

May 23, 2021



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

◆
Lesson Leaders:
James Haymon

Class Leaders:
Inreach: Pat Hester
Deacon: C M Hester

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
God gives fresh starts from the inside out

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Lord, we need Your touch on our lives. Work in our hearts in whatever areas need a fresh start. Help us to do our part and to trust You to do what only You can do

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness And rivers in the desert

(Isa 43:19 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Apr 12 2014)

Series: Prophets Faithful to God's Covenant

UNIT 3: Courageous Prophets of Change

NEXT WEEK

NO CLASS

Preaching to the Exiles Ezekiel 18:1-9, 30-32

Lesson Background and Introduction

The exiles imagined themselves to be the victims of a cosmic injustice. They viewed themselves as serving a sentence intended for the prior generation. The history of God's people reveals that they had always been incapable of keeping the covenant. Before Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai, Aaron had already constructed the gold calf and led the people into idolatry. The book of Judges outlines the nation's checkered history of obeying God. The exiles were not unique in their ability to view themselves as morally superior to the prior generation. Jesus called out similar duplicity in the Pharisees, who insisted that if they had been alive at the time of the prophets, they would not have murdered them (Matthew 23:30). Indeed, they had already plotted to kill Jesus (12:14). The apostle Paul's words "Let God be true, and every human being a liar" (Romans 3:4) fit well in Ezekiel's defense of God's justice. The hearts of the people were always incapable of obeying God fully. So God promised a new creative act: He would give the people new hearts, ones capable of being sensitive and obedient to God's Word. This truth was intended to prevent Ezekiel's audience from slipping into the despair or apathy that came with believing they were the victims of their parents' decisions. Each person was charged with the responsibility of turning from his or her sinful ways and returning to God, in order that they would avoid being destroyed by the consequences of their own sins. This is ultimately fulfilled through following Jesus in the plan of salvation. Those who do so receive the Holy Spirit, who daily recreates our hearts and minds to be like Christ.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

The Blamers - When Ezekiel preached to the exiles, they responded with cliches that snowed they took no responsibility for their troubles. A favorite saying referred to the older generation eating sour grapes, which resulted in the younger generation's suffering. This group of Israelites blamed their present adverse circumstances on the forefathers, they were unjustly punished for the sins of the previous generation. But Ezekiel said that each person has to stand before God and take responsibility for his or her actions. God was not unfair and unjust. The Lord punishes people for their sin, as they deserve it. God created all human beings and gives us every breath we take.

The Righteous - Ezekiel said that any person who lives uprightly is under no condemnation. That includes whoever eats no food offered to idols nor worships idols, has no illicit sexual relations, respects the laws concerning ritual purity, obeys Moses' law, refrains from robbery or violence, and is charitable. They are honoring God.

The Invitation - God gives out consequences according to the ways of each person. God is not up in heaven, deciding to bless someone based on previous family members' behavior. Nor is suffering placed on a person because of the actions of an earlier generation. It's essential for each person to repent and make things right with God. He is not a killjoy, wanting our lives to be miserable, fearing His big stick every time a law is violated. God takes no delight in the suffering of sinners. He wants none to perish, but rather for everyone to come into a right relationship with Him. That's the personal invitation God extends to everyone.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

A False Proverb Refuted (Ezek 18:1-4)

Proverb based on tradition of people (1-2)

- Traditions based on principles of the world (Col 2:8)
- Traditions based on rules taught by man (Mark 7:5-8)
- Traditions based on culture (Gal 1:14)
- Traditions based on human commands (Col 2:22)
- Traditions based on worldly standards (Eph 2:1-2)

Proverb rejected by God who owns the soul (3-4)

- Owned by God because we were bought with a price (1 Cor 6:18-20)
- Owned by God because He made us (Ps 100:3)
- Owned by God because Jesus died for us (2 Cor 5:15)
- Owned by God because Jesus redeemed us (Titus 2:14)

A Righteousness Commended (Ezek 18:5-9)

Righteousness through justice (5)

- Justice that comes from righteous wisdom (Ps 37:30)
- Justice that comes from the plans of the righteous (Prov 12:5)
- Justice that comes from doing right (Prov 21:3)
- Justice that comes from insight (Ps 119:98-100)

Righteousness through obedience (6-8)

- Obedience is better because it delights God (1 Sam 15:22)
- Obedience leads to righteousness (Rom 6:16)
- Obedience keeps us remaining in God's love (John 15:10)
- Obedience leads to the reward of blessings (Deut 28:1-6)
- Obedience brings the reward of freedom (James 1:25)

Righteousness through faithfulness (9)

- Faithfulness because God reconciled us (Col 1:21-23)
- Faithfulness because God first loved us (John 15:9)
- Faithfulness because God is not pleased with man's unfaithfulness (Heb 10:38)
- Faithfulness because God gave us the victory (1 Cor 15:56-58)
- Faithfulness because God is faithful even when we are unfaithful (2 Tim 2:10-13)

Repent and Live (Ezek 18:30-32)

Repentance through fear of judgment (30)

- Fear because God judges on what the individual does, not others (Ps 62:12)
- Fear because God examines each one's conduct (Jer 17:10)
- Fear because God judges on motives that can't be hidden (1 Cor 4:5)
- Fear because judgment of things done while in the human body (2 Cor 5:10)
- Fear because God makes what is right plain (Rom 1:18-19)

Life through being renewed (31)

- Renewed into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)
- Renewed into a spiritual covenant (Gal 6:15)
- Renewed inwardly daily (2 Cor 4:16)
- Renewed from the old to the new man (Col 3:10)
- Renewed by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

Life through returning to God (32)

- Returning to God will result in growth in knowing God (Jer 24:7)
- Returning to God could bring blessings from Him (Joel 2:13-14)
- Returning to God is a sign of growth in faith (Luke 17:17-19)
- Returning to God brings healing of the spiritual and physical man (2 Chron 7:14)
- Returning to God brings mercy and prosperity (Prov 28:13)