

## Ezekiel 18 and Eternal Security

Ezekiel 18, like the rest of the Bible, teaches that the truly converted will be characterized by right actions; this is an evidence of justification, not a means to attain it:

“But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right” (v. 5)—he does not do what is lawful and right to become just, but he is just, and so does what is right.

Ezekiel teaches that the truly converted are given a new nature, and will be characterized by righteousness:

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.” (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

What about Ezekiel 18:26, which reads, “When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die”? Does this contradict the rest of Ezekiel and the Bible and teach that God changes His mind and casts away those He has chosen to save? This verse does not speak of a truly justified man becoming lost after being saved, for Ezekiel 36:26-27 tells us that God causes those who He has given new hearts and spirits to walk in His statutes and judgments. The person in Ezekiel 18:26 professes to be righteous, but is a hypocrite. He does not visit high places, etc. but has never been saved.

Is the word “righteous” (Heb. *tsaddiq*) ever used for the unsaved? Yes!  
Thou also, which hast judged thy sisters, bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters. (Ezekiel 16:52)  
-The wicked idolators in Canaan, and the sodomites, who are destroyed by God for their sins, are said to be “righteous” compared to Judah.

But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? (Genesis 20:4)  
-Philistines are called “righteous” because they had not been guilty of adultery with Sarah.

Also, one who wins a case in court is “righteous” (Deut 25:1). Ishbosheth, who was knowingly fighting God’s chosen king, David, was called “righteous” (2 Sam 4:11). The leaders of his army, Abner, who fought God’s chosen king, David, knowing exactly what he was doing (2 Sam 3:8-9), is called “righteous” (1 Ki 2:32). Amasa, leader of wicked Absalom’s army against godly king David, is called “righteous” (1 Ki 2:32). Religious people, such as Campbellites, who do certain outwardly righteous things but are still lost, are “going about to establish their own righteousness” (Rom 10:3). The unsaved

persecutor of the true church, Paul, was “blameless” concerning a “righteousness which is in the law” which was his “own righteousness” (Philippians 3:6, 9).

Ezekiel 18 teaches eternal security: when “the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.” (v. 27-28). God promises that the one who is truly converted shall live. Where does Ezekiel 18 say that one like this person will ever turn away again, and fall away from salvation?

Those who say Ezekiel 18 teaches that God takes those whom He has given a new heart and a new spirit and casts them into hell should consider Mark 12:24: “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?”