

# Maximising Redemption: Loosening Repressive Shackles

*See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.*

Isaiah 42:9

## Loosening Repressive Shackles

Discipline your son, for in that there is hope;  
do not be a willing party to his death.  
A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty;  
if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.  
Listen to advice and accept instruction,  
and in the end you will be wise.  
Many are the plans in a man's heart,  
but it is the LORD'S purpose that prevails.  
What a man desires is unfailing love;  
better to be poor than a liar.  
The fear of the LORD leads to life:  
Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.  
(Proverbs 19:18-23)

To move into healthy functional societies requires us to accept that there "dark side" within each individual and we must work individually and collectively to satisfy core urges in a healthy manner; build cultural values that reward embracing truth, love and peace and discourage hate, deceit and destruction. As we have learnt from Paris, Sydney and New Orleans in 2005; there is a violent undercurrent in any city. When we become arrogant, complacent or unrepentant we deserve to see evidence of our delusions and heed Jesus' warning: "If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day." (See [Matthew 11:20-24](#))

A major challenge in moving forward is allowing God to regain authority and control over our theology and hearts. This requires seeking either the repentance or discrediting false prophets who espouse a selfish narrow definition of God and then decree that their vision is the absolute and only truth.

This takes us into the next section, which is ways the deceiver tries to convince people they are not worthy of redemption or are bound to the sins of their fathers, brothers or daughters. We see the biblical God hates wasteful shepherds and punishes the leaders and redeems their flocks, integrating them into His own e.g. [Nehemiah 1:7-10](#), [Job 24](#), [Hosea 10:13-14](#), [Zechariah 10:3-12](#), [Isaiah 51:12-16](#), [2 Corinthians 12:11-15](#)

This is what God the LORD says— he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.” (Isaiah 42:5-9)

“The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the LORD. “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD. “My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever,” says the LORD. (Isaiah 59:20-21)

The biblical book of Ezekiel explores the questions of who is responsible for sin; it seems Ezekiel was taking on deceiver’s sociopaths because this book disarms arguments that would unfairly bind people to another’s sins. Although there are select passages elsewhere (e.g. [Luke 17:1-4](#), [Romans 2:6-16](#)) some of the best can be found in [Ezekiel 18](#) and [Ezekiel 33](#).

Ezekiel 18 examines the question of who is responsible for sin within a family (although the passages refer to sons and fathers they also apply to mothers and daughters). A slightly shortened summary is included because this section is crucial for our current times, especially for those struggling to overcome “honor” deaths, kidnappings and suicides that some tyrants are fostering.

The word of the LORD came to me:

“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: “‘The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?’ “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die. (Ezekiel 18:1-4)

“Suppose there is a righteous man who... follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign LORD. (Ezekiel 18:9)

“Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things (though the father has done none of them): “He eats at the mountain shrines. He defiles his neighbor’s wife. He oppresses the poor and needy. He commits robbery. He does not return what he took in pledge. He looks to the idols. He does detestable things. He lends at usury and takes excessive interest. Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things (Ezekiel 18:10-12-10)

"But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things:... He withholds his hand from sin and takes no usury or excessive interest. He keeps my laws and follows my decrees. He will not die for his father's sin; he will surely live. (from Ezekiel 18:14-17)

**But his father will die for his own sin**, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people. (Ezekiel 18:18)

"Yet you ask, 'Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?' Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. **The soul who sins is the one who will die.** The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him. "But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. (Ezekiel 18:19-22)

"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! (Ezekiel 18:30-32)

[Ezekiel 33](#) is important for those who take on a responsibility for others, especially those of the religious castes, public servants, government officials, elected representatives. This section should be closely heeded when considering human rights, corruption control, welfare policies (and sustainability for future generations).

The word of the LORD came to me:

"Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.' (Ezekiel 33:1-6)

[This last passage has kept me persevering through times of little or no support, because the watchman becomes responsible for blood that is shed if they do not give the warning. However, if the warning is given and the message not heeded, then the responsibility rests with those who had eyes but did not see and ears but did not hear. Similarly, if one writes only subtle parables then people can pretend that the message was hidden or obscure. Plain speaking removes this excuse for not

listening. ...we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. (2 Corinthians 4:2-3)]

We see that God repeats His Ezekiel counsel in [Jeremiah 31:27-36](#), including: "In those days people will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Instead, everyone will die for his own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—his own teeth will be set on edge. (Jeremiah 31:29-30)

We also see God's promise of a new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34: "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."