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## **Repent and Live**

Quite often, when we read of the new or renewed covenant we quickly turn to Jeremiah 31:31-33.

But have we ever read the verses before verse 31?

### **Jeremiah 31:29-30**

*In those days they shall no longer say: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.*

What does that mean?

If we were to not give the matter much thought or context, we might be quick to conclude that everyone is responsible for their own sin, and thus will die because of it. In fact, in isolation, no other conclusion could be rendered.

Someone might go as far as to say that it must be an error to believe that a man named Jesus, or in Hebrew His name being Yeshua, followed the law, the Torah perfectly, and was able to die for our sin...that it is silly to believe that He died for our iniquity.

We just might conclude that in our reading of these two verses prior to verse 31. However, what if we read the verse after verse 33?

### **Jeremiah 31:34**

*And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

So, and this is important, if our Creator is going to forgive our iniquity how is it possible that we can die for it?

How can we die for iniquity that is no longer remembered? Didn't verses 29-30 just say that every man

is to die for their iniquity?

### **Jeremiah 31:29-30**

In those days they shall no longer say: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

How can we die for iniquity that is no longer remembered?

The answer is this: we can't. There must be something different about those who are responsible for their own iniquity.

What is that difference?

Who are those that have eaten sour grapes? We should answer that, because that is the context for dying for one's own iniquity.

### **Ezekiel 18:1-4**

The word of the Lord came to me: "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'? As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. 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."

The eating of sour grapes is a Hebraic proverb. And it is the "souls that sin" that have "eaten the sour grapes."

And it is those souls that sin that are the souls that shall die.

So what is different about those in Jeremiah 34? Why are their sins forgiven and no longer remembered? Why are they not responsible for their iniquity any longer?

### **Jeremiah 31:34**

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Who are these that are different? Why is their iniquity forgiven and no longer remembered?

Now that we have examined verses 29-30 and verse 34, perhaps the verses in the middle might answer that question.

### **Jeremiah 31:-33**

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

So, contrary to the father's that ate sour grapes and chose a lifestyle sin and retained a heart not after the law of God, we find that the new covenant will grant to God's people a heartfelt desire to follow after the law of God.

In that desire to follow the Word of God, to believe, commit and trust in the Word of God, our sins are remembered no more...thus, we are not to die for our iniquity, but live instead.

The very next verse:

**Jeremiah 31:34**

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

This is the same understanding we find in Ezekiel 18. The one who desires the path of walking righteously is the one who will live, not die.

**Ezekiel 18:5-9**

"If a man is righteous and does what is just and right— 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—he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord God.

But, the one who rejects the Word of God, which would be evidenced by the way they live, it is those who are responsible for their own iniquity.

**Ezekiel 18:10-13**

"If he fathers a son who is violent, 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; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.

So, in reading Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 18, we learn two things.

First, we learn that one who rejects the Word of God, and chooses a life of living in sin, that person will die...eternal death is his reward. Likewise, we also learn that the one who hears the Word of God, writes it on their heart, repents of their previous wicked ways, and consequently, lives out the Word of God, it is they who will live, and are saved from death.

One might say, see, we can save ourselves by following the Word of God.

But, is that fair? Is that just?

All have sinned and gone astray. We have all gone the wrong way.

In Ezekiel 18, this question of fairness is anticipated...asking the very question, how just is this really?

### **Ezekiel 18:25-32**

“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? 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?”

“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! 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.”

Israel questioned Yahweh’s fairness. To their point, if we have all sinned, how can some die and some live, just because at some point, some decide to repent and turn from sin.

A judge that pardons some and not others is not the definition of a fair judge. That judge would not qualify as just.

But we know that Yahweh is a righteous judge. How can this be? In Ezekiel 18, our Creator does not provide the answer on how He is able to forgive their sin should they repent, He simply commands them to focus on repenting first.

Yahweh did not say that it was not a good question. It is actually a very good question. They simply asked the question at the wrong time. They needed to repent first, come back to His ways, and then ask how all of this is actually fair and just, given the fact that everyone has sinned and deserves death. He is almost saying, “Don’t worry about whether I am just or not right now. Of course I am. How I accomplish this and still be just is none of your concern.”

But, if we have repented, and are following after His ways, and if we believe the Word of God to be truth, and have adopted it as our lifestyle, then now might be the right time to ask, “How is this just?” and “How is this fair?”

If all have sinned, how can it be that we do not die for our iniquity?

The prophets offer us the answer to that as well.

Our iniquity is laid on someone else. Someone else takes the death that we deserved, thus our Creator preserves Himself being a righteous and fair Judge, by allowing someone else to take responsibility for our iniquity.

### **Isaiah 53:6**

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Someone else bears our iniquities and bears the sin for many.

**Isaiah 53:11-12**

Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Thus, the only ones who are responsible for dying for their iniquity are those who reject the Word of God.

Those who desire after the Word of God, to allow Yahweh to continue being a righteous Judge, our punishment of death for our sin is laid on someone else. He makes others righteous, by bearing their sin. He could do this, because He had never sinned Himself.

**Isaiah 53:9**

Although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

So though we can understand that Yahweh forgives and no longer remembers our sin should we repent and follow after His ways, we must ask how. How can He do this and still be a fair Judge? As we saw, long ago, the House of Israel asked how this was possible long ago, but they were not given an answer.

The answer is there, if you are willing to seek it.

For some, it might simply be good enough to understand that if they repent and desire the Word of God, that they'll be forgiven and live. However, the person that wants to go deeper, and understand how it is possible to be forgiven, despite our iniquity, you must ask the question, and seek the answer, and you will find it.

We hope that teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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