

Generational Sin

The Scriptural Case for the Reality of Generational Sin in the Old Testament:

Exodus 34:6-7

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

Deuteronomy 30:19

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

Exodus 20:5-6

*You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.**

Deuteronomy 5:8-10

*"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.**

* Notice God's heart here is to show love to thousands. The punishment is a consequence, used to turn us back to God; however, the blessing far outweighs the punishment.

The Scriptural Case for Generational Sin in the New Testament:

Matthew 23:35-38

And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate.

Matthew 27:24-25

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and our children!"

Luke 1:50

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

The writer of Hebrews refers back to the new covenant in **Jeremiah 31:31-34** in **Hebrews 8:7-13**. Verse 12 reads: *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* (KJV)

Romans 4:5-8

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (KJV)

Hebrews 10:16-20

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. (KJV)

Timothy 2:19

Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

The Remedy:**Leviticus 26:40-42**

But if they will confess their sins (iniquity NASB) and the sins (iniquities NASB) of their fathers — their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies— then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, (iniquity NASB) I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The Greek translation for the word unrighteousness is (G93) *adikia* and is translated as iniquity, wickedness, evil, wrongdoing.

Helpful Definitions:

Sin (H2403) is an offence or wrong, whether you identify it or not. One of the root words for sin (H2398) is a verb which means to "willfully act contrary to the will and law of God, moving from a standard or mark," simply put, missing the mark.

Transgression (H6588) is revolt or rebellion. One of the root words for transgression (H6586) is a verb which means to rebel, revolt, offend, break away (from just authority).

Iniquity (H5771) is sin, wickedness. The root word for iniquity (H5753) is a verb that means to be crooked, perverted, warped, bent, twisted.

Sin, Transgression and Iniquity

Isaiah 53:4-8

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

Psalm 103:1-13

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

Psalm 32:1-5

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"—and you forgave the guilt of my sin. (KJV uses iniquity for sin in verse 2 and for guilt in verse 5)

Isaiah 59:1-2

Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.