

No More Excuses

The Chapter That Silences Every Mouth

A

1 18 The word of the Lord came to me: ²“What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?

2 5 “If a man is righteous and does what is just and right—

3 10 “If he fathers a son who is violent,

B

1 3 As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.

2 6 if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, ⁷ does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, ⁸ does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, ⁹ walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully—

3 a shedder of blood, who does any of these things ¹¹ (though he himself did none of these things), who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor’s wife, ¹² oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination, ¹³ lends at interest, and takes profit; shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominations;

C

1 4 Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: **the soul who sins shall die.**

2 he is righteous; **he shall surely live,** declares the Lord God.

3 **he shall surely die;** his blood shall be upon himself.

4 ¹⁴ “Now suppose this man fathers a son who sees all the sins that his father has done; he sees, and does not do likewise:

4 ¹⁵ he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife,¹⁶ does not oppress anyone, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, ¹⁷ withholds his hand from iniquity, takes no interest or profit, obeys my rules, and walks in my statutes;

4 **he shall not die** for his father’s iniquity; he shall surely live. ¹⁸ As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity. ¹⁹ “Yet you say, ‘Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?’ When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, **he shall surely live.** ²⁰ **The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.**

5 ²¹ “But if a wicked person

5 **turns away from all his sins** that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right,

5 **he shall surely live;** he shall not die. ²² None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. ²³ **Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?**

6 ²⁴ But **when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness** and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does,

6 shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.

6 ²⁵ “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? ²⁶ When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. ²⁷ Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, **he shall save his life.** ²⁸ Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, **he shall surely live; he shall not die.**

7 ³⁰ “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God.

7 Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!

²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?¹

7 Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”

The Original Creation Covenant

One of the most important contributions the Reformed have brought to Christian theology is bringing the **covenants** of the Bible to the forefront as a lens through which we can read the Bible. Doing this provides **a unified narrative arc** of creation → fall → redemption → consummation. They were certainly not the first to see these things, but they did systematize it in a unique way that has influenced virtually all Christians to one degree or another.

Traditionally, **three common terms** have been used to discuss this: The Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. Let’s look at each. **The**

¹ I had a question about whether this column constituted a new row. However, the Hebrew text has seven natural marker breaks that exactly match these rows. They do not insert a break after vs. 26. It is a double objection that rightly belongs in this column.

Covenant of Redemption is the pre-creation covenant made between the Father and Son with the Spirit being the consenting party, executor, and applier. The 1689 puts it this way, “It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, *according to the covenant made between them both*, to be the mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king; head and savior of the church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; unto whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified” (LBC 8.1). This wonderful statement shows that everything about history has as its goal and purpose (its *telos*) the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. His coming was no accident, his people are given to him in eternity past, his church is not plan B. The Father does this that we might glorify the Son even as the Son does all things to glorify the Father. This covenant guarantees our redemption because it was made between two perfect parties.

The *Covenant of Grace* is a term that I use, but in a more Baptist formulation. It refers directly or indirectly to the covenants after the Fall. There are seven covenants after the Fall—six in the OT and one unique covenant in the NT: A covenant made with *Adam* when he clothed him with the

skins of the animal, with Noah, Abraham, Moses, Levi, and David in the OT and the new covenant made with Christ and his church in the NT. The latter three amazingly make up the three offices of Christ we just saw—Moses (Prophet), Levi (Priest), David (King). The former three make up the three estates (Adam: Universal Humanity; Noah: Common Preservation; Abraham: Elect Particularity)² of God to his image bearers.³ Now, I don't the first six “the covenant of grace,” but rather covenants that point to it (typological of it), for the covenant of grace is, properly speaking, the new covenant, the unique covenant, the covenant cut in Christ's blood and forged from his obedience. But that is for another time.

Yet, his *obedience* leads me to the third term and likely the most controversial. It is usually called the *Covenant of Works*. This is the idea that in the Garden but before the Fall, God made a covenant with Adam. This covenant offered life upon obedience and death upon disobedience. He is given a

² We can also think of these as three spheres (Adam: Cosmic; Noah: National; Abraham: Familial) or callings (Adam: General Calling to all; Vocational to nations; Effectual to the elect).

³ **Going Deeper:** I was playing around with the Genesis 1 weave of 6 days + 1, which is the exact same pattern as the covenants and wondering if you might have them pairing up like Days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, 3 and 6 in Genesis. In fact, they do. Adam and Moses the prophet (prophets speak to Israel and all humanity) are covenants to humanity, Noah and David the king are covenants to the nations (the Messianic King rules the nations), and Abraham and Levi the priest (who represent believers) are covenants to God's people.

law surrounding a tree. If he eats from the wrong tree, he will “surely die” (Gen 2:17). The implication after he eats it is that if he had eaten from the right tree, he would live (3:22). Leviticus will later take this principle and put it in the heart of the Torah, “If a person does them, he shall live by them” (Lev 18:5). Neither are talking about a covenant of faith, but of works, which is why Christ’s *works* are so foundational. Christ’s obedience fulfills *this* covenant.

Now, faith was surely present in Adam’s heart, though it was weak and he eventually sinned, as we all do. But the point is, the covenant’s stipulated condition for life was flawless obedience, *not* faith. It’s ground was merit, fairness, and justice. This is precisely what Paul argues in Romans 2 and elsewhere that God is fair and will give to each person according to his “works.” If they do good and seek glory, honor, and immortality they will merit eternal life. But if they do evil, even one thing, they will be judged and punished and life is off the table (Rom 2:6-11).

