

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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Ezekiel 18

By Derek Long

During the days of Ezekiel and Jeremiah a proverb was circulating around those in Israel. The proverb was, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:1-2; Jeremiah 31:29). God tells Ezekiel "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel" (Ezekiel 18:3). The proverb should no longer be used because it taught a concept which was not true as God points out through Ezekiel in chapter 18.

Ezekiel 18:4 makes a statement which serves as the basis of much of the rest of the chapter. An important point is emphasized at the end of the passage, "the soul who sins shall die." God is teaching each person is responsible for his or her decision to serve Him or not.

Ezekiel 18 speaks of three generations within a family. Ezekiel 18:5-9 speaks of an individual who is just, does what is lawful and right, walks in God's statutes, and keeps God's judgments faithfully. God says the individual who does these things will live. Ezekiel 18:10-13 speaks of a son born to the first man. The son commits abominations and is wicked. Even

though his father was a righteous individual he would die because of his own wickedness. The wicked individual will not be saved because of his father's righteousness. Ezekiel 18:14-18 points out the second man could have a son who sees his wickedness and does not act like his father. Instead, the third man executes God's judgments and walks in God's statutes. As a result, the third individual will live despite the fact his father was a wicked man. Each of these individuals would either live or die on the basis of what they did and not on the basis of what someone else did.

Ezekiel 18:20 restates the principle stated in verse 4. It says, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." God does not hold one responsible for the decisions of others. Israel should have known this point as it was a part of God's law to them. Deuteronomy 24:16 says, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin." In regards to the final judgment, the Bible is clear each person will be held responsible for their own actions and not the actions of another. Romans 14:12 says, "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." We will not give account for what someone else did or did not do but for what we did or did not do. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." We will not be judged according to what someone else has done but based upon what we have done. Revelation 20:12-13 says, "And I saw the dead, small and great, standing

before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each according to his works." They were judged according to their own works not someone else's works. It is important for us to remember passages such as these when we hear some in the religious world today talk about us inheriting the sin of Adam. Sin is not inherited. Sin is committed by the individual. God does not hold us responsible for what our forefathers did but for what we have done.

Ezekiel 18:21-29 points out how a wicked man can turn from his sin and end up living. It also points out how a righteous man can turn from righteousness to wickedness and end up dying. We need to remember our destiny is not determined by our parents nor is our eternal destiny written in stone based upon our past deeds. As long as we are alive we have the opportunity to turn from sin and live or turn from righteousness and die. We would do well to remember the teaching of Ezekiel 18:24, 26 when we encounter those who claim it is not possible for a person who is saved to sin so as to be lost.

Ezekiel 18:23, 32 points out God does not take pleasure in one who dies in wickedness. God's desire is for the wicked to repent and live. 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 teach the same principle that God wants all men to be saved but requires them to repent and turn to Him. We need to remember these passages when some speak of God selecting certain people to be lost unconditionally.

Ezekiel 18 has some very important points for us today.