

Answers to Objections on Original Sin

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Hosea 4:6

Hos 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

If you read this passage carefully, you will notice that although God is speaking to the nation of Israel in verse 6, He is speaking directly to the priests.

God declares: "because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me". And then God adds: "I will also forget thy children".

God is talking to the false priests who have forgotten His law and He says **to them** (the priests): "I will forget thy children".

In the Strong's Concordance, this word for 'children' is H1121: 'ben'. This word means 'son'. It is translated as 'son' 1876 times, as 'sons' 2369 times, and as 'children' 111 times.

Young's Literal translates Hosea 4:6 as follows:

"I forget thee from being priest to me...I forget thy sons also."

This is the correct rendering of the text and it means that God would forget, or reject their sons **from being priests**. Therefore, it is wrong to interpret Hosea 4:6 to mean that God would forget the children because of the sins of their parents.

This would also contradict Ezekiel 18:20 wherein God declares: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father".

In Hosea 4:6, God is declaring to the unfaithful priests that He would forget their children from being priests. Here are some Bible translations which translate it this way:

Good News Bible: "My people are doomed because they do not acknowledge me. You priests have refused to acknowledge me and have rejected my teaching, and so I reject you and will not acknowledge your sons as my priests."

New International Reader's Version: "My people are destroyed because they do not know me. You priests have refused to obey me. So I will refuse to accept you as my priests. You have not paid any attention to my law. So I will not let your children be my priests."

Wycliffe's Translation: "My people were destroyed, for they did not acknowledge me; and for thou hast not acknowledged me, I shall put thee away, so that thou be not my priests; and for thou hast forgotten the Law, or the teaching, of thy God, I shall also forget thy sons, who also shall not be my priests."

Jubilee Bible 2000: "My people were cut off because they lacked wisdom; because thou hast rejected wisdom, I will cast thee out of the priesthood; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy sons."

1 Samuel 15:3

1Sa 15:3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

How does this passage in any way teach that an infant is born a sinner? It's important to understand that when studying a controversial topic with someone, it's up to the person who puts forward the text to explain how that text supports their belief. People will often quote a text and then ask you to answer it. However, you have the right to first ask them how they understand the text they are quoting, and how it supports their doctrine. Often, you will find that their understanding is based more on assumption rather than what the text is saying.

Matthew 28:19 is a good example of this, and it is one of the most oft-quoted texts for the trinity. Yet it is only assumed. The verse never mentions the word 'trinity' or 'Godhead', nor does it say the Holy Spirit is an individual divine being. Neither does it mention the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Father and Son. Just because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are mentioned, it is assumed that they are three co-eternal divine beings of a trinity. Yet nowhere does the passage say that. What the passage does clearly teach is that there is a Father and a Son which the trinity doctrine denies. And when we study Scripture with Scripture, we also see that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and Son. For example, see John 15:26 and Galatians 4:6.

So it is with 1 Samuel 15:3. It is assumed that because God ordered the destruction of all the Amalekites—including their infants—that all infants are sinners! This is purely an assumption. The passage is speaking about the Amalekite infants. It is not speaking in a general sense about all infants in the world. Neither does it tell us the status of the infants. This too is assumed.

1 Samuel 15:3 is not a theological statement regarding the nature of sin. It is a command of God given to Saul to destroy all the Amalekites—their men, women, children, infants, and livestock. Let us remember that "the only definition of sin is the transgression of the law". Inspiration is clear. It is not your nature, your birth, or being an infant, that makes you a sinner. To be a sinner is to have transgressed God's law, and to transgress requires knowledge. See Deut 1:39, James 4:17, Rom 4:15, Rom 5:13, John 9:41, and John 15:22.

Again, 1 Samuel 15:3 is not a theological teaching about what sin is. It's a teaching about the consequences of sin! And also about the foreknowledge of God!

The Amalekites were Israel's worst enemies. They even attacked Israel when they were unprovoked after the Exodus and they slew the elderly and the weak (Deut 25:17-19). God prophesied through Moses and even Balaam that the Amalekites would be totally destroyed (Numbers 24:20).

1 Samuel 15:3 is God's command to King Saul to fulfill that prophecy and destroy the nation of Amalek. That is why the command included their infants. The Lord knew that this people—including their posterity—would be a constant danger to Israel and even other nations. This is why He commanded their total destruction. And yet, we know that some must have survived because we read in Esther 3:10 that Haman is a descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites. And we know that Haman sought to destroy all the Jews of the Persian Empire in one day! See Esther 3:12-14.

Est 3:12 Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded...

Est 3:13 And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day,

even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

Est 3:14 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

Therefore, the all-knowing God was right in His command. Sadly, the Amalekite infants would have grown up like Haman to seek continuously to annihilate God's people.

They were not destroyed because they were born sinners, but rather because of the **consequences** of sin—in this case, the sins of their parents. Continual rejection of God leads to rebellion and idolatrous worship of the worst kind: child sacrifices, bestiality etc. The people and even the animals were diseased. They were a danger to themselves and other nations, possessed of demons and of the grossest immorality and debauchery. Thus, God foresaw that even their offspring would become a continual curse in the world.

It was out of love and protection for the other nations, especially Israel, that the Lord commanded the annihilation of Amalek. Just as it was with the flood and then again with Sodom and Gomorrah. And so it will be at the end of the world.

1 Samuel 15:3 in no way teaches that infants are born sinners, but rather that the consequences of our sins and rebellion towards God will not only destroy us, but possibly even our children through the weakened and immoral genealogy we pass on to them.