

A Call for Repentance

Key Verse:
“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. 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?”
—Ezekiel 18:30,31

Selected Scripture:
Ezekiel 18:1-13,30-32

UNLIKE JEREMIAH, WHO prophesied in Judah and foretold its destruction before he was taken captive into Egypt, Ezekiel received his prophetic commission while in Babylon and warned the house of Israel concerning the consequences of their unfaithfulness to God.—Jer. 43:1-8; Ezek. 1:1-3

Ezekiel prophesied, “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 edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. 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.”—Ezek. 18:1-4

The people of Judah blamed their sins on the failure of their ancestors. The Heavenly Father refuted this logic. Through Ezekiel he

indicated individuals are held responsible for their own sins.

In today's lesson, several examples are given concerning principles of divine judgment as they pertain to a man who does what is lawful and right, the wicked son of a righteous man, the righteous son of a wicked father, a wicked man who repents, and a righteous man who forsakes his righteousness and commits iniquity.—vss. 5-24

Our Key Verses affirm that God desires repentance from sinners, and has no pleasure in the death of any individual, although those who prove incorrigible will surely be destroyed. In viewing this study from the broadest standpoint, because of Adam's sin, there is none righteous. Were it not for the fact that Christ gave his perfect humanity to purchase mankind, no individual would be able to meet the Heavenly Father's requirements to attain everlasting life.

During this Gospel Age, those who have repented from sin and are diligently striving to walk in the footsteps of our Lord are counted by God as having been justified. If faithful in carrying out their vows of consecration, they will receive a heavenly reward and assist the Master during the coming kingdom in restoring mankind back to the state of perfection that Adam and Eve enjoyed before they were disobedient.

Additionally, a future application of the principle that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," will occur when Satan is bound and humanity will have the opportunity to attain perfection and through obedience live forever. At that time, all will be accountable for their deeds because they will be fully enlightened as to the Heavenly Father's standards.

How thankful all humanity will be when they are raised from the tomb and will be given an opportunity to forever be in harmony with God and to receive his favor eternally.—John 5:28,29; Rev. 21:1-4 ■