

## THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

### GFT-25 [SUPPLEMENT] "WHAT ABOUT GENERATIONAL CURSES"

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The passage in **JOHN 9** regarding the healing of the man born blind raises the question of "**Generational Curses.**" Specifically, the Disciples asked Jesus whether the man's "blindness" was the result of some **sin committed by his parents** and **punished in the child**. (**This is not about things that can be "passed-on" physically or behaviorally**). As unsettling as that may sound, it has become a common focus of many Bible teachers who may not have studied the full scope of Scripture, nor considered the ramifications of such teaching.

When considering a question like this it is necessary to find the passages that most directly address the subject, and then apply that wisdom to individual statements that are often taken out of context.

There is **ONE** passage that becomes the "**standard**" for this subject, and it covers all aspects of the question of "**GENERATIONAL CURSES.**" It is **CHAPTER 18** of the **BOOK OF EZEKIEL**.

**Ezek 18:1 Then the WORD OF THE LORD came to me, saying, 2) "What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The fathers eat the sour grapes, But the children's teeth are set on edge'?**

- The people of Ezekiel's day had adopted a "**proverb**" to assign the current trouble they were experiencing to the former generation... "**It's NOT our fault**"
- This "**proverb**" was NOT from Scripture... it was just a "**wise saying**" someone had come up with and it sounded good to the people.
- It is also recorded in **JEREMIAH 31:29**, where, again, God says they are NOT to use this any longer.

**3) "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore."**

There are "**always**" consequences to sin. The neglect of God's Word, the failure of the Priests to properly teach and correct the people, the cold-heartedness to the **LAWS OF SACRIFICE**, and the attraction to foreign idols had opened the lives of the people of Judah to all manner of repercussions.

BUT it was not just the former generation who had sinned, God's Prophets (**ISAIAH, JEREMIAH**, and now **EZEKIEL**) had pleaded with **these very people** to repent and return to the Lord. **God would forgive their sin, and heal their land, He would restore what had been lost, and grant mercy** in place of judgment. [2 CHRON 7:14] **But they DID NOT want to change.**

So... God speaks through **EZEKIEL** to correct the "**error**" and **grant them hope**: "**Repent and Live**" is what God wants for them.

**4) 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 soul who sins shall die..."** - This phrase is the "**heart**" of the message: "**Personal Responsibility for our Sin and Repentance.**" Repeated in **VERSE 20** with the addition of:

**The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.**

God wants the people to understand that the problems they are facing are of **THEIR OWN MAKING...** **not their fathers**. THEY are the ones who must repent of **THEIR** wickedness... God will forgive... and they will live.

These next verses (5-18) are illustrated in the real-life example of **3 Kings in Judah** (**a Father - HEZEKIAH; his Son MANASSEH; and his Great-Grandson - JOSIAH**) - ALL of them known to the people.

**HEZEKIAH** [SEE: 2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chron 29-31; Isaiah 36-39... Great-grandson of Uzziah]

18:5) **"But if a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness, <sup>6)</sup> and does not... [all these things forbidden in the LAW]**

8) **... if he keeps his hand from iniquity and executes true justice between man and man, <sup>9)</sup> if he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully - he is righteous and will surely live."** declares the Lord GOD.

- **HEZEKIAH** was recognized as the most righteous King since **DAVID**. BUT, his father was not.
- **HEZEKIAH** had a voice to guide him... he was trained under the tutorship of **ISAIAH**. Although his father did not follow **ISAIAH'S** instructions, **HEZEKIAH** did.
- He did NOT reap the **"judgment"** of his father and grandfather, but brought great success, prosperity, and freedom to JUDAH through the **"Revival"** that took place under his leadership. Although the ASSYRIANS had just devastated the NORTHERN KINGDOM (ISRAEL), and encompassed and placed a siege upon JERUSALEM, his righteous leadership and faithfulness to the Lord brought deliverance, and a second **"Golden Era"** to the Nation.

**He had a son...**

**MANASSEH** [SEE: 2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20]

18:10) **"He may have a violent son who ...does any of these things to a brother <sup>11)</sup> (though the father himself did not do any of these things), that is... [he does all these things forbidden in the Law]**

13) **Will he live? He will not live! He has committed all these abominations, he will surely be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.**

- **MANASSEH** was raised in the same period that **ISAIAH** was serving as spiritual leader and Prophet... proclaiming the **"future"** of the KINGDOM through **PROPHETIC WORD**.
- It began as a time of **"great revival"** for the KINGDOM... YET it turned into a time of dire warning for the repercussions of turning from GOD'S WORD to IDOLATRY.
- **MANASSEH** CHOSE to turn... to neglect his BIBLICAL instruction... to follow **"his ways"** and ignore GOD'S LAW: **AND he led the Nation into great apostasy...**
- The outcome was disastrous... It is told in Jewish legend that he was the one who put **ISAIAH** to death by placing him in a hollow tree and having him sawn in two [HEB 11:37]
- NOTICE: the **"Blessings of the righteous actions"** of **HEZEKIAH** **were not passed-on** to him... **AND the choice of "rebellion" against GOD'S LAW** was ALL his... and that of the people
- **BUT:** **see below** vs 21-22

