

The Bitter Cycle of Sin

We see it all the time. Especially now with the Israelites. When someone sins, the consequences appear. And everyone tries to discover whose fault it is. Some say that parents are to blame. Others say they cannot stop sinning—it's in their blood. But the word of the Lord came to me. And he said, "What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: 'The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'?" God told me that this ancient proverb was not true about Israel.

Each person is an individual with a soul and a will of their own. And all, both the child and the parent, were created by God. We are individuals, and the one who sins will die. Some people are confused about this, and others still feel that the bad things that happen are a consequence for sin committed by people a long time ago. God wants us to know that we are not going to receive punishment for what others did, although sometimes we suffer indirectly from the consequences of what they did. Why will the child not bear the sin of his parent? Because if the child acted according to law and justice, kept all the statutes of God and fulfilled them, then he/she will live; but the soul that sins will die.

The child will not bear the sin of the father nor the father bear the sin of the child; "The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them."

"But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live."

Does God want the wicked to die? God says, "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? But if a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked person does, will they live? None of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness they are guilty of and because of the sins they have committed, they will die."

Then Israel has a decision to make, beyond what their families and ancestors did. The people of Israel can return to God and change the cycle of sin, or they can choose to stay in the bitter cycle of sin.

(Taken from Ezekiel 18:1-4; 19-24).

- 1.** What does the proverb "The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" mean?
- 2.** Why do you think God told Israel to never quote this proverb again?
- 3.** If God doesn't want the wicked to be lost forever, then why does He allow evil to happen?
- 4.** God forgets our evil if we go to him, but he also forgets our good if we return to evil. Is that fair?

