

CAN WE BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SINS OF OTHERS – INCLUDING CHURCHES?, part 3 quotes

1) Corporate Responsibility

Corporate responsibility centers around an individual being held accountable for the sins of others because they are united with, members of, or associated with groups of other individuals: such as churches, institutions, organizations, etc., or basically a corporate body. Even if an individual did not personally participate in the sin committed, yet they are held responsible along with the rest of their group because of their association or union with this corporate body.

This principle of truth is clearly taught in the word of God, being seen in two main areas:

- 1 - the sins of the membership make the whole corporate body responsible.
- 2 - the sins of the leadership make the whole corporate body responsible.

2) The Sins of the Membership Make the Whole Corporate Body Responsible

God told His people of Israel that they were not to take any of the spoils of victory over Jericho, because all of these were to be consecrated to the Lord. But Achan disobeyed God's commandment and thus committed sin by taking some of the spoils for himself. But was Achan alone held responsible for this sin?

"But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan...took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled **against the children of Israel**....Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. **Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed**..." Joshua 7:1, 11-12.

After Achan's theft and concealment, over 36 men died in a battle because God could not help them (Joshua 7:5). But these men had not disobeyed God themselves by taking any of Jericho's spoils! So since they were innocent, then why did they die without God's protection? Because Achan chose to sin, and he, along with these men, were part of the same group or corporate body. This meant that even though Achan alone had committed the sin, yet because he was a member of Israel, God considered the whole corporate body of Israel responsible for this sin.

"God's command had been disregarded by one of those appointed to execute His judgments. And the nation was held accountable for the guilt of the transgressor...

"Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation. For one man's sin, the displeasure of God will rest upon the church till the transgression is sought out and put away." Patriarchs and Prophets, p 494 & 497 (see also Testimonies, vol 3, p 265, 269, 517, vol 4, p 491, vol 5, p 676; Manuscript Release #449, p 1-2).

But because of sin now being in the camp, God's presence was removed from the entire corporate body of Israel!

"...neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." Joshua 7:12.

So this first aspect of corporate responsibility is that the sins of the membership, even if it is just one individual, makes the entire membership responsible.

3) The Sins of the Leadership Make the Whole Corporate Body Responsible

Abraham decided to tell Pharaoh as well as king Abimelech that Sarah was only his sister. Both of these kings decided to take Sarah to be their wife. But was it just Pharaoh and king Abimelech that God held responsible for taking the married woman Sarah to be their wife?

"The Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues..." Genesis 12:17.

"Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?" Genesis 20:9.

These verses shows us that because of the wrongful actions of the highest leader — the king or president — the whole kingdom was held responsible.

4) God commanded Jeremiah to go and speak strong, plain, and cutting words to His people of Israel. The church leadership did not like this message--especially the part about their church falling from God's grace and protection, and becoming connected with Babylon and under its complete control (see Jeremiah 21:4-6, 27:2-6 & 12, 28:14, 32:3 & 28, 29:5-6 & 28, 37:9, 25:9-11).

The church leadership became so upset that they then apprehended Jeremiah and brought him in before their council.

"Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city..." Jeremiah 26:11.

When Jeremiah heard their words he said that they could do with him as they wished, but they must realize a very important principle of truth first.

"But know ye for certain, that if ye [the church leadership] put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof..." Jeremiah 26:15.

This shows us that it was not just the church leadership who would be held responsible for Jeremiah's death, but his innocent blood would also be chargeable upon the city or church, and upon all the inhabitants or members thereof! Thus for the sinful actions of the leadership, the whole corporate body--membership and all--would also be held responsible.

5) After Pentecost, Peter spoke the following words of truth to the house of Israel gathered together from all nations.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, **whom ye have crucified**, both Lord and Christ." Acts 2:36.

But who were those who actually killed Jesus? It was the highest Jewish church leadership in union with the civil government of Rome. Yet Peter stated that all members of the Jewish church were guilty of crucifying the Lord--even those who did not know of Jesus! This clearly reveals that it was not only the church leadership who were responsible for their sins committed while in office, but the whole house of Israel were corporately responsible as well because they were connected with and members of that Jewish church!

"A nation's sin and a nation's ruin were due to the religious leaders." Christ's Object Lessons, p 305 (see also Desire of Ages, p 738).

