

A careful study of the entire Bible shows there has always been one unchanging requirement for living in right relationship with the Lord and obtaining His blessing. It is to *listen* to His voice and *obey* the conditions of His Covenant. To quote just one example, speaking to the children of Israel, Moses promised:

*And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God.*

*(Deuteronomy 28:1-3)*

Further on in that same chapter of Deuteronomy Moses states what will result from *not* listening to God's voice and *not* doing what He commands:

*But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.*

*(Deuteronomy 28:15-16)*

In the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus says basically the same thing:

*I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built.*

*But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.*

*(Luke 6:47-49)*

From these portions of Scripture, it is clear that refusal to listen and obey God's voice results in utter destruction for the individual. However, according to Exodus the consequences of their accumulated sin is extended; Tragically, it is visited upon their children! Moses warned:

*For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

*(Exodus 20:5-7)*

But does this not portray God as being unfair? In chapter eighteen of the Book of Ezekiel the Prophet Ezekiel asked the exiles this very question. Some in his day had interpreted this Scripture to mean that God did indeed visit the sins of parents upon their innocent children.

A proverb had been coined in Israel, *“The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.”* Ezekiel, however, argued against such a proverb saying that, *“The soul who sins is the one who will die.”*

Therefore, the generational curse here in Exodus can only mean that parents pass on to their children their misdirected and ill-advised patterns of life that they picked up from their own parents, especially wrong notions about the nature and character of God!