But I said this covenant has been controversial. That there was a covenant here has been seen as long ago as Augustine and even one of our very earliest Church Fathers, Irenaeus.⁴ But based on works? My old pastor who has done

⁴ Irenaeus (c. 125-200 A.D.) says that God made a “covenant ... prior to the deluge, under Adam.” He is not talking about Adam after the Fall, but prior to it. For, Adam “did not perform

much good for Christianity in his areas of gifting, John Piper, asks, “Has God ever commanded anyone to obey with a view to earning or meriting life? Would God command a person to do a thing that he uniformly condemns as arrogant?”⁵ Piper clearly thinks that the idea of a covenant of works is the supreme height of hubris. *God? Wants us? To Merit Life? Ridiculous! Life is a gift of grace alone. How dare anyone think they could merit life from him!* Some will argue even further that God is our Father and we are his children. How could he ever make us *earn his love* like that? These are the kinds of objections that are raised by the doctrine of the covenant of works. I don’t question the zeal. I do question the logic and the hermeneutics.

These objections miss the point. The covenant of works is **not about earning a Father’s love**, which is unconditional as image bearers. Even in his wrath against sinners this very moment, God still *loves* them with a love of benevolence. He wishes us all good-will and does not delight in the death of the wicked—as we will see even today! The rain falls on the

his commandment,” and “the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man is justified, which also those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, did observe previous to the giving of the law” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.11.8; 5.16.3; 4.13.1). Augustine says, “The first covenant, which was made with the first man, is just this: ‘In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die’ ... The covenant from the beginning is, ‘You shall die the death’” (Augustine, *City of God* 16:27).

⁵ John Piper, *A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All Life* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1997), 171.

just and the unjust, because of God's love, Jesus says. The covenant of works has nothing to do with earning love, but with earning a prize, getting a reward. It's about the *inheritance* of a deserving son, not God's love.

That *father-son relationship* is key to the covenant of works idea and it is surely present in the Garden (**Luke 3:38**). But it is not the only relationship present in the Garden between God and man. Hence, this covenant is also given other titles. One of the *Covenant of Creation*. The chief metaphor here is the **King** granting dominion to his **vassal** or vice-regent, so that the vassal will rule over all creation as a good steward for the King. This is the whole point of the dominion mandate in **Gen 1:26-28**. Dominion is about ruling as a king over creation. Dominion is the covenant's stipulations as a creation covenant. Frankly, the creation itself is government by a covenant, which we call "natural law" (**Job 38:8-11**'s "boundaries and decree), which is why Jeremiah refers to this as the covenant with the day and the night (**Jer 33:20, 25**). Angels are under this covenant oath (**Job 38:31-33**'s starry host; **Ps 148:6**) as well.⁶

We also call this covenant a *Covenant of Life*. The dominating metaphor here is that of a **husband to a bride**. We've

⁶ Cf. 1En 5:2-4; 69:13-25; Prayer of Manasseh 1:1-4. See my *Covenant Theology* book for more.

seen recently in Ezekiel 16 just how closely tied God's marital relationship to Israel is via the covenant (especially viewed through the third column of its weave). In the pre-Fall covenant, God promises Adam if confirmed, eternal life in perfect communion with Himself. The very first step toward that life is the gift of the bride and the one-flesh union, his helper Eve, so that marriage itself becomes the covenantal mechanism by which life is to be perpetuated forever in God's presence (**Gen 2:23-24**; cf. **Eph 5:31-32**). It always taught us about Christ and his church (**Eph 5:32**), because that's the covenant of life. The Tree of Life, the sacramental pledge of that eternal life, stands at the center of the garden-bridechamber, showing that the reward of the covenant is nothing less than unending, face-to-face, husband-bride intimacy with God (**Gen 2:9; 3:22-24; Rev 22:2, 14**).

- | Covenant of **Works** | → | Father tests the obedience of His son (filial probation for inheritance) |
- | Covenant of **Creation** | → | King grants dominion to His vassal (royal grant + suzerain treaty) |
- | Covenant of **Life** | → | Husband gives eternal communion to His bride (one-flesh garden marriage) |

All three relationships are simultaneously **present** in Eden, and all three are **broken** at the Fall — and all three are perfectly restored in the Last Adam who is the obedient Son, the conquering King, and the Bridegroom who gives His life for His bride. What we are going to discover today is that this covenant of works takes center stage in what is likely its most overt and lengthy treatment in the entire OT.

The Ezekiel 18 Covenant of Creation Weave

We are going to do this today by understanding not just the teaching of the text, but just how this chapter itself is deliberately woven to emulate the creation of Genesis 1, the place where the Covenant of Works actually begins. This is absolutely fascinating. We saw in Ezekiel 16 that **weaving texts** is a real thing, and one that can really help us understand the meaning more easily because of it creates a 3-D picture. In that chapter, the content consisted of seven rows, each row escalating the next acts as it comes to you naturally as you read the chapter. What I did not point out then, but will not since Ezekiel 18 follows the exact same pattern, is that those seven rows had six escalations and one final resolution. This follows the six days of creation and one unique day pattern of Genesis 1. **6 + 1**, an idea that is also embedded

in the six OT covenants after the fall and one “new covenant.” In my mind, following the original pattern, whenever you see this after Gen 1, you can be sure that the theological messaging is that a **new creation** is being offered up as a promise, but not a fulfillment, because that needs an eighth or first, like the resurrection. The seventh is the deep breath, the pause, the rest before the new creation actually comes to you.

That’s what happened in Ezekiel 16, when in that last row, God told Jerusalem, literally, that **he would make a new covenant** with them and with all the nations of the world, even though it has been an exceedingly evil bride. And yet, those in Ezekiel’s day never saw that new covenant. They had to stay in that pause, the rest, and simply trust that it would one day come. Today, it is similar, but even more fully evocative of Genesis 1-3. Hence, my discussion on covenants, especially the Covenant of Works/Creation/Life is absolutely vital backdrop if you really want to get the most out of Ezekiel 18’s astonishing message.