6) What consequences are there in being held corporately responsible for the sins of a wicked church leadership just because you are members of, associated with, or connected to, that church?

"Hear ye this, O priests [or ministers]; and hearken, ye house of Israel [or church body]; and give ye ear, O house of the king [or the highest leadership]; for judgment is toward you...

"They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find Him; **He hath withdrawn Himself from them**. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord: for they have begotten strange children..." Hosea 5:1, 6-7.

This means that even those few members who are overcoming all their sins, and who believe only the pure truth, would be considered "strange children" to God because of their connection with their wicked church!

7) But this is not the extent of God's dealings with a wicked church:

"Plead with your mother [church], plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts..." Hosea 2:2.

What was the sin of God's chosen church in the above text? Whoredom or harlotry. But how can a chosen church of God commit harlotry?

The church is supposed to be the bride or wife of Christ. But if this wife chooses to no longer live for Christ and Him alone and then departs from her Husband, uniting herself with more than one lover, then she commits adultery and harlotry. She is then no longer a faithful bride of Christ, but has become a harlot church. And please realize that the church herself literally does not commit harlotry, but it is the church leadership who choose to unite the whole church body in the adulterous and harlotrous love affair with other churches or religious nations.

God first calls His wayward wife to come away from her harlotry. But if she refuses to repent, then God sets her aside and puts her away, and she is no longer His wife and He is no longer her Husband. Or in other words God divorces His church!

"The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not...for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce" Jeremiah 3:6-8.

"Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away?...Behold...for your transgressions is your mother put away." Isaiah 50:1.

God divorced His chosen people of Israel from Himself, and all because of the sinful actions of the church leadership.

8) But what about the membership of this harlot church?

"And I will not have mercy upon her children [church members]; **for they be the children of whoredoms**. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully". Hosea 2:4-5.

Even though it was the leadership of the church which involved the church in the harlotrous love affair, yet all the membership--the children or offspring of this unfaithful mother--were considered guilty of harlotry as well! This meant that all the church membership were no longer the children of God, but were considered by God to be the "children of whoredoms" and "strange children" because of their connection to, and union with, their harlot mother church!

9) As God changes not (see James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8), then has the church which God's people are currently members in and association with committed harlotry?

The Roman Catholic church has been a harlot church for many centuries (see Revelation 17:1-6, 13:1-8; Daniel 7:7-25; Spirit of Prophecy, vol 4, p 232-33).

Rome's offspring or daughters, being all the Protestant churches (Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, etc), are harlots as well, because they rejected the heaven-sent messages of the first and second angels (see Revelation 17:5, 13:14-17; Spirit of Prophecy, vol 4, p 231-32).

What about the sister to the Protestant churches--or the Seventh-day Adventist church? Has she also become a harlot church?

"Who can truthfully say our gold is tried in the fire, our garments are unspotted by the world.

"I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off He laid bare the defilement beneath, then He said to me, '**Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? How is the faithful city become an harlot. My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory has departed.'"** Testimonies, vol 8, p 250.

Christ Himself has denounced the Seventh-day Adventist church to be a harlot! And what consequences does that mean to each and every SDA church member?

"And I will not have mercy upon her children; **for they be the children of whoredoms.**" Hosea 2:4.

This means that if we are members of any of the harlot churches of today — whether Roman Catholic, or Protestant, or even SDA — then we are corporately responsible for the terrible harlotrous sins of our church. And as long as we remain connected with our harlot mother church, then God will not have mercy upon us!

10) God looks upon all members of all the harlot churches as being one with, or in bed with, the harlot! And this includes those persons who expose the sins and abominations of their church, but who still choose to remain connected with her!

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons". Acts 10:34.

"For there is no respect of persons with God." Romans 2:11.

All the members of a harlot church, regardless of their personal innocence, are not considered to be the children of God because they are the children of whoredoms.

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh." 1 Corinthians 6:15-16.

The Greek word "joined" is "kollao", and it translates and means "to stick, to cleave, join, keep company" (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, word #2853). So Paul is telling God's people in this New Testament time that if they join, stick with, cleave to, or otherwise keep company in union or association with any harlot, then they are considered to be of one body and of one flesh with that harlot! They are no longer two different entities, but are now one together!

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3.

If we are members of a harlot church, then we are no longer two entities, but are of one flesh with the church in harlotry!