

# Deuteronomy 32:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.

## Analysis

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**They have corrupted themselves** (shichet lo)—the reflexive verb emphasizes Israel's self-inflicted moral defilement. **Their spot is not the spot of his children** (mumam lo banim)—"spot" (mum) denotes blemish or defect, the same term used for disqualifying sacrificial animals (Leviticus 22:20-21). Israel has become unfit for the holy purpose God intended.

**A perverse and crooked generation** (dor 'iqqesh u-pethaltol)—'iqqesh' means twisted or morally distorted; 'pethaltol' suggests fraudulent or devious. Paul quotes this verse in Philippians 2:15, calling Christians to shine as lights in a similarly corrupted generation. The indictment is devastating: Israel bears not God's family resemblance but the deformity of covenant rebellion.

The contrast is sharp—God is perfect (v. 4), but they are blemished; He is their Father, but they've disowned their heritage through sin. This diagnostic statement precedes the Song's therapeutic call to repentance.

## Historical Context

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This verse functions as covenant lawsuit language, declaring Israel's breach of the Mosaic covenant. The 'generation' (dor) specifically refers to Israel's repeated cycles of apostasy throughout their history—from the golden calf to Baal worship to the eventual exile. Moses prophetically describes not just current rebellion but the pattern that will culminate in judgment. The sacrificial imagery ('spot') recalls

Israel's priestly calling as a 'kingdom of priests' (Exodus 19:6)—morally compromised priests cannot mediate God's holiness. The New Testament applies this theology of holy living to the Church (1 Peter 2:9), showing continuity in God's demand for a people who reflect His character.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. In what ways might you have 'corrupted yourself' through self-inflicted moral compromise rather than external persecution?
2. How does understanding holiness as family resemblance to God motivate different behavior than mere rule-keeping?

## Interlinear Text

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מֹוֶךְ	מִ	בְּנֵי	שְׁחַת	לֹא	שְׁחַת	תְּ
They have corrupted	H0	H3808	is not the spot of his children	themselves	their spot	
	H7843			H1121		H3971
דָּוִר	שְׁעִיר	וְפָתַלְתַּלְ				
generation	they are a perverse	and crooked				
H1755	H6141	H6618				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 1:4** (Parallel theme): Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

**Philippians 2:15** (Parallel theme): That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

**Deuteronomy 31:29** (Parallel theme): For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

**Matthew 17:17** (Parallel theme): Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

**Luke 9:41** (Parallel theme): And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

**Psalms 78:8** (Parallel theme): And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

**Matthew 16:4** (Parallel theme): A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

**Hosea 9:9** (Parallel theme): They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.