

“See What You Made Me Do?”

by Wayne Goff

*Much as I hate to admit it now, my brother and I often blamed each other as children for things we had done and for which we knew we would get into trouble! Looking back on those words, I can now see the immaturity of them. They were spoken in haste, in fear, and with an urgent desire to avoid accepting the blame! More than that, those words never accomplished their desired intent. We **still** got into trouble!*

Today's Generation

Today I see grown adults, both young and old, who do their best to avoid responsibility for their actions. They prefer to blame society, their family, the governmental authorities, schools and teachers, churches and preachers — just **anybody** in their sights — for their own misdeeds.

Lawyers make a fortune suing everyone and everything on their client's behalf. If someone spills a hot cup of coffee on their lap while driving a car, then the company who sold them the coffee is sued because it was too hot! If another person takes a new prescription drug, then you had better rest assured that the pharmaceutical company behind it has given them every possible warning. If a school child gets into trouble at school, too often the school or the teachers get the blame! Yes, things have gotten way out of hand today.

The Blame Game (600 B.C.)

We can go back 2,600 years and see the same “blame game” going on in ancient Judah! The prophet Jeremiah wrote “*In those days they shall say no more: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.’ But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge*” (Jer. 31:29-30). **There it is in black and white!** The children are blaming all the nation's ills on the previous generation (their parents). But God warned these people that “*every one shall die for his own iniquity.*” In plain English, if **your** teeth are set on edge, then it is because **you** ate the sour grapes! Stop blaming others for your problems!

A Change From Nation To Individual

Another fascinating point which is elaborated on in Ezekiel 18, is the point that many innocent individuals suffered in the downfall of the nation of Judah. The kings and leaders of Jeremiah's day made decisions that led to the nation's downfall, and the people were to blame to a lesser degree for allowing things to digress, but the nation suffered as a **whole**. God prophesies of a future day when a new *spiritual* kingdom will stand *forever*, and its **individual** citizens will each be punished for their own sins. Others will not suffer the consequences in this realm. Each will be responsible for his own. Read Ezekiel 18:1-4, and notice the same proverb being quoted. Jehovah's response is “*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*” (v. 4). Once again, if you have done something wrong in the Lord's kingdom, then you need to accept responsibility for it, repent of it, and stand justified before God! Don't blame others for your sins!

We see this individual aspect of God's future kingdom back in Jeremiah 3:14 “*Return, O backsliding children,*” says the LORD; “*for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.*” Those redeemed in the new Zion (the Lord's church) will come “*one from a city, and two from a family*” — that is, on an individual basis, dependent upon their own faith and obedience to the gospel. Indeed, in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost, 3,000 souls heard the Gospel message, believed and were baptized (vv. 37-38). All were exhorted to “*be saved from this perverse generation*” (v. 40). But only those who “*gladly received his word were baptized*” (v. 41). The rest were lost in sin among the rest of that wicked generation.

So what? The lesson is simple. Take responsibility for your thoughts, words and actions. If you have sinned, then own up to them and a gracious God will forgive you, wash you in His own Son's blood, and welcome you into the eternal family of God.

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