

Ezekiel 33:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

Analysis

This passage emphasizes both the possibility and necessity of genuine repentance. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked but desires they turn and live (Ezekiel 33:11). This reflects the Reformed understanding that while salvation is entirely by grace through faith, it necessarily involves repentance—turning from sin to God in trust and obedience. True conversion produces transformed living, not merely intellectual assent to doctrine. The call to repentance demonstrates God's mercy even amid judgment, offering escape to those who truly turn from rebellion. This principle refutes both presumption ("I'm elect, so my behavior doesn't matter") and despair ("I've sinned too much to be saved")—both errors Ezekiel's audience faced.

Historical Context

This passage was delivered during the Babylonian exile (c. 586-571 BCE) after Jerusalem's destruction. The exiled community grappled with theological and practical questions: Why had judgment come? Would restoration occur? How should they live in exile? The historical context of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns, conquest and exile practices, and prophetic literature provides essential background. Archaeological discoveries from this period illuminate the exile's realities and the return's historical fulfillment. Yet Ezekiel's prophecies extend beyond immediate historical context to find fuller realization in Christ and the church, with ultimate consummation in the new creation.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen your understanding of God's character, purposes, or ways of working in history?
2. What specific application does this passage call you to make in your current circumstances or spiritual life?
3. How does this Old Testament passage illuminate New Testament teaching about Christ, salvation, or the church?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמְרוּ	בְּנֵי י	עַמְּךָ	לֹא	וְתִכְוֶן:	וְדֶרֶךְ מ	אֲדֹנָי י
say	Yet the children	of thy people	H3808	is not equal	The way	of the Lord
H559	H1121	H5971		H8505	H1870	H136
וְהִיא מָה	וְדֶרֶךְ מ	לֹא	וְתִכְוֶן:			
H1992	The way	H3808	is not equal			
	H1870		H8505			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 18:29 (References Lord): Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

Ezekiel 18:25 (References Lord): Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?