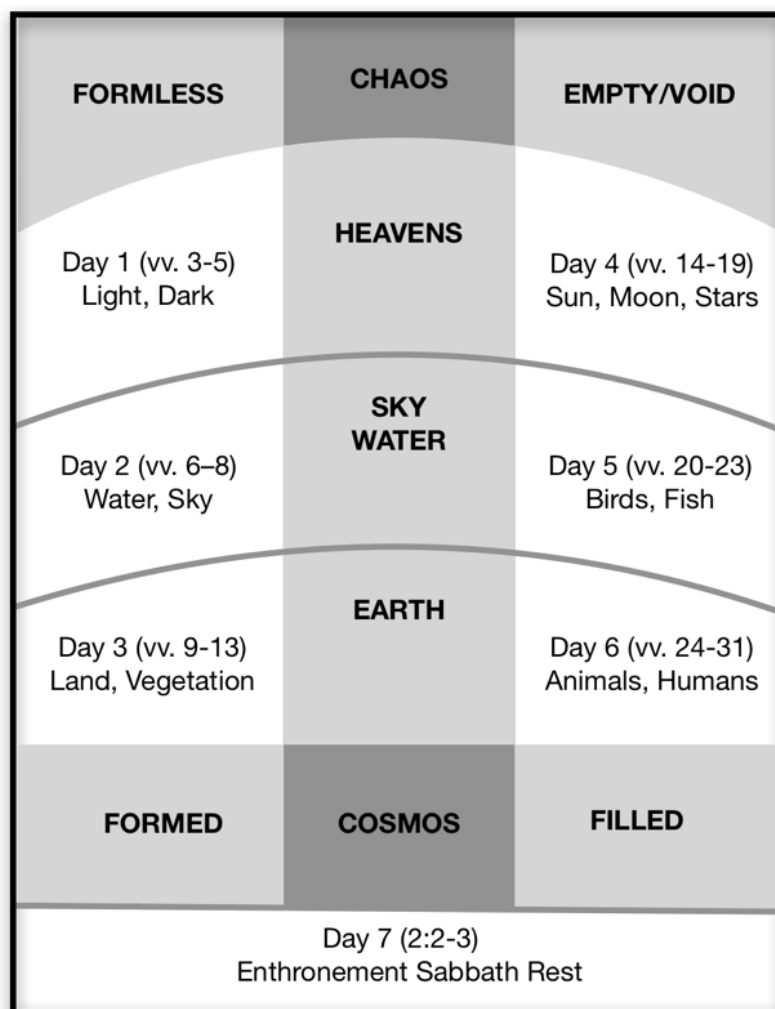
Ezekiel 18 is a perfectly symmetrical 7×3 literary weave that divides the entire chapter into seven consecutive horizontal rows and three unbroken vertical columns. **Column A** repeatedly **introduces the subject** (the proverb, the right-

eous man, the wicked son, the righteous grandson, the repentant sinner, the apostate righteous, and finally “you, O house of Israel”). **Column B** details the **concrete behavior** and its immediate consequence or objection. **Column C** carries **the divine verdict**, the refutation of Israel’s complaints, and the ever-intensifying plea for life and repentance. The exact center of the table (row 4, column B) falls on the righteous grandson’s list of obedient deeds—the last positive portrait of righteousness in the generational section and the hinge that launches the repentance section, making personal choice the structural and theological pivot of the entire oracle.⁷

Beneath lies the seven-day creation weave template of Genesis 1. Genesis 1 has two balanced triads of “**forming**” (days 1–3) and “**filling**” (days 4–6) capped by a transcendent seventh day that breaks the pattern (see graphic below). Ezekiel 18 also presents two triads—rows 1–4 refute **inherited guilt across generations** (forming a moral cosmos), rows 5–6 apply the same principle to change **within one lifetime** (filling that cosmos with personal repentance or apostasy), and

⁷ This weave seems the **deliberate twin of Ezekiel 16**. Both chapters use an identical seven-row, three-column architecture, both place the human heart and human responsibility at the dead center, and both climax in the seventh row with God’s promise of renewal (“I will establish my covenant ... and I will atone” in 16:60–63 // “make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit ... turn, and live!” in 18:31–32). Chapter 16 tells the corporate story of Israel as YHWH’s adulterous bride whose heart became sick through idolatry and alliances; chapter 18 applies the identical logic to every individual, demolishing any excuse of inherited guilt. Together they form a single theological diptych: the nation’s sin is every person’s sin, and the atonement/new heart offered to the nation is offered to every soul.

row 7 steps outside the pattern with a direct, sabbath-like appeal for new creation (“new heart ... new spirit ... live!”). Seeing this architecture is profoundly beneficial because it reveals that Ezekiel is **not merely arguing against a proverb (vs. 2)**; he is **re-creating the moral order** on the literary skeleton of the original creation, proclaiming that the God who once said “**Let there be light**” now says “**Let there be a new heart,**” and that the same seven-day rhythm that brought the cosmos from chaos to rest is the rhythm by which He brings every human soul from death to life.



It is *imperative*, however, to also *remember where we are at in Ezekiel*. Our passage falls as the very center of the chiasm of the second section of Ezekiel's book:

- A. "Know That I Am the Lord" (12:15) Symbolic Acts of Exile (12:1–28)
- B. "Lying Divination" (13:6) False Prophecy Condemned (13:1–23)
- C. "Idols in Their Heart" (14:3) Idolatry Indicted (14:1–23)
- D. "Like a Vine" (15:2) Unfaithfulness Allegorized (15:1–8)
- E. "Played the Whore" (16:15) Adultery Allegorized (16:1–63)
- F. "Rebelled Against Him" (17:15) Rebellion Parabled (17:1–24)
- G. "Turn and Live" (18:32) Repentance Urged (18:1–32)**
- F'. "Rebelled Against Me" (19:2) Leadership Lamented (19:1–14)
- E'. "Played the Whore" (23:5) Adultery Allegorized (23:1–49)
- D'. "Like a Vine" (21:10) Judgment Imaged (20:45–21:32)
- C'. "Made Your Idols" (22:3) Sins Indicted (22:1–31)
- B'. "Lying Divination" (22:28) False Prophecy Judged (22:23–31)
- A'. "Know That I Am the Lord" (24:27) Symbolic Acts of Judgment (24:1–27)

Why is this so important to understand?

