

Dr. Leslie Allen, Daniel, Session 9, Living out the Hope (Ezek 18:1-32) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Allen, Ezekiel, Session 9, Living out the Hope (Ezek 18:1-32), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Leslie Allen's lecture dissects Ezekiel 18:1-32, focusing on living out hope amidst exile. The lecture posits that this chapter, seemingly interrupting a royal theme, actually builds on the hope of Davidic kingship from chapter 17. **Allen argues that Ezekiel shifts from prophesying inevitable destruction to offering a choice between life and death, urging repentance.** The exiles' proverb blaming past generations for their plight is refuted, emphasizing individual responsibility. **Ezekiel reinforces that each person faces God directly, and the exiles can access a fresh start through the gift of a new heart and spirit from God, enabling obedience to covenant standards.** The lecture highlights Ezekiel's role as a prophet, priest, teacher, and pastor, challenging the exiles to live according to God's will and offering assurance of renewed life.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Allen, Ezekiel, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →
Major Prophets → Ezekiel).**



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on09.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 9, Living out the Hope (Ezek 18:1-32)

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Allen's lecture on Ezekiel 18, "Living Out the Hope":

Briefing Document: Ezekiel 18 - Living Out the Hope

Overall Theme: Ezekiel 18 addresses the exiles' fatalistic mindset and offers a message of individual responsibility and hope for renewal, emphasizing that even in exile, they can choose life by aligning themselves with God's covenant standards. The chapter serves as an interruption of the royal theme, logically building on the positive message about Davidic kingship found in chapter 17:22-24. It urges the exiles to live their lives in the light of that royal hope as they wait for their return from exile.

Key Ideas & Arguments:

- **Context is Crucial:** Dr. Allen emphasizes the importance of understanding Ezekiel 18 within the broader context of the book, particularly in relation to chapters 17 and 19. He argues that it shouldn't be isolated but viewed as a deliberate "interruption" of the royal theme, building on the promise of restoration in 17:22-24.
- "We're so used to chapter and verse in our Bibles that we don't appreciate that they are reference devices that we misuse if we concentrate on one verse or even one chapter. We're in danger of missing the overall context and losing the continuity."
- "I suggest that chapter 18 is a deliberate interruption that logically builds on 17:22 through 24, that positive message about Davidic kingship that promised a grand restoration of kingship as part of God's positive plan for his people."
- **Shift in Ezekiel's Ministry:** The lecture highlights the shift in Ezekiel's prophetic message after 587 BCE, from one of inevitable destruction to one of hope and the possibility of repentance. Chapter 18 exemplifies this shift, offering a "choice of death or life" and calling for repentance.
- "Ezekiel is playing a very different tune from that inevitable message of destruction that he had to prophesy up to 587... Ezekiel is practicing, in fact, in offering a choice of life and calling for repentance. He's practicing the watchman

ministry of chapters 33 and back in chapter 3, warning the exiles and coaxing them forward instead of preaching messages of irreversible doom."

- **The Proverb and the Problem of Transgenerational Guilt:** The exiles are repeating a proverb: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:2). This expresses their belief that they are suffering for the sins of previous generations. Dr. Allen points out that this slogan expresses a fatalistic despair and a defiance against God, lacking acknowledgement of their own sin.
- "And the slogan was a metaphor...Eating something sour and the acid makes your teeth unpleasantly rough. But there's a variation on this cause and effect because it here applies to two different sets of people, two generations."
- "The exiles are talking about their deportation and all the losses that went with deportation...And they're saying it's not our fault. It's their fault. Previous generations."
- **Individual Responsibility:** Ezekiel 18 emphasizes that each individual is responsible for their own actions and their relationship with God. The old principle of transgenerational punishment has ended.
- "And so, there's no room now, after 587, for fatalism. There's no room for despair, but neither is there room for defiance or protest against God by implying it's not our fault. That slogan wasn't true because they had all been silly enough to eat those sour grapes themselves and not just previous generations."
- "As all persons relate directly to me, the parent as a personal entity and the child as a personal entity relate to me in the same direct way. And so, maintenance of the old generational principle for each generation has a part to play in their responsibility before God but it is saying goodbye to that old transgenerational principle."
- "It's only the person who sins that shall die. If a person is righteous and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live." (Summarizing Ezekiel 18:4-9)
- **Torah Foundation:** Ezekiel's message is grounded in the Torah. Dr. Allen identifies specific passages in Deuteronomy (24:16) and Leviticus (18:5; 19) that underpin Ezekiel's teaching on individual responsibility and the consequences of righteousness and wickedness.