**JOSIAH** [SEE: 2 Kings 21:23 – 23:30; 2 Chronicles 33:24 – 35:30]

18:14) **"Now behold, he has a son (direct descendant) who has observed all his father's sins which he committed, and observing DOES NOT DO LIKEWISE.** <sup>15)</sup> **"He does not ... [all these things] <sup>17)</sup> ...but**

executes 'My Ordinances', and walks in 'My Statutes'; HE WILL NOT DIE FOR HIS FATHER'S INIQUITY, he will surely live.

18:18) **"As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was not good among his people, behold, he will die for HIS iniquity.**

- After **MANASSEH** died, his son **AMON** reigned for 2 years... all of it under great oppression from wicked companions. He followed the ways of his Father. He was killed by his own servants.
- After his death, **HIS SON, JOSIAH** (great-grandson of **HEZEKIAH**) became KING OF JUDAH though he was only 8 years old. He was raised by a "godly" mother, and was greatly influenced in his faith by the Prophet **HILKIAH**.
- Having been instructed in the LAW OF GOD, he rejected the rebellious ways of his father and grandfather, and, instead, returned to the Lord. Later, he recovered the lost **BOOK OF THE LAW** (GENESIS-DEUTERONOMY), and began the "**2<sup>nd</sup> Great Revival**" in JUDAH.
- AFTER all of the evil that had been practiced and committed by his father (**AMON**) and grandfather (**MANASSEH**) **JOSIAH** found God's hand of blessing... **NOT** curse.

THAT... doesn't match with what the people are teaching ("...our fathers sinned, and we are reaping the judgment")

18:19) **"Yet YOU say, 'Why should the son not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity?' [but GOD says] When the son has practiced justice and righteousness and has observed all My statutes and done them, he shall surely live.**

- It appears AS IF the people actually WANT the children to pay for the sins of the "fathers".
- The issue really is, "**Surely WE can't be responsible for the problems we are facing... it's our parents/ancestors' fault...**"
- They don't want to accept that THEY must be the ones who need to repent of THEIR OWN sins and rebellion.
- This does not ignore the failures of the "fathers" to follow God's ways and to bring tragedy upon the land... because they did...
- **BUT**, the "children" CAN REPENT of their own sin, change their ways, and live in the peace of God's blessing.

18:20) **"The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.**

- GOD says, **NO!** The SINS of the fathers WILL NOT be judged in the children.
- The "righteous" are not held under the "curse" of the unrighteous.
- Everyone is responsible for themselves before God...

18:21) **"BUT if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die.**

22) "All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. (MANASSEH repented)

- Even the wicked who repent are not held to judgment IF they repent.
- THIS is where the story returns to MANASSEH. While he was held in captivity by the KING OF BABYLON, he repented and cried-out to God for mercy. AND he found it!

2 CHRONICLES 33:10-13 *The LORD spoke to MANASSEH and to his people, but they paid no attention.* <sup>11</sup> *Therefore the LORD brought upon them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who captured MANASSEH with hooks and bound him with chains of bronze and brought him to Babylon.* <sup>12</sup> *And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of THE LORD HIS God and humbled himself greatly before the GOD of his fathers.* <sup>13</sup> *He prayed to him, and GOD was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then MANASSEH knew that THE LORD was GOD.*

- He was returned to JUDAH, began to enact reform, and died “righteous” before God.

18:23) "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"

- God's plan is NEVER for judgment... He desires for people to “Live”
- THIS was the whole purpose of the “sacrifices” IN the LAW...

24) "BUT when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed ... for them he will die.

- Just as GOD will NOT overlook our present sins because of “former” righteous acts...
- So also, GOD does NOT carry our sins beyond our repentance... neither in OUR life, or in the lives of our Children

25) "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Hear now, O house of Israel! Is "My Way" not right? Is it NOT YOUR WAYS that are NOT RIGHT?"

- #1 – DON'T tell God what He cannot do...
- #2 – IF any thinking is wrong... it's ours... NOT God's

18:26) "When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and dies because of it, for his iniquity which he has committed he will die.

27) "Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, HE WILL SAVE HIS LIFE.

- This man's repentance has made the way for God's “saving power” to be applied to his life... AND the blessings of righteousness to be extended to him... instead of judgement...

18:28) "Because he considered and turned away from all his transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live; ... HE SHALL NOT DIE.

30) "Therefore, I will judge you, O house of Israel, EACH according to HIS conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, ...

31) ...For WHY WILL YOU DIE, O house of Israel?

