

WHAT IS ORIGINAL SIN? (5)

During the past few weeks we have noticed that when one generation sins against God, the future generations suffer the punishment for the sin. The sin itself is forgiven the generation that commits it when the people repent, but the punishment can go on as long as the fourth generation. We found this to be true when we studied Ex. 20:5 and Deut. 5:4" Neither of these passages teach the doctrine of original sin.

In this writing we want to explore Lamentations 5:7 and Job 21:19. The explanation of these verses is very similar to those in Exodus and Deuteronomy. Lamentations 5: 7 states, "Our fathers sinned, and are no more; It is we who have borne their iniquities." Here we see that one generation has sinned and the children of that generation are going to bear their iniquities. The key to understanding if the sin is passed on is understanding the word "borne." The Hebrew word used here is "cabal" which means to be a burden. Literally translated the phrase would read, "It is we who have to bear the burden of their iniquities." The iniquities (sins) still belonged to the fathers, not the children (or generations) that come after them. Although not speaking of the same sin, Num. 14 :33 states the concept very well, "And your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they shall suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness."

Job 21:19 is used to show that sin can be passed from generation to generation, but it is this author's opinion that careful reading of the passage shows no such teaching. Read Job 21:19 and then Isaiah 14:21, and I think you will agree that the Old Testament does not teach original sin. "You say, 'God stores away a man's iniquity for his sons.' Let God repay him so that he may know it" (Job 21:19). "Prepare for his sons a place of slaughter because of the iniquity of their fathers, They must not arise and take possession of the earth And fill the face of the world with cities" (Isa. 14:21).

The repayment of the father's sins goes to the sons, and Job is saying this should not be so. Since the repayment goes to the children the sin remains with the fathers, it is not passed on! Isaiah 14 shows the extent of the repayment.

Next week we shall look at the Old Testament verse that "clinches" the argument against the doctrine of original sin.

--Greg