- "Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents. Only for their own crimes may persons be put to death." (Deuteronomy 24:16, as the legal ruling Ezekiel reapplies spiritually)
- "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances. By doing so, one shall live. Life depends on living up to God's covenant standards." (Leviticus 18:5, used as a justification for saying if one does what is right, he shall surely live.)
- "You shall not charge interest on loans to another Israelite. Interest on money, interest on provisions, and interest on anything that is lent. It's an act of charity." (Deuteronomy verse 19, as the basis for what Ezekiel is saying)
- **"Life" and "Death" in the Context of Exile:** In Ezekiel's second period of ministry, "life" refers to the blessed life to come after returning to the land. Preparing for that coming hope means adopting a good lifestyle now. Conversely, "death" signifies exclusion from the return, remaining in exile. God will set up a "screening process" to "purge out the rebels" (Ezekiel 20:35-38).
- "As soon as we realize that chapter 18 belongs to the second period of Ezekiel's ministry after 587, we can understand what life means. Because eventually we're going to come to chapter 37, which tells the vision of dry bones coming back to life. And as we read the interpretation of that vision, resurrection is a metaphor for new life in the land."
- "I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face on the way back from exile... I will purge out the rebels among you and those who transgress against me. I will bring them out of the land where they reside as aliens, but they shall not enter the land of Israel." (Ezekiel 20:35-38, as a screening process God will enact)
- **Priestly List of Righteousness and Wickedness:** Ezekiel uses a priestly list, likely used in the Jerusalem temple before the exile, to illustrate what it means to be righteous (Ezekiel 18:6-8). This list includes religious, sexual, social, and economic examples of right living. Verses 10-13 then present the negative side, depicting the consequences of wickedness.
- **The Possibility of Change and Forgiveness:** The lecture emphasizes that individuals are not locked into past choices. Even the wicked can turn from their sins and find life (Ezekiel 18:21-23). God is willing to "let bygones be bygones." However, those who were previously righteous can also fall away and face consequences (Ezekiel 18:24-28).

- "If the wicked turn away from all their own sins that they've committed and keep all my statutes and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live and shall not die...None of the transgressions that they've committed shall be remembered against them. For the righteousness that they have done, they shall live." (Ezekiel 18:21-23)
- "Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live?" (Ezekiel 18:23)
- **New Heart and New Spirit:** Dr. Allen clarifies that Ezekiel isn't simply advocating for self-effort. The call to "get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 18:31) echoes God's promise in Ezekiel 36:26 and 11:19. This new heart and spirit are God's enabling power, allowing them to obey His covenant standards, even before returning to the land.
- "Get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit...A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you. In that way, I will make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances." (Ezekiel 18:31 & 36:26)

Conclusion:

Ezekiel 18 is a powerful message of hope and individual responsibility, urging the exiles to actively participate in their future by embracing God's covenant standards and receiving His gift of a new heart and spirit. It directly confronts the fatalistic attitude that was hindering their spiritual growth and preparation for eventual restoration.

4. Study Guide: Allen, Ezekiel, Session 9, Living out the Hope (Ezek 18:1-32)

Ezekiel 18: Living Out the Hope - Study Guide

I. Key Concepts Review

This section provides an overview of the major ideas presented in Ezekiel 18, as discussed in the lecture. Focus on understanding the connections between these concepts.

- **Context within Ezekiel:** Understand the placement of chapter 18 between chapters 17 and 19, recognizing how it shifts from royal themes to individual responsibility.
- **Ezekiel's Two Periods of Ministry:** Differentiate between the pre-587 BCE message of judgment and the post-587 BCE message of hope and restoration.
- **The Proverb of Sour Grapes (Ezekiel 18:2):** Analyze the meaning of the proverb and why the exiles used it. Understand how Ezekiel challenges this fatalistic view.
- **Individual Responsibility:** Grasp the central theme of individual accountability before God, emphasizing that each person is responsible for their own actions.
- **Torah and Covenant Standards:** Recognize the importance of the Torah as the standard for righteous living and how Ezekiel uses it to call the exiles to repentance.
- **Life and Death Metaphors:** Interpret the meanings of "life" (restoration, return to the land) and "death" (remaining in exile, exclusion from the restored community) within the context of Ezekiel's message.
- **Priestly List of Righteousness (Ezekiel 18:5-9):** Understand the types of actions that define a righteous person, including religious purity, sexual morality, justice, and charity.
- **The Possibility of Change:** Appreciate the message of hope that even those who have sinned can repent and find life, and conversely, those who are righteous can fall away.
- **God's Desire for Repentance:** Recognize the emphasis on God's desire for the people to turn from their wicked ways and live, rather than face judgment.

- **New Heart and New Spirit:** Understand that God's gift of a "new heart" and "new spirit" enables obedience to God's laws and makes true repentance possible.

II. Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. How does the message of Ezekiel 18 contrast with the prophecies Ezekiel delivered before 587 BCE?
2. What is the meaning of the proverb about "sour grapes," and what problem was Ezekiel trying to address by countering it?
3. Explain Ezekiel's perspective on the concept of transgenerational punishment.
4. How does Ezekiel use Deuteronomy 24:16 and Leviticus 18:5 in his argument about individual responsibility?
5. In Ezekiel 18, what does it mean to "live," and what does it mean to "die"?
6. Describe three examples of righteous behavior from the priestly list in Ezekiel 18:5-9.
7. According to Ezekiel, can a wicked person change their ways and be accepted by God? Explain.
8. Why does Ezekiel say that righteous people can still face death (Ezekiel 18:24)?
9. In Ezekiel 18:31, what does Ezekiel mean when he urges the people to "get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit"?
10. How does Ezekiel function as a priest-prophet in this chapter?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Before 587 BCE, Ezekiel primarily delivered messages of judgment and inevitable destruction due to the sins of Israel. In contrast, Ezekiel 18 offers a message of hope, emphasizing individual responsibility, repentance, and the possibility of restoration.
2. The proverb "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" suggests that the exiles believed they were suffering for the sins of their ancestors. Ezekiel counters this by asserting that each individual is accountable for their own actions and fate, not predetermined by past generations.

3. Ezekiel argues that the transgenerational principle of climactic judgment ended in 587 BCE, so each generation now stands on its own feet before God. Therefore, each person has a spiritual responsibility to honor God in their lives.
4. Ezekiel uses Deuteronomy 24:16, which states that people should be put to death for their own crimes, not their parents', to emphasize that each person is legally responsible for their own actions. He then uses Leviticus 18:5, which states that one shall live by keeping God's statutes, as scriptural justification for saying that one who does what is right shall surely live.
5. To "live" in Ezekiel 18 refers to the hope of restoration, return to the promised land, and new life after the exile. To "die" means to remain in exile, to be excluded from the restored community, and to miss out on the blessings of God's future.
6. Examples include not eating upon the mountains or lifting up his eyes to the idols, not defiling his neighbor's wife or approaching a woman during her menstrual period, and not oppressing anyone but restoring to the debtor his pledge. These behaviors reflect religious purity, sexual morality, and justice.
7. Yes, Ezekiel emphasizes that even the wicked can find forgiveness and life if they turn away from their sins, keep God's statutes, and do what is lawful and right. God promises not to remember their past transgressions if they embrace righteousness.
8. Righteous people can face death if they turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, negating their former loyalty to God. This highlights the ongoing need for spiritual integrity and faithfulness.
9. To "get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit" means to seek God's transformative power to change their inner desires and motivations, enabling them to obey God's laws. This promise of a new heart and spirit coincides with the promise of God in Ezekiel 36:26, as an enabling to maintain practical obedience to God's covenant standards.
10. Ezekiel functions as a priest-prophet by teaching the exiles about the Torah and covenant standards, while also delivering prophetic messages about hope, judgment, and the need for repentance. He draws on his priestly knowledge of the law to guide the people toward righteous living in preparation for God's future blessings.

III. Essay Questions

Consider the following essay questions, drawing on the information in the lecture.

1. Discuss the significance of Ezekiel 18's placement within the larger context of the Book of Ezekiel. How does it contribute to the overall message and purpose of the book?
2. Analyze the proverb of the sour grapes in Ezekiel 18:2. Why was this proverb problematic, and how did Ezekiel challenge it? What does this reveal about Ezekiel's understanding of justice and responsibility?
3. Explore the concept of individual responsibility in Ezekiel 18. How does Ezekiel use legal and covenantal language to emphasize this concept? What are the implications of individual responsibility for the exiles' understanding of their situation?
4. Examine the relationship between the Torah and Ezekiel's message of repentance and restoration in Ezekiel 18. How does Ezekiel use the Torah to define righteous living and to motivate the exiles to change their ways?
5. Discuss the themes of hope and judgment in Ezekiel 18. How does Ezekiel balance these two themes, and what does this reveal about his understanding of God's character and purpose?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exile:** The forced removal of the Israelites from their homeland to Babylon, occurring in stages between 597 and 582 BCE.
- **587 BCE:** The year Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, marking a turning point in Ezekiel's ministry.
- **Transgenerational Principle:** The belief that the sins of ancestors could determine the fate of later generations, a concept Ezekiel challenges.
- **Individual Responsibility:** The idea that each person is accountable for their own actions and choices before God.
- **Torah:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible, containing God's law and covenant with Israel.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and Israel, outlining the terms of their relationship.
- **Repentance:** Turning away from sin and returning to God, demonstrating a change of heart and lifestyle.
- **New Heart and New Spirit:** God's gift of inner transformation that enables obedience to His commands, mentioned in Ezekiel 11:19, 18:31, and 36:26.
- **Priest-Prophet:** A person who combines the roles of a priest (teaching the law and offering sacrifices) and a prophet (delivering God's messages).
- **Eschatology:** The study of the "end times" or the ultimate destiny of humanity and the world, often involving themes of judgment and restoration.

