

Ezekiel 18:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Analysis

"But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." This sobering warning addresses apostasy danger. The phrase "turneth away from righteousness" indicates deliberate departure, not momentary lapse. Final apostasy proves that prior "righteousness" was external conformity, not genuine faith. The Reformed doctrine of perseverance teaches that true believers ultimately persevere; those who utterly apostatize demonstrate they never possessed saving faith.

Historical Context

Among the exiles (591 BC), some appeared righteous but lacked genuine transformation. God warns that mere external righteousness without heart change proves insufficient. Israel's history included many who started well but finished poorly. The warning guards against presumptuous assurance based on past performance rather than present faith. The early church recognized this danger:

apostasy reveals false profession (1 John 2:19, Hebrews 6:4-6). True faith perseveres; false faith eventually manifests itself.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does this warning challenge presumptuous assurance based on past religious performance?
2. What is the relationship between genuine persevering faith and temporary false profession?

Interlinear Text

וּבָשׁ וּבִ	צַדִּיק	צְדִיקוֹתָ ו	עֲשֶׂה	עַל	
turneth away	But when the righteous	All his righteousness	and committeth	iniquity	
H7725	H6662	H6666	H6213	H5766	
כָּל ל	הַתּוֹעֵב וְ	אֲשֶׁר	עֲשֶׂה	הָרָשׁ ע	
H3605	according to all the abominations	H834	and committeth	that the wicked	
	H8441		H6213	H7563	
עֲשֶׂה	וְחַי	כָּל	צְדִיקוֹתָ ו	אֲשֶׁר	עֲשֶׂה
and committeth	shall he live	H3605	All his righteousness	H834	and committeth
H6213	H2425		H6666		H6213
ל א	תִּזְכַּר רָנָה	בְּמַעַל ו	אֲשֶׁר	חָמַע ל	
H3808	shall not be mentioned	in his trespass	H834	that he hath trespassed	
	H2142	H4603		H4604	
וּבְחַטָּאת ו	אֲשֶׁר	חָטָא	בָּם	יָמוֹת:	
and in his sin	H834	that he hath sinned	H0	in them shall he die	
H2403		H2398		H4191	

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 33:18 (Righteousness): When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

Proverbs 21:16 (Parallel theme): The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

2 John 1:8 (Parallel theme): Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Galatians 3:4 (Parallel theme): Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

Ezekiel 18:26 (Righteousness): When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

1 John 2:19 (Parallel theme): They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

1 Samuel 15:11 (Parallel theme): It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

Revelation 3:11 (Parallel theme): Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Revelation 2:10 (Evil): Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Psalms 125:5 (Sin): As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.