It is because *the theology* of this chapter is one *that lends itself very easily to bad interpretation*. Specifically, it lends itself, when not taken in context, to Arminian ideas that when God gives the many instances of doing good, that people actually *can* do them, or that when he says at the very end, "*Turn, and live,*" that people can actually do that of

their own freewill apart from the very special grace of regeneration from God.⁸ The context proves to you that you *can't* do it. For we have just been through [six brutal chapters](#) of absolute horrific depravity that has leveled every single Israelite, and immediately after this chapter, we will go through six more that are equally as devastating, and then the prophet will turn his eye on the nations!

The cumulative effect of this is that Ezekiel 18 stands [not](#) as some kind of offering of hope to wicked people [to save themselves](#) by their good works or choices, but as a revelation as to the kind of God that God is, in the midst of our wickedness. For in revealing God's heart, it shows us that [he is not the one to blame for anyone's judgment](#). Even more, if we keep reading the rest of the book, we see that it sets us up for the desperate need that we all have for God to do something miraculous to make us ready and able to obey him apart from our good works. For beloved, the Covenant of Works has only ever been kept by one person, and that is Jesus Christ, by whose perfect righteousness we are saved, as God looks upon his works and through faith, credits those

⁸ I speak here in a *spiritual* sense, not a *natural* sense. Our inability to do what God requires rests not in our physical capacity (we have brains, hands and feet, a moral compass, etc.), but in our willingness. We do not will do to what God requires, because we hate him in our natural state. See my paper, "[On Amyraldianism, Different Senses of Ability, The Death of Christ, and Being Reformed](#)," *Academia* (2015).

to our endless ledger of debts and sins. If you can keep this in mind, it will go a long way towards helping you see what the purpose of this chapter is, and what it is actually teaching you about yourself and God.

The Ezekiel 18 Covenant of Creation Weave

As we go through this, I'm going to be using two overlapping Genesis 1-3 ideas simultaneously. One is this three-fold relationship of the covenant of works/ life/creation where God is the **Father**, God is the **Husband**, and God is the **King** respectively. Chapter 18 literally follows that very pattern in that order. **Vv. 1-20** are the Father analogy; **21-29** imply the Groom analogy; **30-32** the King analogy.

The other is **the analogy of the Genesis weave** of forming and filling. In our chapter, God *forms* an empty moral world of pure personal responsibility (rows 1-4). Then he *fills* it with real human choices **that all end in death** (rows 5-6), just like Adam. But, he hold out the Sabbath-rest promise of a new heart/new creation (row 7), for the first moral world is finished — *and fatally flawed* because of sin and because **God always had something even better in mind**. This is also exactly how the chapter unfolds via its internal woven

design. It is a deliberate reflection on Genesis 1-3 and this pre-fall covenant God made with humans which never ceases to exist until a person comes to Christ. For all are born under the terms of the Covenant of Works.

The Covenant of Works: Father to Son

We begin with **God as the Father**. This is **vv. 1-20** or **rows 1-4**. Vs. 1 begins as nearly all of these units do, “**The Word of the LORD came to me**” (1). This isn’t a disembodied purely oral stream of words that Ezekiel quickly sprawled on a piece of parchment before he forgot them. It is John’s *Logos*, the Word of God. Christ introduces **a new subject in the form of a question** and which recalls *a proverb*. This is **the column of introducing a new person or situation**: “**What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?**” (2). Ezekiel isn’t saying that. The Lord is telling Ezekiel that *the people* are saying that. What is the picture?

On the surface, it is simple enough. **Your dad eats a sour grape**. What does that do? When you bite into an unripe, sour grape, your whole face tightens up in a pucker, you feel

like you want to choke, your teeth get that instant, sharp, tingling ache and feel like they've been “set on edge” (the Hebrew verb literally means “to be blunt” or “to be dulled,” so your teeth feel numb, sensitive, or painfully clenched). But in the proverb, it isn't the dad who eats them who **feels this reaction, it is his son!** *Fathers and sons*—the first of our three relationships.

But what is the meaning? The Puritan **William Greenhill** (1591–1671) explained it perfectly. They were claiming, “**That their ancestors had sinned, and they who were their children suffered for their sins. We being innocent are grievously afflicted for their iniquities**” (*An Exposition on Ezekiel*).⁹ This is actually a most horrific accusation that they are using in the form of a proverb *against God*. **Zimmerli** says, “**We can see in it a mocking at the divine ‘righteousness’ which lays the guilt of the fathers upon the children.**”¹⁰

Where might this come from? Perhaps they were thinking about **the Second Commandment**, where God is “**visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third**

⁹ **Carl L. Beckwith**, Timothy George, and Scott M. Manetsch, eds., *Ezekiel, Daniel: Old Testament*, vol. 12, Reformation Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 99.

¹⁰ **Walther Zimmerli**, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Klaus Baltzer, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979–), 378.

and the fourth generation of those who hate me” (Ex 20:5). It seems unfair. What did the children do? Second, Ezekiel has previously said many times that this judgment is coming because Israel has been rotten since the beginning (Ezek 2:3-4; 3:7; 16:15-22; and coming, 20:4; etc.). However, this current generation was saying that they are being punished for what their fathers did. Therefore, God is unjust.

What they have forgotten is that in many of these same passages, not to mention a whole lot more, God has told them directly that *they are a wicked generation*, worse than even their fathers were! But, the Lord is not going to allow them even the smallest hope of an out. So he says, “As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel” (3). This is *the column of immediately behavior or outcome*. In this case, the Lord GOD is going to put an end to this proverb right here and right now. No more bad theology to get yourself off the hook.

