

Ezekiel 18:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

Analysis

God declares emphatically: "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel." The oath formula "as I live" invokes God's eternal existence as guarantee. This isn't denying generational consequences but rejecting deterministic fatalism. Each person will be judged according to their own righteousness or wickedness (verses 4, 20). The doctrine of personal accountability doesn't negate original sin but emphasizes that individuals ratify or repudiate their inheritance. Adam's sin brings condemnation, but each sinner willingly confirms that sentence through personal rebellion (Romans 5:12).

Historical Context

Among the Babylonian exiles (591 BC), fatalistic resignation threatened to perpetuate the very idolatry that caused exile. If judgment was inevitable regardless of personal behavior, why repent? God's prohibition of this proverb restored moral agency and hope—repentance matters because God judges individuals, not just generations. This principle prepared for the New Covenant emphasis on personal faith and individual regeneration. While corporate identity remains important biblically, it doesn't eliminate personal responsibility.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does personal accountability before God challenge fatalistic attitudes about spiritual growth and change?
2. What is the biblical balance between acknowledging generational influences and accepting personal responsibility?

Interlinear Text

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org