

Messianic Rabbi Reveals the Power of Generational Repentance

Read Time: 4 Minutes 23 Seconds

Most Bible believers are familiar with the concept of generational curses. This is where the unrepentant sins of a parent in some way affect their children and then continue to transfer from generation to generation.

The Bible is full of examples of the bad choices of people not only affecting themselves, but also affecting those around them, and ultimately their descendants who follow them. Most of us have heard sermons, read books or even attended seminars that dealt with generational curses.

However, I am not sure that I have ever heard a sermon or read a book dealing with generational repentance, yet, it is just as biblical a topic as generational curses. We know that the Bible is full of stories of people sinning and the effects of their sins. Yet, the Bible is also filled with stories of people repenting and the effects of their repentance.

For the sake of this article, we will use the definition of repentance not simply feeling bad about our sinful actions, but a real, intentional turning to or returning to G-D.

We, as believers, need to understand that both the choice to sin and the choice to repent of our sins can have generational effects. One example of the generational effects of sin followed by the generational effects of repentance can be seen in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The cycle of sin begins with Abraham as he is confronted with what he perceives as a life and death situation. We read about

Abraham's fear and response to his fear in Genesis 20 when he believes that Abimelech is going to kill him so he can take Sarah for himself. Abraham makes the choice to lie and say that Sarah is not his wife, but his sister. Okay, maybe it was a half lie because she was his half sister, but while what he said was a half lie, he did so with full intent and empty of faith in G-D to protect him and Sarah.

Just a few chapters later in Genesis 26, we find Isaac following the example of his father Abraham, and when confronted with the same perceived life and death situation, Isaac also lies about Rebekah and says she is not his wife. In Isaac's case though, he doesn't tell a half lie about a half sister. He just outright lies. Notice the generational cycle of fear resulting in sin that transitions from father to son. Instead of protecting their wives, even at the risk of their own lives, both Abraham and Isaac choose not only to lie, but to save themselves from danger by allowing their wives to be placed into danger. We can clearly see that Abraham's sin became Isaac's sin.

So, we see a clear pattern of generational sin and its effects, and we see that as the sin passes from generation to generation, it gets worse and worse. This generational sin unabated destroys families and, ultimately, nations. But, the Bible doesn't only show generational sin; it also shows how generational sin ends and the result is generational repentance. We have seen in the examples of Abraham and Isaac that when confronted with a perceived threat against their lives, they chose to protect their lives, even at the cost of their wives.

However, something powerful happens in the life of Jacob that stops the flow of this generational sin that was passed from Abraham to Isaac. This generational repentance takes place in Jacob's life on his journey back to the land of promise.

We read about Jacob's wrestling match, which results in

Jacob's name being changed to Israel. During the wrestling match, Jacob turns his heart toward G-D. Previous to this, Jacob refers to G-D as the G-D of Abraham and Isaac.

But, now G-D was Jacob's G-D also. This time of repentance and turning so fundamentally changed Jacob's faith in G-D that it ended the generational sin that had passed from his grandfather to his father. How do we know this? Let's look at Genesis 33:1-3:

"Then Jacob glanced up and saw, behold, there was Esau coming—and 400 men with him. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. He put the female servants and their children first, then Leah and her children behind them, then Rachel and Joseph behind them. But he himself passed on ahead of them, and bowed to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother."

Notice what is taking place. Esau is coming towards Jacob. This was not simply a perceived threat in the mind of Jacob. The last words Jacob heard before leaving was that Esau was going to kill him and now he sees Esau with 400 men coming towards him. Here in the story is where we see the results of generational repentance. Jacob divides up his family to protect them and then instead of sending his wives in to save his life, Jacob goes on ahead of his wives and children, risking his life to protect them.

In these few verses, we see the end of the generational sin of Abraham of Isaac. From this point on, we never again see a place where a descendant of Abraham offers up his wife's life to save his own.

This concept of generational repentance is one of the most powerful concepts in the Bible, and yet, is rarely taught today. It is my hope that as we read these words, we will understand the impact that we can have on future generations simply by turning to G-D in true repentance.

We can end the impact of the curse of generational sin and begin the powerful pattern of generational repentance.

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