The first row ends in *the column of the verdict* that comes from God. “Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die” (4). This is *the great theological idea* that Protestants and Evangelicals have so long rightly emphasized. Each individual is personally responsible for their own

actions before God. I'm not responsible for you. You aren't responsible for me. I'm not punished, ultimately speaking, for your sins, nor you for mine. And pick anyone else you want.

This doesn't mean that God might not *give you over* because of others' actions. But that giving over, say to a foreign invader, is to be viewed both as a cumulative consequence of corporate sins as well as God giving *you* over to *your own* sins, which will be the ultimate point of the chapter. But as of here, God is rebuilding or reforming the moral structure of creation. Creation is based on fairness, merit, justice, and individuality.

We now get *a series of hypothetical cases*. The first is **vs. 5**, “If a man is righteous and does what is just and right.” What does that mean? Col 2 (**vv. 6-9a**) elaborates, “If he does *not* eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does *not* defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, does *not* oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits *no* robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, does *not* lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, walks in my statutes, and keeps

my rules by acting faithfully.” We have here a list of **fourteen things**—8 are negative, 6 positive:

8 Things He Does NOT Do (negative – “lo-” clauses in Hebrew)

1. Does not eat upon the mountains (no **idolatrous** high-place meals)
2. Does not lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel (no worship of **false gods**)
3. Does not defile his neighbor’s wife (no **adultery**)
4. Does not approach a woman during her menstrual impurity (sexual impurity laws; **sabbath** rest)
5. Does not oppress anyone (abuse of the weak)
6. Does not commit robbery (no **stealing**)
7. Does not lend at interest or take profit (no usury)
8. Does not pervert justice / withholds his hand from injustice (**murder, false witness**)

6 Things He Actively DOES (positive)

9. Restores the pledge to the debtor (gives back the poor man’s cloak; Ex 22:26-27)
10. Gives his bread to the hungry (**coveting**)
11. Covers the naked with a garment (positive care of the poor)
12. Executes true justice between man and man (impartial judgment)
13. Walks in my statutes (implicit; **Name in vain**)
14. Keeps my rules by acting faithfully

The list covers most of the **Ten Commandments** and the **three great sins of Israel**: Idolatry, sexual immorality, and social injustice. Most of the negative ones are first. You *must*

not commit sin. Most of the positive are last. You *must* do positive good!

What is the verdict? “He is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord GOD” (9b). Who is righteous? The one who does all these things. How many of them? *All* of them. How often? *All* the time. I hope you feel the weight of this, because even though the declaration is that he is righteous, who can actually do that? Perhaps ask the rich young ruler if you think someone can.

Vs. 10 a gives the next hypothetical. “If he fathers a son who is violent...” What does that mean? Col B, the column of describing the situation explains, “... a shedder of blood, who does any of these things (though he himself did none of these things), who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor’s wife, oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination, lends at interest, and takes profit; shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominations” (10b-13a). This gives exactly 10 sins, nine negative, that exactly mirror the previous list. The son is the polar opposite of his father:

Righteous Father (vv. 6–9)

Does not eat on the mountains
Does not lift eyes to idols
Does not defile neighbor's wife
Does not oppress anyone
Does not commit robbery
Restores the pledge
Gives bread to hungry / covers naked
Does not lend at interest / take profit
Withholds hand from injustice / executes true justice

Wicked Son (vv. 10–13) – Exact Reversal

Eats on the mountains
Lifts eyes to idols
Defiles neighbor's wife
Oppresses the poor and needy
Commits robbery
Does not restore the pledge
(Implied opposite – takes from the poor)
Lends at interest / takes profit
Commits abomination (covers the rest)

The point is obvious. The father is righteous, **the son is evil**. So what should happen to him? Should the son get a free pass because of his father's righteousness? No. The verdict comes in the end of **vs. 13**, "**He shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.**" This entire argument is really all Paul is making in **Romans 2:6-11**, which says the exact same thing. He is likely getting it from this very chapter.

Vs. 14 (row 4) begins **the third hypothetical**. "**Now suppose this man fathers a son who sees all the sins that his father has done; he sees, and does not do likewise.**" So we have generations passing. Row 2 was the grandfather (righteous),

Row 3 the father (wicked), Row 4 the son (righteous). What should happen to him? **Vv. 15-17a** elaborate on what his righteousness looks like, “He does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife, does not oppress anyone, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, withholds his hand from iniquity, takes no interest or profit, obeys my rules, and walks in my statutes.” It gives a list of 13 sins (9 negative; 4 positive). It is an almost **verbatim copy of the righteous grandfather**. It proves that if this were to happen, God is fair to all. God says the grandfather will live, and even though the father was evil, justice demands that this righteous son be treated as righteous like his grandfather. There is **no inherited guilt**.

But just here, someone might wonder about **original sin**. Original sin is the doctrine that all humans inherit both the corruption and the guilt of *Adam*: we are born with a sinful nature that makes us inclined to evil, and we are counted guilty in God’s sight because Adam’s first sin is legally imputed to us (**Rom 5:12–19**), making us by nature children of wrath (**Eph 2:1-3**). Israel was trying to use the idea of “**ancestral guilt**” as an excuse (“**we’re only dying because of**

what our fathers did”), but Ezekiel shuts that down: God will not punish any individual for the actual sins of his father — each person dies for his own sins. Original sin is the very reason every person does sin as soon as he is able; it doesn’t give anyone a pass, it removes every alibi. And you don’t even need original sin to prove the point, because Adam himself, who had no sinful nature, still chose to sin. How much more will we, who are born corrupted and already guilty in Adam? Original sin is a biblical doctrine, but the specific excuse Ezekiel is crushing here is the claim that God punishes the children instead of their own transgressions. He doesn’t. The soul who sins shall die — and every soul does.