5. FAQs on Allen, Ezekiel, Session 9, Living out the Hope (Ezek 18:1-32), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Ezekiel 18: Living Out the Hope

1. Why is Ezekiel 18 considered an "interruption" in the broader context of Ezekiel's prophecies, particularly following chapters 17 and 19?

Ezekiel 18 appears to be an interruption because chapters 17 and 19 focus on a royal theme, specifically concerning Davidic kingship and the promise of restoration. Chapter 18, however, shifts the focus to individual responsibility and repentance. It addresses a contemporary problem faced by the exiles regarding the proverb about the fathers eating sour grapes and the children's teeth being set on edge. It is a deliberate pause to emphasize the importance of individual moral responsibility in light of the hope for future restoration. It is also a chance to encourage the exiles to adopt a new lifestyle in order to prepare for the coming hope.

2. What is the significance of the proverb, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," in the context of the exiles' situation?

This proverb reflects the exiles' fatalistic and defiant sentiment that they were suffering for the sins of their ancestors. They felt it was unfair for them to bear the consequences of previous generations' disobedience, particularly the loss of their land and their deportation. This slogan has a ring of despair, and a protest against God. They felt they shouldn't be victims. Ezekiel challenges this notion by emphasizing individual accountability and the opportunity for a fresh start.

3. How does Ezekiel 18 address the concept of transgenerational punishment, and what new principle does it introduce?

Ezekiel 18 challenges the idea of transgenerational punishment, the belief that one generation is punished for the sins of previous generations. The chapter introduces the principle of generational responsibility, emphasizing that each individual is accountable for their own actions. God assesses each person and generation separately, offering a chance for righteousness regardless of their lineage.

4. What are the two sides of the "spiritual coin" that Ezekiel presents in this chapter, and how are they rooted in the Torah?

The two sides of the spiritual coin are that the person who sins shall die, and the person who is righteous shall live. These principles are rooted in the Torah:

- Deuteronomy 24:16 establishes that individuals should only be punished for their own crimes.
- Leviticus 18:5 states that keeping God's statutes and ordinances leads to life. Ezekiel reinterprets these legal concepts spiritually, stressing that individual moral choices determine one's destiny in relation to God's promise of restoration.

5. In Ezekiel 18, what does it mean to "live" and to "die," particularly in the context of Ezekiel's second period of ministry and the coming restoration?

In Ezekiel's second period of ministry (after 587 BCE), "living" refers to the restored life in the promised land after exile, a concept symbolized by the vision of dry bones coming back to life in chapter 37. "Dying" represents being excluded from this restoration, either by remaining in exile or being "purged out" as a rebel during the return, as described in Ezekiel 20:35-38.

6. What specific examples of righteous living does Ezekiel provide in verses 6-8, and what is their origin and significance?

Ezekiel uses a priestly list to illustrate righteous living:

- Avoiding idolatry ("not eating upon the mountains or lifting up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel")
- Avoiding sexual immorality ("does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period")
- Avoiding oppression and robbery ("does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery")
- Practicing charity ("gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment")
- Avoiding usury ("does not take advance or accrued interest") These acts reflect adherence to the Torah's moral and ethical standards, emphasizing the importance of religious purity, social justice, and compassion. Loans were meant to be acts of charity.

7. How does Ezekiel address the exiles' potential despair or fatalism stemming from past choices, and what is his message of hope and change?

Ezekiel directly addresses the exiles who feel trapped by their past sins. He declares that even the wicked can find life by turning away from their transgressions and keeping God's statutes (Ezekiel 18:21). This signifies that individuals are not permanently defined by their past choices. There is a fresh start offered to them, and they can choose to get right with God once more. He offers a "gospel message" of forgiveness and renewal, inviting the exiles to change their lives and prepare for restoration.

8. What does Ezekiel mean when he says the exiles must "get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit," and how does this relate to God's promise in other parts of Ezekiel?

The phrase "get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit" does not imply salvation through works, rather, it expresses the idea that God offers the gift of a new heart and a new spirit so that people are enabled to obey God's covenant standards (as seen in Ezekiel 36:26 and 11:19-20). It means acknowledging their need for a transformative change that comes from God. While God promises to give this new heart in the future, Ezekiel urges the exiles to appropriate this gift even in their present situation of exile. They were meant to ask God for the change of heart. This is the satisfying answer to the demoralized slogan that the exiles carried.