

Disputing the Justice of God Part II**Opening the Door to Hope****Ezekiel 18:19–32**

Veritas Adult Community

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The Text**A. The People's First Rejoinder and YHWH's Response**¹⁹“But you say, ‘Why should the son not share in the guilt of his father?’

The son has practised justice and righteousness. He has observed all my statutes and kept them—He shall surely live!

B. The Reiteration of the New Thesis²⁰It is the person who sins who shall die!

A son shall not share in the guilt of his father;

nor shall a father share in the guilt of his son.

The righteousness of the righteous shall be credited to him alone;

but the wickedness of the wicked shall be charged to him alone.”

C. A Corollary Thesis²¹Now if the wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed, and observes all my statutes, and practises justice and righteousness, he shall surely live! He shall not die! ²²None of his rebellious acts that he has perpetrated, will be charged against him. On account of his righteousness that he has practised, he shall live.²³Do I really find any pleasure in the death of the wicked?—the declaration of the Lord YHWH—Is it not rather in his turning from his ways that he may live?**D. Two Case Studies on Divine Justice****1. The Case of the Person Who Begins Righteously**²⁴But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness, and practises evil, like all the abominable actions that the wicked practise—Shall he behave this way and still live? None of his righteous actions that he has performed, will be credited [to him]. On account of his treachery that he has perpetrated, and on account of his sins that he has committed—on their account he shall die!**2. The People's Second Rejoinder and YHWH's Response**²⁵But you say, “The Lord's action is unscrupulous!”Hear now, O house of Israel! Is my action really unscrupulous? Is it not your own actions that are unscrupulous? ²⁶If a righteous person turns from his righteousness and practises evil, he dies for his actions; On account of his evil that he has committed, he shall die.**3. The Case of the Person Who Begins Wickedly**²⁷But if a wicked person turns from his wickedness that has committed, and practises justice and righteousness, he shall preserve his own life. ²⁸He has taken heed and repented of all his wicked acts that he had committed. He shall surely live! He shall not die!**4. The People's Third Rejoinder and YHWH's Response**²⁹But the house of Israel insists: “The Lord's action is unscrupulous.”

Is my action really unscrupulous, O house of Israel? Is it not your actions that are unscrupulous?

³⁰Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, each one, based on his actions—The declaration of the Lord YHWH. Repent and turn away from all your rebellious actions, so that iniquity does not become a stumbling-block for you. ³¹Throw off all your rebellious actions that you have committed and create a new heart and a new spirit for yourselves.**E. The Concluding Appeal**Why should you die, O house of Israel? ³²I find no pleasure in any one's death—The declaration of the Lord YHWH. So turn around and live!**Exposition****Introduction**

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| (1) The Way of Life | (vv. 21–22) |
| (2) The Basis of Hope | (v. 23) |
| (3) The Way of Death | (v. 24) |

The Call of the Watchman (Ezekiel 3:17–21)

¹⁶At the end of seven days the following message of YHWH came to me: ¹⁷“Human, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a message coming from my mouth you shall warn them about me. ¹⁸If I announce to the wicked, ‘You shall die!’ and you fail to warn him—that is, you do not speak out to warn the wicked person to turn from his wicked way to save him that wicked man shall die for his iniquity, but I will hold you responsible for his death. ¹⁹As for you, if you have warned the wicked, but he does not turn from his wickedness that is from his wicked way, on account of his iniquity, he shall die, but you will have saved your own life. ²⁰And when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and practices evil, and I place a stumbling block in front of him—he shall die. Since you did not warn him, because of his sin he shall die (his righteous actions that he has committed not being remembered), but I will hold you responsible for his death. ²¹But you, if you warn him, the righteous man, so that he does not sin, and he refrains from sin, he certainly shall live because he took warning, and you will have saved your own life.”

A. The Case of the Formerly Wicked Person (vv. 21–23).

1. The Meaning of “unscrupulous” (*lō’ yittakēn*)
2. The Biblical Doctrine of Repentance (Part 1)
 - a. Turning from sin (*šûb*)
 - b. Observing YHWH’s Ordinances (*šāmar ḥuqqōtāy*)
 - c. Demonstrating Justice and Righteousness (*’āšā mišpāt’ ûšēdāqâ*)

B. The Case of the Formerly Righteous Person (v. 24)

The Rules Governing the Fate of Human Beings

- a. One generation cannot build up such a treasure for another.
- b. A person cannot build up a treasure of merit or demerit and bank on this later in life if his/her conduct changes.

C. The Concluding Rejoinder and Appeal (18:25–32)

Verse 19		Verse 25
But you say,		But the house of Israel says,
“YHWH’s action is unscrupulous.”		“YHWH’s action is unscrupulous.”
Listen, O house of Israel,	←	Is my action (יָדַי) unscrupulous,
Is my action (יָדַי) unscrupulous?	→	O house of Israel?
Is it not your actions		Is it not your actions
that are unscrupulous?		that are unscrupulous?

1. The Prophet’s Rejoinder and Reply (18:25–29)

2. The Concluding Appeal (vv. 30–32)

The Purpose of the Appeal

a. To underlines people’s own culpability for their judgment.

The Biblical Doctrine of Repentance (Part 2)

- (1) “Turning away” from rebellious behavior
- (2) “Casting off all rebellious actions
- (3) A mind/heart transplant.

Ezek 11:18–19; 36:26; Deut 10:16; 30:6

b. To highlight YHWH’s burden for his people and his yearning for their obedience.

Application

1. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine that would perceive God as primarily bent on judgment and death.
2. Ezekiel sends a warning to those who presume upon the grace of God, and a promise of hope to those who despair of life..
3. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine of eternal security and/or eternal damnation that would hold a person captive to the decisions of the past.

The Case of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1–17; 2 Chr 33:10–20; apocryphal “Prayer of Manasseh”)
The Case of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:1–5; 3; 10:8–10).
4. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine that would accuse God of unscrupulosity and capriciousness.
5. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine of ministry that encourages a prophet to proclaim only what people want to hear.
6. Ezekiel repudiates any doctrine that claims that God’s covenant with Israel is over.