

# OUR INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Introduction

- 1) **Ezekiel 18:1-2** – God did not like the popular proverb of the day: “*The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge*”
- 2) Judah had been taken into Babylonian captivity (Ezekiel taken in deportation of 597 BC)
- 3) Those in captivity thought they were innocent people being punished while the real sinners had gone unpunished – they were accusing God of being unfair (v. 25)
- 4) God proceeds to refute this false proverb with the **individual responsibility of man** (v. 3ff)

## I) **Principle of Individual Responsibility**

- A) The soul who sins shall die (vv. 4, 20; cf. Deut. 24:16; Jer. 31:29-30)
  - 1) Each person will be judged according to his own works (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10)
  - 2) Righteousness or wickedness is not transferable; each one is individually responsible

## II) **Principle Illustrated**

- A) Examples of three men: man, son, grandson (vv. 5-18)
- B) **First man** (vv. 5-9)
  - 1) A just man who did what was lawful and right according to God’s will
  - 2) Judged according to his own deeds (cf. 1 Jn. 3:7)
- C) **Second man** [son of first man] (vv. 10-13)
  - 1) An unjust man who is personally responsible – “his blood shall be upon *him*”
  - 2) His just father is not held guilty for his son’s sins
- D) **Third man** [son of second man, grandson of first man] (vv. 14-17)
  - 1) A just man who decided not to be like his unjust father (each person makes their own individual choice to do good or evil)
  - 2) Not punished for the iniquity of his father – responsible only for his own actions
  - 3) His father will be punished for his own sins – the righteous son will not be held guilty for his father’s sins (vv. 18-19)

## III) **The Possibility of Change**

- A) The wicked and righteous can both change their ways (vv. 21-24)
  - 1) Wicked can repent and do right – God will not hold past sins against him
  - 2) Righteous can turn away from righteousness and commit sin – be held guilty of sin
- B) Judgment of God is fair and impartial – sin punished and faithfulness rewarded (vv. 25-29)
- C) Need to heed the invitation of the Lord – “Therefore, turn and live!” (vv. 30-32)

## IV) **False Doctrines of Man Refuted**

- A) Total Inherited Depravity [Original Sin] (v. 20; Eph. 2:1-3)
- B) Unconditional Election (v. 23; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9)
- C) Faith Only (vv. 9, 21; Acts 10:35; Rom. 2:7, 10; Jas. 2:24)
- D) Once Saved, Always Saved (v. 24; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 3:12)

## Conclusion

Each one of us will be judged **individually**: “*For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...each of us shall give account of himself to God*” (Rom. 14:10-12). Do you need a new heart and a new spirit? Put on the new man made in the image of the Son of God (Col. 3:9-10). Hear the gospel, believe the truth, repent of sin, confess your faith in Jesus, and be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins.