

Biblical Notes – Ezekiel 18:5-9; 10; 14; 20-29

5-9 – “But if a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness, [6] and does not eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period- [7] if a man does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, does not commit robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing, [8] if he does not lend money on interest or take increase, if he keeps his hand from iniquity and executes true justice between man and man, [9] if he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully-he is righteous and will surely live,” declares the Lord GOD.

וְאִישׁ קָרְבָּנָה צַדִּיק וְעָשָׂה מְשֻׁפֶּט וְאַדְּקָה: וְאֶל-גָּלְעָדִים לֹא אָכַל וְעַינָּיו לֹא נִשְׁאָרָא בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַתְּ-אָשָׁת רַעַבְוָה לֹא טָא אֶל-גָּלְעָדִים לֹא אָכַל וְעַינָּיו לֹא נִשְׁאָרָא בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַתְּ-אָשָׁת נָקָה לֹא וְקָרְבָּן: זֶה אִישׁ לֹא יָפֵא חַבְלָנוּ חֹבֶשׁ יָבֶל גָּדָלָה לֹא נִגְּלָה לֹא חַמְלָה לֹרְעָב יְהֹוָה וְעַלְמָם יְכֹפֵה-הַגָּדוֹ: חַבְשָׁר לֹא יָלַמְן וְמְרַבֵּת לֹא יָלַמְן: מְשֻׁפֶּט יְשִׁיבָה בְּזָהָן מְשֻׁפֶּט אֶל-עַשְׂלָה בְּזָהָן אֶל-אַיִשׁ: טְבָחוֹת יְתַלְּבָה וְמְשֻׁפֶּט שְׁמָר לְעַשְׂתָה אֶתְמָתָא צַדִּיק הַוָּה קָדְמָה נָם אַדְנִי תְּהִיא:

It's quite clear that the entire passage is rooted in the hypothetical. Vs.5-9 teaches that if you do practice justice, if you do not practice oppression, if you walk faithfully you will surely live. It starts entirely dependant upon *if* you do these things.

10,14,20 – “Then he may have a violent son who sheds blood and who does any of these things to a brother [14] "Now behold, he has a son who has observed all his father's sins which he committed, and observing does not do likewise. [20] The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

וְהַוְלִיד בְּוּרְפְּרִיז שָׁקָר גָּם וְעַשָּׂה אֲחָזָה מְאַחַד מְאַלָּה: יְדוֹתָה הַוְלִיד בְּנָוֹן וְנָרְאָה אֶת-כְּלִישָׁת אָכְיוֹ אֲשֶׁר עַשָּׂה וְוַיָּאָהָה (וְלֹא יָשַׁשָּׂה כֵּהוּ: כְּכֹפֵשׁ הַתְּפִעָת קְיָא
קְמָוֹת בְּנָוֹן לְאַדִּישָׁא | בְּקָעָנוּ הַאֲבָב לֹא יִשְׁאָל בְּנָוֹן הַבְּנָוֹן אֶל-יְהֹוָה וְרַשְׁעַת הַרְשָׁע (כְּתִיב רְשָׁע) עַל-יוֹתְהִיא

We then see the consequences of the son who is violent and sheds blood. Everyone will be punished for their own sins (Father for his sins and Son for his sins).

21-23 – “But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. [22] All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. [23] Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares the Lord GOD, “rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?

אוּנְרַשְׁע צַיְדָה יְשָׁוֹב מִקְלָ-חַטָּאָתָיו (כְּתִיב חַטָּאָתוֹ) אֲשֶׁר עַשָּׂה וְשִׁמְרָה אֶת-כְּלִי-קָוְלִי וְעַשָּׂה מְשֻׁפֶּט וְאַדְּקָה תָּהָה לֹא נָמוֹת: כְּכֹל-פְּשָׁעָיו אֲשֶׁר עַשָּׂה לֹא יָקְרָר לוֹ
בְּצַדְקָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-עַשָּׂה יְתַהָּה גַּתְעָפָץ אַחֲרֵי מָוֹת רְשָׁע גָּם אַנְגָּלִי תָּהָה קָלוֹא בְּשִׁיבוֹ מִזְרָכוֹ (כְּתִיב מִזְרָכוֹ) וְתִהְיָה

Vs.21 again supplies us with a hypothetical “BUT IF” the wicked man turns he will surely live he will not die. Obviously, God has no pleasure in killing the wicked who refuse to repent but would rather the wicked would turn from their sin and live. This is consistent with the entire message of scripture.

24-29 – “But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die. [25] Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Hear now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right? [26] When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and dies because of it, for his iniquity which he has committed he will die. [27] Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life. [28] Because he considered and turned away from all his transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. [29] But the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Are My ways not right, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right?

Again we are given more hypotheticals "BUT WHEN". God desires us to turn from our wickedness because HIS way is the right way: "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Hear now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?" Turning and living is what God wants for us. God's ways are higher than our own and God is the standard we must meet if we want to live. The problem is that the one dead in sin will never be able to uphold this command. Just as no one but Christ could uphold the Law perfectly. Just because God gave us his standard doesn't follow that we in ourselves can uphold that command perfectly.

What matters here is that we understand God's desire for justice, righteousness and repentance. God, because of the perfection of his nature **demands** that we act in a certain way, even if we are incapable of doing that. That is why the **if** is placed throughout this text, because if God so enables them and circumcises their heart THEN they will be able to do what is right in the Lord's eyes.

1 Kings 3:14 NASB

If you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days."

2 Kings 17:13-14 NASB

Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets." [14] However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

Isaiah 55:6-9 NASB

Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. [7] Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. [8] "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. [9] "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.