

Israel was guilty of blaming their fathers for their punishment (1-3)

- The proverb they used in the land (2)
- God tells them this proverb will not be used in the land any more (3)
 - He is going to tell them exactly why “the children’s teeth are set on edge”
 - It is because *they* have “eaten sour grapes”
- How quick are we to blame someone else rather than take responsibility?
 - Even going back to the garden of Eden, blame was passed (Genesis 3:12)
 - Ezekiel teaches us that we are going to be held personally responsible (4)
 - In judgment, God will hold us accountable to the things *we* have done (Romans 2:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

God “sets the record straight” (4-32)

- There is personal responsibility (4-20)
 - “The soul who sins shall die” (4)
 - If a man is righteous, he will live (5-9)
 - If the righteous man has a wicked son, then the son will die; the son’s blood is on himself (10-13)
 - If the wicked man then has a son who is righteous, the son will live and the father will die (14-18)
 - The one who obeys will live and the one who disobeys will die (19-20)
- The Lord will judge according to the action we turn to (21-24)
 - If a wicked person turns away from wickedness toward God’s law, they will live (21-23)
 - If a righteous person turns away from righteousness toward wickedness, they will die (24)
- God defends his justice (25-32)
 - Israel accused God of being unjust for punishing them for their fathers’ sins—hence the proverb of verse 2
 - God establishes the righteousness of his actions and tells Israel that his ways are not unjust—their way is unjust (25-29)
 - God will judge Israel justly and pleads for their repentance (30-32)

What does this mean in regard to “total depravity”?

- What is total depravity?
 - “Total Depravity means that sin has touched all of what a person is. In the unbeliever this means that his intellect is now corrupted by falsehood. His speech no longer brings glory to God. His motives are selfish instead of pure. His character is stained and corrupted. **Furthermore, the doctrine of total depravity does not teach that the person is as bad as he can be, or that he always does the worst possible thing.** Instead, it teaches that all parts and passions of the person have been touched by sin and are affected by sin. It means that our intellect is corrupted, our speech does not glorify God, and that our motives are not pure. This is because we are stained by sin and we are flawed by its effect upon us.” (Matthew Slick, *Calvinist Corner*)
 - This is a part of the nature of man; he is born totally deprived of any goodness.

- While we sometimes use “original sin” and “total depravity” synonymously, there are Calvinists who distinguish these terms. Original sin is being born with Adam’s sin. Total depravity is being born in a depraved state because of Adam’s sin.
- “We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners”; i.e. we have absolutely no choice in the matter; it is just a part of our nature.
- How total depravity affects the rest of Calvinistic doctrine
 - Since man is totally depraved, God must act
 - Being completely sovereign over his creation, he acts with “irresistible grace” upon some who have been “elected unconditionally.”
 - This causes man to be able to seek out goodness and come into contact with the Christ’s blood that was only shed for those chosen to be saved.
 - Because it is from God, it cannot be changed; the chosen cannot be “unchosen”
- What Ezekiel 18 shows us about this
 - Remember total depravity means we don’t have a choice until God acts
 - Yet, Ezekiel shows God’s action is conditional upon the action of man (note 18:23, 30-32)
 - Is God telling them to do something they can’t?
 - Why doesn’t he *cause* them to repent?
 - Is God lying, and he does not really want them to turn from their sin?