**Is One Born Guilty Of Sin?**

Jarrod Jacobs

The teaching that man is born a sinner is fairly common in the religious world. Is this true? Are little babies actually born guilty of Adam’s or their father’s sin? What does the Bible say?

First, let us understand that there is no place in the Bible that says man is born guilty of sin. Certainly, Adam was not created guilty of sin (Gen. 2:7). No one would say this. Yet, after he and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:6), the Bible doesn’t say that their children were born guilty of sin. In fact, let us study Adam’s son, Cain (Gen. 4). After Cain’s sacrifice was rejected by God (v. 5), we see Cain being visibly upset. Yet, note what God says to Cain about the situation (v. 7). He tells Cain that if he does well he will be accepted, but if not, “sin lies at the door” for him. My question is how can this be so? Seeing that Cain is Adam’s son, shouldn’t God have said that sin was already within him and this is why he sinned, and he needed the operation of the Holy Spirit to make him righteous? This is the position of the Calvinists. Instead of teaching Calvinism, God told Cain he had choices to make, and told him the consequences of those choices, just like He had instructed Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:16-17). If man is born in sin, this was the time to say so, but God did not teach it.

In the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, God devotes the entire chapter to disproving the teaching that man is born a sinner. He tells His people, “Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die” (Ezek. 18:4, 20). I think that it is interesting to note that if these people had listened to God in Deuteronomy 24:16, perhaps God would not have had to devote an entire chapter to inherited sin in Ezekiel. Deuteronomy 24:16 says, “Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.” Please read Exodus 32:30-33 also.

In the New Testament, we also see that man does not inherit the sins of his father. In Colossians 3:25, we read, “But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respect of persons.” To say that infants possess inherited sin is to say something the Bible does not say. If a man is not forgiven of his own sin (Mk. 16:16), then he will stand guilty of his own sin, and not guilty of Adam’s sin!

I am impressed with the words of Christ in Matthew 19:13-15 when He spoke of the little children and said, “of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” Does it make sense to think that Jesus would say that the kingdom is composed of those who are inherently sinful? The truth is that each person becomes guilty of sin when he/she satisfies his lust and yields to temptation (Jas. 1:14-15). This is the way one becomes guilty of sin, and not through somehow inheriting Adam’s sin.

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