Ezekiel 18:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.

Analysis

'Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.' The people's objection shows they still cling to corporate guilt. God's answer: righteous actions bring life. The son who practices righteousness lives, regardless of his father's wickedness. This establishes clear moral causality based on personal choices.

Historical Context

The exiles struggled to understand why they suffered if they personally hadn't committed their ancestors' sins. Ezekiel clarifies: they suffered national consequences of corporate sin, but individual eternal destiny depends on personal faithfulness. This prepares for New Covenant individualized salvation through personal faith in Christ.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do we distinguish between corporate consequences we experience and individual guilt we bear?
2. What does this teach about the relationship between community and individual in God's economy?

Interlinear Text

הָאָ ב	בַּעֲוֹ ן	וְהַבֵּ ן	נָשָׂ א	לֹא	מַדֻּ עַ	וַאֲמַרְתֶּ ם
of the father	the iniquity	When the son	bear			Yet say
H1	H5771	H1121	H5375	H3808	H4069	H559

וְהַבֵּ ן	מִשְׁפָּ ט	וּצְדָקָ ה	וַיַּעֲשֶׂ ה	כָּל	אֵ ת	
When the son	that which is lawful	and right	and hath done			
H1121	H4941	H6666	H6213	H3605	H853	

חֻקּוֹתַ י	שָׁמַ ר	וַיַּעֲשֶׂ ה	אֹתָ ם	יִחְיֶה׃	יִחְיֶה	
all my statutes	and hath kept	and hath done		live	live	
H2708	H8104	H6213	H853	H2421	H2421	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:5 (Sin): Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Jeremiah 15:4 (Parallel theme): And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 5:9 (Sin): Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,