

Why Will You Die?
International Bible Lesson
Ezekiel 18:1-13, 31-32
Sunday, August 16, 2015
L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 18:31—KJV).

“Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel?” (Ezekiel 18:31—NIV).

Jesus brought His friend Lazarus back from the dead. Jesus also told a story about a man named Lazarus, who died physically and went to live with Abraham. All of them died physically, but as persons they continued to live forever. No one can die ultimately. Physical death differs from spiritual death, the consequence of sinning. God spoke of spiritual death when He asked, “Why will you die?” God wants people to consider the consequences of continuing to practice sin. Those who continually disobey God remain spiritually dead, and when they die physically they join the eternally dead; but, as C.S. Lewis noted, they have no companionship there. In Jesus’ parable about Lazarus, when the rich man died physically he entered the kingdom of eternal death. He became separated from God, from all good, and from all good things—he could not even have one drop of good water. When both the Old and New Testaments encourage everyone to choose life, why would anyone choose the well-trod way that Jesus warned leads to destruction? God has told us the way to avoid the place of spiritual and eternal death. God has told us how to live in a perfect place with people made perfect forever. Ezekiel stated God’s word plainly: to live spiritually, we need to repent (stop sinning), get a new heart (a new purpose for our lives), and get a new spirit (a deep love for God). When we trust in Jesus Christ as Lord, He will save us, help us, give us a new heart, and put a right spirit within us. — L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. How do we know that Ezekiel was a true prophet of God?
2. What was the proverb that Ezekiel quoted? Why did some people quote that proverb?
3. What kind of death does the one who sins die?
4. How did Ezekiel describe or define a righteous person?
5. Give an example from your study of the Book of Ezekiel of a sin of commission and a sin of omission.