

# “The Wickedness Of The Wicked Shall Be Upon Himself”

Ezekiel 18:20-32

## Introduction:

- A. Ezekiel responds to a false proverb. (vv. 1-3).
  - 1. Caused Israel to blame fathers and even God for their sins. (vv. 19,25,29).
  - 2. Encouraged two obstacles to repentance: self-pity and self-justification.
- B. Ezekiel points out two fundamental facts of life:
  - 1. Each responsible for his *own* spiritual condition.
  - 2. Each will be judged by his *present* spiritual condition.
- C. Ezekiel gave sinners but two choices. (vv. 30-32)
  - 1. Repent of sins and live!
  - 2. Remain in sins and die!
- D. Ezekiel condemns modern *approaches* to crime, anti-social behavior, and sin.
  - 1. The Calvinistic approach: Imputation of sin and righteousness.
  - 2. The Liberal Sociological approach:
    - a. Makes criminals and sinners victims rather than holding them accountable.
    - b. Assumes something or somebody “made you do it”.
    - c. Anything to keep but personal accountability and responsibility.
    - d. Has resulted in increased crime rate in society and corrupted churches.
- E. Let us look at *four popular approaches* taken by these liberal sociologists and brethren influenced by them:

## Discussion:

### I. The *Decriminalization Approach*.

- A. It reduces(?) crime by legalizing it.
  - 1. If controlling an evil in society becomes too difficult — decriminalize it.
  - 2. If controlling sin in the church is difficult to identify and control - “grey area” it.
- B. It makes law responsible for sin rather than the sinner. (cf. Rom. 7:7-12).

### II. The *Distribution Approach*.

- A. It automatically assumes that one's guilt must be shared by others - “look what you made me do.”
  - 1. A crime is committed — Victim, police, and society must share blame.
  - 2. A man takes us with secretary — Wife and home must share blame.
  - 3. A kid terrorizes school — teachers, peers, and school share blame.
  - 4. A Christian apostatizes — church, elders, preacher, and brethren must share blame.
- B. It places all imperfections and mistakes on same level.
  - 1. *Any* mistake of police, victim, or society removes right to prosecute.
  - 2. *Any* mistake of parents removes their right to punish.
  - 3. *Any* mistake of brethren removes their right to correct and rebuke.
- C. It discourages *all* parties from accepting and facing their respective responsibilities.
  - 1. Sinner feels little or no need to repent if others are responsible.
  - 2. Leaves no one qualified to correct or punish since all are responsible.
  - 3. The results: society and the church suffers from crime and sin out of control.

### III. The *Deprivation Approach*.

- A. It assumes sin caused by being deprived — not depraved — not really sinner's fault.
  - 1. Murderers, rapist, drunkenness do it because are or were unloved.
  - 2. Thief steals because deprived of prosperity of his neighbors.
  - 3. Unfaithful brother deprived of attention and neglected by church.
- B. It attempts to solve problem by showering guilty with what was allegedly deprived of.
  - 1. Allows him to wallow in self-pity.

2. Keeps him from facing his guilt and repenting of it.
3. Gives him comfort rather than sorrow in his sin.

**IV. The *Disease* Approach.**

- A. No sinners, criminals, or wicked folks — just patients and people with problems.
- B. No needing for discipline and/or punishment, just sympathy and understanding.
- C. No need to blame a sick person, he is a victim.

Conclusion:

- A. Brethren must face responsibility to deal with internal sin. (1 Cor. 5).
- B. Brethren will not face up to this responsibility until they:
  1. Stop thinking they have to be perfect to correct a sinner.
  2. Stop looking around to find another cause rather than sinner's sinfulness.
  3. Stop timidly allowing rebellious brethren send them on “guilt trip” to avoid correction. (cf. 2 Cor. 7:2; Acts 20:26,27).
- C. Brethren need to examine themselves to avoid:
  1. Becoming unfaithful to the Lord.
  2. Becoming a stumbling block to others. (Rom. 14).
  3. But, the bottom line is still: “The wickedness of the wicked shall be upon *himself*.”