I need to point out that this list is the third and final positive portrait of righteousness by law-keeping in the entire chapter. It is therefore a conceptual middle, a pivot upon which everything else will turn in another direction. From this point onward, the only people who live are wicked people who repent, never someone who keeps the statues from the start. This is the final glimpse of Edenic obedience before the plea for a new heart begins. It completes the *forming* of the moral world which will now begin to be *filled* with real human choices (just like God filled the original creation with

the creatures (Days 4-6) fit for their formed habitations (Days 1-3)... that all end in death.

But before we get to that filling, we must see **the verdict**. **17b-18**. “He shall not die for his father’s iniquity; he shall surely live. As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.” This is exactly what we’ve seen. God always treats people exactly as they deserve, according to their works. Don’t even let anyone tell you any different!

But **vs. 19** interrupts the flow of the three verdicts by adding an inquiry. “Yet you say, ‘Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?’” What’s going on here? Row 4 (which this ends), is the hinge of the weave and **the climax of the Covenant of Works argument**. The objection is placed exactly where the reader is most tempted to cry “**Unfair!**—right after the grandson is declared innocent and the wicked father dies for his own sin. It mirrors the sour-grapes proverb, but in reverse.

Israel had **false theology** in a proverb. Now they have false theology in a direct accusation. It’s the exact same excuse stripped of its proverbial dressing. It’s all an attempt to take the blame off of themselves. “**God, you are unfair for**

punishing us for what our fathers did.” Now it is reversed, “God, you are unfair for not punishing the son for what his father did!” This is professional blame-shifting at its finest. When judgment falls on them, “If’s our fathers’ fault.” When judgement falls on their fathers and spares them, “That’s not fair either, the son should still pay!” This whole thing is written to expose the heart that will always find a way to pass the blame. “It’s not my fault!” “God is unfair.” Same smell, different taste.

So God answers, “When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself” (19b-20). This is the last word of the “forming” triad of this new moral creation. *This is how justice works* in God’s moral universe. This is his house. Now, what kind of people actually live in it? That sets up the desperate plea in the last three rows. Once every excuse is crushed here in the center, the only thing left is the heart-broken Husband/King pleading, “Why will you die?” Turn and live!”

The Covenant of Works: Husband to Bride

Vs. 21 now changes the tune. “But if a wicked man...” That picks up from the previous verse, “... the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.” But now look what it does. “... *turns (shuv)* way from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just a right” (21b). To “turn and do” is the definition of **repentance**. However, the LXX here (*epistrephō*) is not the usual word for repentance in the NT (*metanoia*).¹¹ Why? This is the same word the prophets always use when a faithless wife is called to return to her husband (Jeremiah 3, Hosea 14). It’s really a change of direction, which can include a change of mind. It is not the usual New Testament word for repentance, which is more a change of mind or heart. Ezekiel is evoking marital language: God is the heartbroken Husband begging His bride, “Come home ... why will you die?”

But the critical thing, friends, is that **we are still under the covenant of works**; it has never gone away. It is simply turning and doing what is just and right. This passage creates **a massive temptation to invent more bad theology**. You

¹¹ It is used occasionally for biblical repentance, but most of the time it simply means ‘to turn around, turn back, or return’ – a physical or directional change of course – and only secondarily carries the sense of moral or spiritual conversion when the context demands it. This is the idea of simply go back to your husband.

must beware. Is Ezekiel saying that *a Christian* is turning (repenting) and then doing all that is right? Ezekiel *isn't talking about Christians* here. Is he talking about repenting and trusting in Christ by faith? No! There is **no mention of faith** here. At all. You mustn't import it from other places, otherwise you destroy the entire argument. He is talking about a wicked man who suddenly decides to turn and obey God—by works, not by faith.

How much obedience? The rules haven't changed. **All of it**: “Turns from *all his sins* and keeps *all my statutes*.” And if any fallen son of Adam actually did turn and keep every single statute perfectly from that day forward for the rest of his life, God would be just to grant him life on the basis of works alone. But the whole point of the chapter is that no one ever has — and no one ever will — which is why we have the unexpected turn at the end of the chapter.

What will be **the verdict**? “**He shall surely live**.” Why? Because he has turned and is doing all good works. The scales are still justice. “**He shall not die**” (21c). Now, someone might wonder, how could God just forget what he has done if he sinned before? The answer is that the law does not have a time-stamp. If from that moment forward, he does everything perfectly, forever, that's what the law requires.

“The man who does these things shall live by them” (Lev 18:5; Ezek 20:11, 13, 21). That’s the righteousness that is by law. Galatians couldn’t be any clearer about this. “The law is not of faith, rather, ‘The one who does them shall live by them’” (Gal 3:12). “Does” is a *present* tense, not a past tense. The law only cares about from this moment forward. That doesn’t mean, by the way, that there wouldn’t still be consequences for past disobedience. God “forgot” David’s sins, but he still suffered the consequences of them in this life. It’s just that *God* forgot them and David was saved.

But my point is that you must remember what you are looking at, where in the book you are situated. It isn’t right to bring other passages into this just because these make you uncomfortable or because you don’t understand what it could possibly mean. But I’ll tell you right now, the point of this is that it is purely hypothetical. But it won’t ever happen. I’ll come back to that in a minute. Let’s continue for now.

The justice continues, “None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live” (22). This is exactly what we’ve been seeing. But this sets us up for the real point of the chapter. So that you can see the heart of God. “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the

Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?” (23). God is not the problem here. In fact, his disposition towards all of his creation is love. God *is* love. He does not take pleasure when the wicked die. And it is precisely for this reason that he is not to blame. He doesn't gleefully revel in the death of anyone as if he somehow predestined to hate them. Hyper Calvinism which says that God simply innately hates some people and has no love for them in any sense is as much a theological disaster as the opposite error which sees human ability being shouted from the rooftops in this chapter. It's amazing that both opposite errors have to be brought up when we read this chapter.

This love that God has becomes that language of a husband to a bride. The legal courtroom language change has shifted dramatically. The father-son relationship of meriting the inheritance, the reward, has given way to the cry of the Groom to his bride. In this way, the Covenant of Works gives way to the idea of the Covenant of Life. How can I say this?

