

Assurance of Salvation
Part 24

Love for God
(#5)



Today, we will illustrate this...

By looking at a Scripture passage about GOD, that most people find offensive.

We will look at:
How God describes himself

And then at:
How we should respond when we find such passages.

Does this verse appeal to you?

"I am the Lord, I am the Lord, the merciful and gracious God. I am slow to anger and rich in unfailing love and faithfulness. I show this unfailing love to many thousands by forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion." (Exodus 34:6-7a NLT)

* Most people tend to like this passage. *

How about this second verse?

"Even so I do not leave sin unpunished, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations." (Exodus 34:7b NLT)

A similar statement is found in the 10 Commandments – Exodus 20:5.

* Most people take offense at this. *

How does a person who knows and loves God respond to this?

Moses immediately fell to the ground and worshiped. (Exodus 34:8 NLT)

* Was this YOUR response? *
If not, what should you do about it?

[Let's find out!]

If we didn't like the second part, what do we tend to do?

- Do we condemn God?

– OR –

- Do we condemn the sin that causes this to happen?

(Our response tells us a lot about ourselves.)

- Do we search the Scriptures to find out why it is true?

– OR –

- Do we go into "attack mode" and come up with reasons for rejecting it?

When a rebellious sinner [= that's us] doesn't like the way God does things...
Guess who needs to change!

Something else to consider:

Why do people get so upset with this passage about judgment, considering what God said just before it??

- God's love can extend to **THOUSANDS!**
 - Compare this to a mere "**3 or 4 generations**" of experiencing punishment (consequences of the parent's sin)!
 - Other Scripture passages mention **A THOUSAND GENERATIONS** (if the children don't fall into sin).

How should we respond to this passage? (as followers of Jesus)

- When we find something unexpected about God...
 - **DON'T** reject it / explain it away / close our eyes to it.
 - **DO** accept it and find out **WHY** it is true!

In this passage, the FIRST thing we must do is REMEMBER:

- **God's sovereignty and human responsibility** WORK TOGETHER.
 - You have to keep both in mind, or you are in danger of going astray!
- This passage has a connection with the actions of people.

- Moses understood this full well.
 - Consider the times the two concepts parallel each other in the earlier chapters of Exodus:

WHO hardened Pharaoh's heart? (an example)

Pharaoh hardened his heart... (Exodus 8:32)

The LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart... (Exodus 10:20)

In this passage, the SECOND thing we must do is ASK:

WHY is it true?

- We might find an answer by studying other Scripture passages.
- If we can't find an answer, we can still accept it as true, simply because God said it is true!

When we take into consideration the "human responsibility" aspect...

This passage basically tells us:

"Your sin has consequences that go beyond you."

Sin has consequences???

- YES!!! **Our sin hurts other people.**
- Don't believe it? **ASK THE CHILDREN!**
 - Ask the child with parents who have never gotten married, or who have gotten a divorce.
 - Ask the child who's mother indulged in drugs and alcohol during pregnancy.
 - Ask the child with parents in prison for a crime.
 - Ask the child with abusive parents.

* (Grown-ups also experience consequences.)

The ultimate question is:

- If you are sinning, **who** are you going to *condemn* for the consequences?
 - **God**, (the one who warns you that there will be consequences for 2-3 generations)
 - **OR** –
 - **Yourself** (the one who chooses to defy God's warning)

There are 2 potential types of consequences for sin

- Eternal consequences ... they exist *forever*.
- Physical consequences ... they exist *in this present life*.

[We will look at each of these.]

There may be ETERNAL consequences

... but there *doesn't* have to be.

- God will forgive the children, if they repent.
 - Then they won't suffer *eternal* consequences.

Yes, there ARE Scripture passages that offer children hope for eternity!

The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son.

The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him. (Ezekiel 18:20 NIV)

We interrupt this for an important notice...

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

God did not give us the *one* group of passages so we could "cancel out" the *other* group.

BOTH GROUPS ARE TRUE!

[That's why we must accept both of the passages – in Exodus and Ezekiel.]

Back to what we were saying...

Unfortunately, children tend to CHOOSE to follow in their parent's footsteps.

Most CHOOSE to continue in their parent's sin.

But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the Lord their God. (2 Kings 17:14 NIV)

There may be PHYSICAL consequences now ... but they *don't* have to last forever.

- There may be suffering in this *present* life, even if there are no *eternal* consequences.
- It's one of the "laws of nature":
Actions have consequences.

(If the children turn to God)

God will use the suffering that must occur, to accomplish good for them.

We know that in all things God works to accomplish good in the lives of those who love him, whom he has called according to his plan. (Romans 8:28)

CONCLUSION (1)

- The Exodus passage points to the CONSEQUENCES.
- But these consequences are directly related to HUMAN CHOICES.

We need to accept God for who he truly is, and then deal with our CHOICES!

CONCLUSION (2)

- We should not blame God for the consequences of OUR sins.
 - After all, *he warned us that there WOULD be consequences!*
- Rather, we should repent of our sins and be a godly example for our children.*
 - This will minimize the consequences they experience.

* (And for everyone else.)

Your mission: REMEMBER

- As you find Scripture passages about God that do NOT fit your views...

- **Remember:**

- These verses are as true as the ones you like.
- They are equally important, and *neither* group of verses cancels out the other.

(They work together and complement each other, to keep you from having a false view of God.)

Your mission: ASK

- Do you love God's TRUE CHARACTER and hate distortions?
 - To tolerate distortions about God is to HATE the true God!

Credits (1)

SCRIPTURE

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- Romans 8:28 - My translation.

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