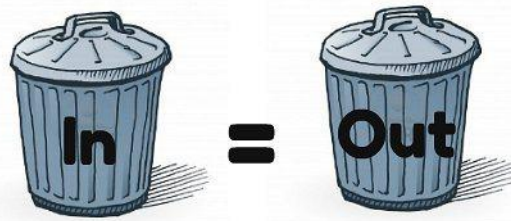


## 'GARBAGE IN – GARBAGE OUT!' or 'GARBAGE IN – GOODNESS OUT?'



**TEXT:** *Ezekiel 18:1-4* The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

**THESIS:** To show that every man must give an account to God for himself.

**INTRO.:** A. In reference to computers they say "**GARBAGE IN – GARBAGE OUT!**" & what they mean is that a computer can only produce what has been programmed. Is this also true of humans? In some areas yes. You feed on filth & sooner or later you will produce filth. "**He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption**" *Gal.6:8* Of course in the verse itself we see that it is what the person does to himself which produces the corruption. Not what someone else fed him or her.

B. We live in a society where no one wants to accept responsibility for their own problems. The serial killer did what he did because he was abused as a child. (What about all those other abused children who didn't kill anyone?) A drunk became a drunk because his father or mother was a drunk. (What about those kids in the same family who turned out alright?) The people in Los Angeles rioted & looted because they had been mistreated. (What about all those law-abiding citizens who lived there who didn't loot & riot?)

**TRANS.:** In our text the children of Israel were in captivity & slavery in Babylon & they blamed the sins of their fathers. They even came up w/a proverb: "**The fathers have eaten sour grapes, & the children's teeth are set on edge**" God & Ezekiel say "baloney – balderdash – hogwash – nonsense" – "**the soul that sinneth, it shall die!**" God is saying that every person is responsible for their own sins, problems, & failures.

### **I. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU:**

**Rom.14:12** So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

**Deut. 24:16** The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

**2 Kings 14:6** But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

**2 Chr.25:4** But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.

**Jer.31:29-30** In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

#### A. No One Goes to Hell Because Of Someone Else:

1. Christ gives everyone some light & they are responsible for the light they have.
2. Everyone has some light from God:

a. There is *the light of conscience*; a knowledge of a Creator & good & evil

**Jn.1:9** *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

**Rom.1:19** *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

**ILLUS.:** Even in heathen, primitive societies, there is a code of morality & boundaries. Murder is always recognized as wrong. Taking another man's wife is a crime. Beating children senseless is frowned upon. Stealing another's property is wrong, etc.

b. There is *the light of creation*; creation & the heavens say there is a God – hear God's evaluation of the evolutionist:

**Rom.1:20-23** *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

**Ps.19:1-4** *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*

**ILLUS.:** You say, how can a person go to hell if he has never heard the Gospel? Because he looks at the light God has given & closes his eyes. He stifles his conscience & when he looks up at the sun, moon & stars & the creation around him, he rejects the concept of a Creator. If he accepts the light he has, God will give him more light. This makes every person responsible for their own soul.

3. It isn't the believer's fault if folks die & go to hell; every person is responsible for the light he has.
4. We are disobedient if we don't warn them, but it is their fault if they reject the light they have.

### **III. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY MAY BE GREATER THAN OTHERS:**

#### A. The Degree Of Light Determines Responsibility:

**Mt.11:21-24** *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*

1. God says that Sodom will be treated better in the judgment than other towns of Christ's day, because they had the Light of the world with them!
2. Think of the responsibility America has compared to Sodom!
  - a. A person who dies & goes to hell from America will suffer worse than someone from Sodom! Why? More light!
  - b. There will be levels of punishment in hell based on works.

**Rev.20:12** *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

**ILLUS.:** You know fire is hot & it burns human flesh. You see a burning building & enter & are severely burned. When asked why you did something so stupid, you say "No-one warned me. There were no signs posted. The Christians standing around didn't say 'Don't go in there, you will get burned.' The police didn't stop me. It's all their fault I got burned." Silly you say? No more so than to think you will tell God that you didn't know hell was hot & that it burned forever & that you will be there because you weren't warned or there were no signs. God's Word is the warning sign!

Surely our sin as believers is that we must warn people, but if they refuse the warning, the responsibility is theirs if they go to hell!

### **III. YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHERS:**

#### A. Your Responsibility Is To Teach, Train & Warn:

1. Christian parents are to teach, train & warn their children.

**ILLUS.:** Parents are not responsible for whether or not their children turn out right.

They are responsible to teach them right. You may be brokenhearted over a child who has turned out wrong, but if you did right the responsibility is theirs now. You need not carry guilt for their sins, only for your sin of disobedience if you didn't warn them, teach & train them.

2. Teaching, training & warning is the limit of personal responsibility.

**ILLUS.:** Billy Sunday was older & stood to preach, when someone shoved a newspaper in front of him. The headline told about his son, Billy Sunday, Jr. being arrested in a bar for being drunk. Billy Sunday had taught his children & the world about the sin of booze. Was he responsible for his son drinking liquor. No! If he hadn't taught his son properly, or warned him, then his sin would have been disobedience. But his son made the decision to drink.

If I don't preach the truth, I will stand before God for my sin, but I will not have to take responsibility for your response to my preaching. If I never warn you, you still have a Bible...you still have a conscience...you still have the Holy Spirit.

#### B. Your Responsibility Is Not To Accept Others Responsibility:

1. You can make it easier for people to do right or wrong, but the decision is theirs.
3. The principles of character can be taught, but not transmitted; every person knows right, them must discipline themselves to do right.
4. Even if you were never taught right, you still know it is wrong to lie, cheat, steal, be lazy, not work, not be on time, to be dishonest, to live impure or indecent or immoral.
  - a. If you are not a good wife, it isn't because you were molested as a child.
  - c. If you are not a good worker, it isn't because your father was lazy.
  - d. If you steal or riot, it is because you chose to do so.
  - e. If you commit adultery, it is not because your husband is unfaithful.
  - f. You are not a victim of circumstances or your environment, you are a victim of your choices.
  - g. If you lie or cheat, it is not because you grew up in a home where lying & cheating were practiced; (*God puts no conditions on His commandments!* There are not 2 sets of commandments – one for "normal" people & one for those who grew up in the ghetto!).

**ILLUS.:** Anything you are supposed to do, you can do. If you are an unhappy or depressed person, it is not because of your circumstances, it is because of a choice you make. God commands you to rejoice & you can do it, if you choose! When you are not rejoicing, you are disobeying God's command. God says to be content. If you are not content, it is because that is your choice, not because you inherited the genes of discontentment from your parents.

**CONCL.:** Whatever choices you make are YOUR responsibility. Perhaps your life has been one of "**GARBAGE IN**" but instead of "**GARBAGE OUT!**" it could be "**GOODNESS OUT!**" *The choice is yours!*

It is high time we all accepted *responsibility for our choices*. Unsaved, if you go to hell, it won't be because of the hypocrites in the church, or because some Christian didn't warn you, it will be because of your choice. Christian, if you are lazy, or a liar, or a drunkard, or ---- it won't be because of your friends, environment, parents or anything else. *The choice is yours!*