

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Inherited Sin

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Many people believe it. Calvinism has it at its doctrinal roots, leading to the belief of Total Depravity. But does the Bible teach it? Do we read in our Bibles that when a baby is born, he or she is a sinner at the time of birth, being tainted by the original sin of Adam passed on through one's parents?

Some point to the following statement of David in Psalms 51:5 as proof that such is true. *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did by mother conceive me.”* While we do not know the character of David's mother, why does this verse prove that it is David that is tainted with sin, while the conception is being emphasized as being connected with David's mother? With sorrow over the sexual sin with Bathsheba on his mind, David is not saying he was born with sin, but that he was conceived and brought forth into a world filled with sin of which his mother has a part. It tainted him when he made the choice to sin, not when he was conceived.

David is so sorrowful for his sin he speaks in hyperboles to show the depths of his sorrow.

For example, David wants to hear joy and gladness once again and expresses such desire in the following way: *“Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou has broken may rejoice” (Psalm 51:8).* David's bones were not literally broken, but crushed bones reflect the depth of his feeling of remorse of his sin. Likewise his sin was so heavy upon him it is as if sin has been in his life from conception.

This use of hyperbole for effect is used in another Psalm. *“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies” (Psalm 58:3).* Literally speaking, infants do not speak lies when they are born. David is simply through the use of a hyperbole showing how extensive sin has characterized the inhabitants of the world. They seem to have been born sinning and speaking lies. There does not seem to be a time in their existence when they were not speaking lies and sinning!

Please note also, that this passage states what happened after they were born, not that they were born astray. The same is seen in *Psalm 14:2-3*, *“Jehovah*

looked down from heaven upon the children of men...They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy.” The fact they are gone astray and became filthy emphasizes the fact that they were not literally born that way.

The reason why these passages must be looked at with these close distinctions is that the Bible makes it clear that the child is not tainted by the sin of the parent. God through Ezekiel makes this clear: *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon Him” (Ezekiel 18:20).* Righteousness and wickedness characterize our actions, and they lay upon the doer of right and wrong, not upon another. God says *“the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.”* So we know that inheriting the sin of our parent, called by some as “congenital depravity” or “inherited sin” contradicts clearly stated Biblical truth, and is therefore a false concept. Sin is the experience of man (*Romans 3:23*), but it is not passed from parent to child at conception and birth.