

**The Book of Ezekiel**  
**Chapters 18-21: God is Just (Part 1)**  
**Lesson 19 “Individual Responsibility”**  
**Ezekiel 18:1-32 (ANSWERS)**  
**January 17, 2021**

**Recap from Lesson 18:**

- From the images of a vine and a marriage, Ezekiel turned to the image of a **Great** Tree, **Two** Eagles, and **Three** Shoots.
  - o This allegory is about Three **Kings** (“Shoots”) because the cedar tree represents the **Royal Dynasty** of David.
  - o He, **Nebuchadnezzar** is the first “Great Eagle.” (**Ezek. 17:3**)
  - o The second eagle, (**Vs. 7**) is the ruler of **Egypt** probably Pharaoh Hophra, who promised to help Judah in her fight against the Babylonians. (**Ezek. 17:7**)
- 1. **King Jehoiachin (Vss. 3-4, 11-12)**
  - a. Jehoiachin was the **Highest** shoot or branch in David’s family tree and he was “**Planted**” in Babylon.
- 2. **King Zedekiah (Vss. 5-10, 13-21)**
  - a. He was the **Youngest** son of good King **Josiah** and Nebuchadnezzar “Planted him in **Judah**,” where he grew for eleven years.
    - i. The second eagle represents Pharaoh, who tried to **Rescue** the kingdom of Judah but **Failed**.
- 3. **Messiah the King (Vss. 22-24)**
  - a. Zedekiah had reigned for eleven years and was the twentieth and last king of Judah.
    - i. His **Dethronement** and **Death** in Babylon seemed to mark the end of the Davidic line and therefore the failure of God’s covenant with King David, but this was not the case.
  - b. This “Shoot” is the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who came from the stem of **Jesse** and one day will establish His glorious kingdom on earth. (**Jer. 23:5-6**)
    - i. The fulfillment of God’s **Kingdom** promises to **David** is **Jesus Christ**, and He shall not **Fail**.

**Lesson 19**

**Background/Introduction:**

- Responsibility is one of the major themes of these four chapters.
  - o The Jewish exiles in Babylon were blaming their ancestors for the terrible judgment that had befallen them, so Ezekiel explained that God judges people individually, for their own sins and not for somebody else’s. (**Chapter 18**)
    - By dealing with the subject of personal and national responsibility, Ezekiel was able to answer the frequent complaints of the people that the Lord was treating them unfairly.
- 1. **Individual Responsibility (Ezek. 18:1-32)**
  - a. **READ: Ezek. 18:2, 19, 25, and 29**

- b. The prophet Jeremiah quoted the same familiar proverb and preached the same truth that Ezekiel preached: “**God Deals with us as individuals and Punishes each of justly for what we do.**” (**Jer. 31:29-30**)
- c. Where did Ezekiel’s listeners get the idea that God punished the children of their Fathers?
  - i. This philosophy came from two sources:
    - 1. A **Misinterpretation** of what the Lord had said in His law, that He visited the **Sins** of the fathers upon the children.
      - a. (**Ex. 20:5, Num. 14:18**)
    - 2. The **Jewish** idea of the **Oneness** of the nation
- d. The warning in **Exodus 20:5** and **Exodus 34:6-7** implies that the Lord punishes the **Children** if they commit the sins their **Fathers** committed.
  - i. As far as the solidarity of the nation, the Jewish people did not consider themselves one people who **Descended** from Abraham.
    - 1. Since each tribe descended from one of the sons of **Jacob**, Israel claimed both **National** and **Tribal** solidarity.
- a. **You Cannot Blame Your Ancestors (Vss. 5-18)**
  - a. The prophet refutes a proverb by imagining a situation involving three men in a family, people with whom his listeners certainly could identify.
    - i. He began with a **Righteous** Father (**Ezek. 18:5-9**), a hypothetical Jew who kept God’s law and therefore was just and would not die because of **Sin (Vss. 4, 9)**.
      - 1. Whether people lived under the old covenant or the new covenant, before or since the cross, the way of salvation is the **Same** Faith in the Lord that is **Evidenced** by a **New** life of obedience. (**Heb. 11:6**)
  - b. In describing this man, Ezekiel named **Eight** negative offenses along with Eight **Positive** virtues.
    - i. The negative sins this man avoids are attending **Idol** feasts in the “High places” and worshipping Idols in his **Own** land, committing **Adultery**, incurring **Ritual** uncleanness, **Exploiting** people and using violence to rob people (**Vs. 7**), **Lending** money with interest and demanding a **Profit (Vs. 8)**
    - ii. The eight positive virtues are **Returning** a debtor’s pledge, **Feeding** the hungry and **Clothing** the naked (**Vs. 7**), **Living** justly and **Promoting** justice (**Vs. 8**), living by God’s **Statutes** and obeying His ordinances, and living with **Integrity (Vs. 9)**
  - c. This righteous Father had an **Unrighteous** Son (**Ezek. 18:10-13**), about whom Ezekiel had nothing good to say.
    - i. He listed ten offenses against God’s law, three of them capital crimes, **Murder (Vs. 10)**, **Idolatry (Vss. 11-12)**, and **Adultery (Vs. 11)**.
  - d. The third character in this drama was a **Righteous** Grandson (**Ezek. 18:14-18**).
    - i. Five godly character traits are mentioned about this third man. The four that are lacking are Ritual **Cleanness (Ezek. 18:6)**, Living



justly and **Promoting** justice (**Vss. 8-9**), and acting with **Integrity** (**Vs. 9**).

- ii. The point is that the third man, the grandson, resisted the bad **Influence** in the home and **Obeded** the Lord in spite of his **Father's** bad example.
- The Lord did not kill the grandson because of his father's sins or even spare him because of his grandfather's righteousness, but dealt with the man on the basis of his own faith and righteousness.