In Jeremiah 3:1-4, where God is viewed as the Husband to faithless Israel, the language is identical. “Return to me, faithless Israel ... I will not be angry forever.” The verb is identical: *turn/return* (Jer 3:12, 14, 22; Hos 14:1-2). This resonates with the parallel 7x3 weave of Ezek 16 when God

cried out to his adulterous wife, as seen also in **Hosea 11:8**, “**How can I give you up?**” It’s the same emotional tone. Since this returns at the very end of the chapter, we will go back to this as a final thought.

But I don’t want you to miss just **how impossible the hypothetical** in Row 5 actually is. Because frankly, people totally miss the point as they try to incorporate some kind of faith or regeneration into a text that actually has none, as they totally lose site of the Covenant of Works and try to turn this into a covenant of grace. The irony in doing this is that grace then becomes this idea that you will live a perfect life after salvation. The tyranny some people live under here is real, and the reason why is because they have ironically turned the real covenant of grace into works, while turning the impossible covenant of works into grace! Does God wish us to always obey him as Christians? Of course. But ours are always works that come from faith and our sins are always covered by the blood of Christ because *he* was perfect, not us.

Look at the sixth row, because it actually shows you how to interpret the former. “**But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does...**” (24a). In vs. 20 (row 4), God has just called out both **the**

righteous and the wicked. We've seen what they are. Most recently, we've seen how the wicked turns and does only good from then on, he will live. But what would that make him? Righteous! And if the righteous person as defined in this chapter is one who only does good *all* the time, then this righteous person who turns away could easily be the one from the previous example.

What is the verdict? It is the opposite of the previous example. Before, none of the wicked acts would be remembered. Now, none of the good acts will be remembered! God asks, "Shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die" (24b). That's fairness again, justice, getting what you deserve.

Of course, we should expect someone won't like this and that's precisely what we find in vs. 25. "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just'" (25a). Funny how no one complained when God said he wouldn't hold any of the former wickedness against them, but now they complain when he says he won't take into account any of the former righteousness! That's the deal if you want to live by your works. Galatians against says, "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who

does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law” (Gal 3:10-11).

Thus, the Word of the Lord says, “Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?” (25b). That’s the ultimate point of living by the Covenant of Works. You simply must internalize this. And that’s why this becomes the last example. Because the reality is, no mere mortal is going to live a righteous life like we see in any of these examples. They are purely hypothetical in order to show God’s justice. But the reality—the reality is *our wickedness*. Each and every individual.

God reiterates and then summarizes, “When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?” (26-29). The

last bit is rhetorical. **Every mouth is silenced** as it is held accountable to God as they seek to live under legalistic moral perfection. God is not unjust. *We are*. And no one can ever again blame someone else for when they die.

What we have just witnessed then is the filling of this renewed moral creation of justice with those who make choices in it. And what choices have they made? **Only bad ones**. Even the righteous person turns evil. That was the way of it in the Garden without original sin. How much more is that the way of it in the world afterwards with it? It's the same story as the original creation weave of forming and filling and the same result obtains. And like we expected at the end of ch. 16, the only rational thing for God to do is destroy them all.

The Covenant of Creation: King to a Vassal

I want you to now hear what happens in the seventy row — **the Sabbath row**. The heartbroken husband and pleading father suddenly step back, and **the Great King** takes the stage. This is the only row in the entire chapter where God speaks from beginning to end as Adonai YHWH, the Sovereign LORD — no more tender pleas, no more fatherly

explanations — just the King issuing His final, royal decree and new-creation offer.

Remember that the Seventh Day was unique, set apart, unlike the others. It was a day of ... rest. A good day. A day of the triumph of God. Amazingly, just as we saw in ch. 16, the same thing happens again. First, we get the final address introduced. “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God” (30). This is **not starting off well**. If that is what God is really going to do, every Israelite is in big trouble.

But the middle row, the row of decision, asserts itself. God presents **a choice**. “Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin” (30b). It is a plea to repent. But this time, it is not the plea of the Groom, but of the King. For God has just been called “**the Lord GOD.**” And he is coming as the Judge. That’s new and introduces the third and final relationship that existed in the Garden.

I think it might still be relatively easy to pervert the text at this point, thinking that God either is saying that it is possible for evil people to repent or that this is somehow the intruding in of the Gospel. But neither is the case. Look at the next verse.

“Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and *make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!*” (31). Certainly you feel the force of that, don’t you? It is climax of the whole oracle. Make for yourself a new heart and a new spirit? **How could anyone do that?** Too many people are Kantians here. Kant was famous for saying that “*ought implies can.*” **Not in the real world** it doesn’t. Ought simply implies responsibility and culpability. We are held responsible for our own actions, because we are individual moral beings with **free agency**. The difference between free agency vs. free will is that freewill means not only that you can, but you are morally able. Free agency acknowledges that humans have wills and minds and abilities, but they do not have the spiritual desire. We have the agency, the natural ability. **But we do not have the *will* for it.**

This was taught long ago in four simple statements by God in Deuteronomy. “**Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!**” (Deut 5:29). So God cries out there as here, “**Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn**” (10:16). And yet, what was the verdict? Same there as here, if you read it properly. “**But to this day the**

Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear” (29:4). God must give you a new heart, because no one can circumcise their own. It’s absurd to think you could.

This doesn’t stop the cry of the King from saying in our last verse, “Why will you die, O House of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live!” (Ezek 18:31b-32). But it does leave us at the very same place that last verse of Deuteronomy left us. **Hopeless.**

And that is what you must be as you conclude this chapter, for it comes as the very center of a series of chapters telling Israel in how many ways that **she is hopelessly sinful and totally depraved.** Each person has gone astray. None will live. This is *not meant* to give you hope, but despair, for that is what the Law does. It is a school master to bring you to the end of yourself, not to puff you up and make you think you are a law-keeper. As soon as you think you are, you are full of pride, and now a law-breaker! This comes to you as **the pinnacle in the OT of the Covenant of Works.** It shows you the heart of the law. **The man who does them will live by them.** The man who doesn’t, will die. There is no other way.

