

Ezekiel 18:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,

Analysis

'But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right.' This begins the description of a righteous person. The Hebrew *tsaddiq* ('just/righteous') describes one in right relationship with God through covenant faithfulness. The subsequent verses detail practical righteousness: avoiding idolatry, sexual sin, oppression, and practicing justice and mercy. This is not works-based salvation but the fruit of genuine faith.

Historical Context

The standards listed reflect Mosaic law requirements, particularly Leviticus 18-20. For exilic Judah, these practical markers of faithfulness were critical when separated from temple worship. The passage shows that true religion involves both vertical relationship with God (avoiding idolatry) and horizontal relationships with others (justice, mercy).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this passage's definition of righteousness compare with modern evangelicalism's emphasis?
2. What practical fruit demonstrates the reality of our faith commitment?

Interlinear Text

אִם־אֵת יְהִי־צִדְקָה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה:
But if a man be just and do that which is lawful and right
H376 H3588 H1961 H6662 H6213 H4941 H6666

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 33:14 (Word): Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

1 John 3:7 (Righteousness): Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

Proverbs 21:3 (Righteousness): To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

1 John 2:29 (Righteousness): If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

1 John 2:3 (Word): And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Genesis 18:19 (Righteousness): For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.