

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Born In Sin

(Jerry Fite)

David writes, “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). What did David mean by this statement? Is it true that man is not just born in sin, but sin is in-born in every human being? Are the Calvinists correct in viewing this passage as inspired proof that man is born depraved because he is tainted with Adam’s sin from the womb?

David writes this Psalm after Nathan the prophet came to him following David’s sin of adultery with Bathsheba, and the sin of shedding innocent blood when he had Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, killed in battle. There is no mention in the Psalm of Adam’s sin being imputed to him, but David speaks of **his sin**. David pleads with God to “cleanse me of **my sin**. For I know my transgressions; and **my sin is ever before me**” (Psalm 51:2-3). After verse 5, David pleads to God: “Hide thy face from **my sins**, and blot out all **mine iniquities**” (Psalm 51:9).

David does not blame his adultery, and blood guiltiness on Adam or his mother. Sin is transgression against God’s law which

we do (I John 3:4). This sin done out of the womb is the context of Psalm 51, and no reference is made of inherited sin in the womb.

Broadening our focus to include other passages on the subject, we see sin to be neither inherited, nor attributed to infants. Ezekiel plainly debunks the idea of a child bearing the sins of a father: “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the sin 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). While Paul was born under the Law of Moses, he writes, “*I was alive apart from the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died*” (Romans 8:9). Paul reverts to his childhood innocence when he was sinless, and therefore alive spiritually. Ezekiel, speaking of the King of Tyre writes, “*Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee*” (Ezekiel 28:15).

Many passages show that sin is attributed to people while they are in their youth, not in the

womb. God sees the “imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Genesis 8:21). Jeremiah writes, “...for we sinned against our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day; and we have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God” (Jeremiah 3:25).

Passages, which seem on the surface to teach that infants are born depraved, really speak of a later time. David writes, “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies” (Psalm 58:3). Infants cannot speak lies at birth. David is merely speaking of the wicked manifesting their ways early in life.

In Psalm 51, David is in deep sorrow over his sin. He is saying, “behold...” I am so overwhelmed by my sin that not only are my bones broken in sorrow (Psalm 51:8), but in such despair, I feel that I have always been a sinner. His bones were not literally broken, nor was he literally conceived and born in sin. The extremes of a broken heart are merely being displayed considering the gravity of one’s sin.