- Again, God brings the question of "judgment" to their own "door-step"

32) "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

- And, HERE'S the reason why...
- GOD WANTS PEOPLE TO LIVE!**

## **YES, but what about Exodus 20:5-6**

Ex 20:5-6 "...visiting the iniquity to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation of those who ARE hat(ing) [continue to hate] me..." [\*\* This is GOD bringing judgement on the children, and grandchildren...]

- This passage MUST be read properly...
- It is NOT a "one time" error or sin... it is about "hating" the Lord... NOT "committing A sin!"
  - God had a "remedy" for sin – THE SACRIFICE:
    - Acknowledgment of Sin - identification with the death of The Substitute – THE MESSIAH
    - Forgiveness – Your sin was "expiated" by the Blood of The Substitute
    - Restoration – righteousness imparted following the removal of sin by The Substitute
  - To "HATE" God was to REJECT HIS LAW and the offer of Forgiveness
  - "HATING" - an ongoing condition – Continual Rejection of GOD'S LAW ("I will not repent")
- This was rejecting HIS covenant altogether... Rejecting the LAW OF GOD outright!
- Built INTO THE LAW was provision for "everyone" to find forgiveness for sin through the sacrifices which were a "required element" IN the LAW...
- ALL would sin... ALL would NEED the sacrifice and forgiveness found IN THE LAW...
- BUT those who "hated God" rejected THE LAW as a whole, and therefore were NOT eligible for the forgiveness offered by the sacrifice...
- NEITHER would they TEACH THE LAW and Sacrifices to their Children...
- THEREFORE, their children would live "outside the atonement and forgiveness for Sin"
- UNTIL... they cried out for MERCY – recognizing they were perishing in their sin...

"...but showing mercy to thousands of generations of those who [continue to] love me."

- God LOVES to show His mercy... it exalts His Name and accomplishes His desire – to REDEEM mankind from their sin
- His "LAW" was His way to show mankind the unrighteousness in their lives and to offer them His Mercy in providing "THE SUBSTITUTE"
  - Mercy – To offer the one who is guilty pardon and forgiveness BY removing the "just penalty" they should receive

- The “**Mercy Seat**” was the place where the “**BLOOD OF THE LAMB**” was poured-out...
  - The penalty was “executed” ... payment was made... BY THE SUBSTITUTE
  - Mercy could NOW be given to the one who WAS guilty...
- Once offered... this “**Mercy**” is realized in the life of those who “**LOVE GOD**”
- AND it is **extended into future generations**, ONLY BY the **teaching** and **actions** of the Parents (and Teachers) who have received it, and who HONOR the GOD OF MERCY  
**EPH 6:1-4** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*<sup>2</sup> *“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),*<sup>3</sup> *“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”*<sup>4</sup> *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

## How Does Jesus Deal with This Question?

**JOHN 9:1-4** - As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who had been blind since birth.<sup>2</sup> Jesus' disciples asked, "Teacher, WHY was this man born blind?  
 ...Was it because he (the man BORN blind) or HIS PARENTS sinned?"

<sup>3</sup> "No, it wasn't (Neither)!" Jesus answered.

- The issue is **not** “**WHY**” is he blind?
  - **HIS** sins... – A theology prevalent, even today, that our sicknesses are to “teach” us
    - The problem, here, is that he was BORN that way...
    - God “made” him blind because he was GOING to sin...? **NO!!!!**
  - **His PARENTS** sin... -
    - Believing that the “**sickness and infirmity**” of their children was a “**punishment FROM GOD**” for the **sin of the parents**
    - BUT... ALL sin, so why are not ALL children born this way?
    - AND... what about “**repentance and forgiveness**” – Is there NO place for those?
    - WHAT are the lessons that are to be learned? Which sins are the cause? When is the punishment enough? What about **EZEKIEL 18:20**?
- The issue is “**WHAT**” can “**Jesus**” do to CHANGE this man’s condition?
- God’s purpose in Jesus is summed-up in **ACTS 10:38**

**ACTS 10:38** "...how GOD anointed JESUS of Nazareth with the HOLY SPIRIT and with power. HE went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for GOD was with HIM."

- The passage makes the “**Doctrine of Scripture**” very clear:
  - **Sickness** and **oppression** are the work of the Devil...
  - **Healing** and **deliverance** are the work of God...

[JOHN 9:3] "But because of his blindness, you will see God work a miracle for him."

<sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do what the one who sent me wants me to do. When night comes, no one can work. (Contemporary English Version)

**There are issues here, though, that must be dealt with through other Teaching:**

- 1) Children “exposed” to demonic influence...**
- 2) Learned “bad” behavior patterns in children NOT raised in a Biblical home...**
- 3) Modeled “ungodly” behavior of children NOT raised in a Biblical Home...**
- 4) “Rebellious” behavior of children raised in Biblical or Non- Biblical home...**
- 5) Inherited “genetic’ diseases -**
- 6) Physical / Mental deficiencies “imposed upon” the child in the womb or after birth by Drug / Alcohol abuse, or lack of proper nutrition, or nurturing...**