricious.

D. A Blunt Response from the Lord (v.25b, 29b)

The Lord emphatically both repeats the people's condemnation of His standard as well as His terse reversal of their charge.

E. Another Patient Explanation of God's Standard (vs.26-28)

God highlights the justice of His standard as well as the continuing place of repentance for anyone, even a wicked man.

5. **A Gracious Call to Repentance** (vs.30-32)

In the midst of Israel's punishment because of their idolatry and their perpetuation of ungodly thinking, God continually calls them to repentance (cf. v.23). The message from God to mankind is that we should repent of our sin and turn to Him alone for salvation (Ac. 17:30). It was the message of God to Israel, it was the message of John the Baptist (Mk. 1:4), of Jesus (Mk. 1:15), the apostles (Acts 16:30-31; 1 Th. 1:9).