But beloved, that is not the end of Ezekiel, and that's the key. This seventh is a pause, a rest, to prepare you for the eighth day, the new day which is coming later in the book. Nor is it the end of our four verses in Deuteronomy, which are its parallel. Deuteronomy ends with a promise, "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deut 30:6). And that is in fact the one moment in our passage where the sun comes out from behind those storm clouds of justice. "Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit" is precisely the theme that will be taken up once these many chapters of woe and misery, sin and depravity have come to an end. For we will see true grace then, when God will spiritual our hearts and God will put a new spirit in his people. God always had something more in mind than Chapter 18 of Ezekiel.

It must be the work of God, by grace. It must be the work of Christ, by works—*his* works—as he obeys where we cannot. It must be this way, because all things were predestined in this world for the ultimate glorification of the Son of God, who himself does all things to glorify his Father

in heaven. That work must be the work of God's Holy Spirit, not your will, not your running, not your effort.

Yes, justification and living by faith will be a reality in the future of this book. **But that is not what is held out here.** People must come to the end of themselves, they must come to admit the disease that they have, otherwise, there appears no Physician to cut it out of them. This is why the *weak* will be strong. This is why the *last* will be first. But for those who are already strong, already first? Well, they stand on their own merits. But those merits demand perfection according to the law.

If you realize that you are not able to merit anything but damnation, then you have read Ezekiel 18 properly, for this is all about individuals and **how they stand or fall apart from grace.** If that is you, then there is very good news indeed. For Christ has come at the end of the law, to put away the need for your efforts. His obedience merited life. *He* was justified *by his works!* The Son of God earned his inheritance by faithfully obeying his Father in all things.

And now God, in the Gospel of his Son, offers you a new heart. Come to life. This is not just a heart cry. It is a command with the very power of the living word behind it—the Word that makes the impossible possible. For it is his

work. Remember the gospel. Know its power. “**The righteous shall live *by faith***” (**Gal 3:11b**). Faith in the promises. Faith in the Son of God. Faith that he has done what you cannot. That’s the ultimate goal of Ezekiel 18, and it is something we should all look forward to seeing much more clearly as God unfolds these truths in this very book in the coming chapters.

To God be the Glory.

Simplest Way to view the Ezekiel 18 Weave

Row	A – Who?	B – What they do	C – God’s Verdict
1	Proverb	(banned)	Soul sins → dies
2	Righteous man	Keeps all statutes	Surely lives
3	Violent son	Does all abominations	Surely dies
4	Righteous grandson	Refuses father’s sins	No inherited guilt
5	Wicked man	Turns, keeps all statutes	Surely lives
6	Righteous man	Turns, does abominations	Surely dies
7	House of Israel	Get new heart	Turn and live!

Ezekiel 18 as emulating Genesis 1

Genesis 1	Ezekiel 18
Days 1–3 = Forming	Rows 1–4 = Forming the moral world (personal responsibility, no inherited guilt)
Days 4–6 = Filling	Rows 5–6 = Filling that moral world with real human choices that end in death
Day 7 = Sabbath rest	Row 7 = Sabbath / new-creation offer (“new heart ... turn and live”)

The Weave of Ezekiel 18 (7 × 3 Table – ESV)

Row	Verses	Column A – The Case Introduced	Column B – Behavior & Immediate Result	Column C – God’s Verdict / Plea
1	1–4	The sour-grapes proverb & “all souls are mine”	Proverb banned forever	“The soul who sins shall die”
2	5–9	A righteous man who does what is just and right	Full list of righteous deeds	“He is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord GOD”
3	10–13	His violent son who does the opposite	Full list of wicked deeds	“He shall not live ... he shall surely die; his blood shall be on himself”
4	14–20	The righteous grandson who refuses to imitate	Grandson’s righteous deeds + father’s separate punishment	“The son shall not suffer for the father ... the soul who sins shall die” (v. 20 – dead center)
5	21–23	A wicked person who turns from all his sins	Past sins forgotten; he lives	“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? ... Turn and live!”
6	24–29	A righteous person who turns to iniquity	Past righteousness forgotten; he dies + Israel’s accusation	“My ways are just; repentant wicked live”
7	30–32	Final direct address to the house of Israel	“Repent ... get a new heart and a new spirit!”	“I have no pleasure in the death of anyone ... Turn, and live!”

Summary of the Columns (the vertical “warp” threads)

Column	What it always does
A	Introduces the person or situation (proverb, righteous man, wicked son, grandson, repentant sinner, apostate righteous, “house of Israel”)
B	Gives the detailed behavior + the immediate life-or-death outcome
C	Delivers God’s verdict , defends His justice, and carries the ever-louder plea for life (“I take no pleasure in death ... turn and live!”)

Summary of the Rows (the horizontal “weft” divisions)

Row	Key Idea
1	The old excuse (“it’s our fathers’ fault”) is demolished; the principle is stated
2	The righteous father – lives
3	The wicked son – dies
4	The righteous grandson – lives; inherited guilt is forever rejected (v. 20 – centre of weave)
5	Wicked man repents – lives; God takes no pleasure in death
6	Righteous man apostatizes – dies; Israel accuses God of injustice
7	Final sovereign decree + new-creation offer: “Get a new heart ... turn and live!”

Bonus: The Genesis-1 Mirror (the big picture)

Genesis 1	Ezekiel 18
Days 1–3 – Forming the empty realms	Rows 1–4 – Forming a moral world of pure personal responsibility
Days 4–6 – Filling the realms with life	Rows 5–6 – Filling that world with real human choices that all end in death
Day 7 – Sabbath rest (finished creation)	Row 7 – Sabbath / new creation (the King offers a new heart and life)

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