

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Was David a Sinner at Birth?

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5). Those who teach and try to prove that we inherit Adam's sin use this verse as a proof text. Does it really say that David was born *a sinner* because of what Adam did hundreds of years before David's birth? Are you and I born sinners because of another man's action? The Bible clearly answers these questions.

In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet plainly said that the son does not bear the guilt for his father's sin; nor is the father responsible for his son's iniquity. Notice: "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." (Ezekiel 18:20). We occasionally suffer the consequences of sins that others commit; yet, we are not guilty before God because of another person's sins.

The nature of sin itself denies the fact that we are born sinners because of the actions of others. Sin is a transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). It does not transfer from one sinful person to others simply because they are the sinner's descendants. When Mary gave birth to Jesus, did He inherit Adam's sin? The Bible says Jesus was without sin (1 Peter 2:22). If we were indeed born sinners because of the actions of others, then Christ would have been born a sinner, as would all other babies. To avoid this logical conclusion, the Catholics teach what is known as the immaculate conception of Mary. Merriam-Webster defines the immaculate-conception doctrine as, "The conception of the Virgin Mary in which, as decreed in Roman Catholic dogma, her soul was preserved free from original sin by divine grace." (Online Version). This is how Catholicism attempts to avoid a very apparent contradiction in their teaching as opposed to Scripture.

The truth of the matter is, that no one is born a sinner. We become sinners when we understand and violate God's law and are, therefore, accountable to Him. The Bible tells us that the God we serve is holy and just (Psalm 7:11; 1 Peter 1:16). How righteous and

good would the Lord be if He condemned a child to the eternal fires of hell because of what Adam did? Do you think a judge and jury in the United States of America would find a son guilty of a crime they knew his father committed? I think not! It is hard for us to imagine that someone would make such a charge against a loving, caring, and compassionate God. Yet those who teach this doctrine do just that!

When we stand before Jehovah in judgment, every man will answer for his own, not another's misdeeds. Paul wrote, "who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness -- indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God." (Romans 2:6-11). The apostle didn't say that God would render to each one according to what Adam did. No, we are accountable to God because of our own failures or good deeds, not because of what mom and dad did or didn't do.

What was David saying in Psalm 51:5? Robert Taylor said, "He was born into a world where sin abounds and where men ultimately do sin. He was born into a world where temptations to sin run strongly, and to one of them -- fleshly passion -- he surrendered in a moment of weakness." (Robert R. Taylor, Jr., *Studies in Psalms*, p. 56). Sin was all around; yet David became a sinner when he yielded to his own desires and violated the Lord's will. (Also read Ezekiel 28:15 and Ecclesiastes 7:29.) Enough said!

- Jimmy Mickells [slightly edited]

"GOD LED ME!"

Ever heard that claim before? It is popular today to talk of the Lord leading one's every action. Whatever thoughts some have or business dealings they make, the Lord is given credit for causing it.

While this writer deeply believes in the providence of God and the ever present help He has promised (Hebrews 13:5-6), it seems to me we should balance the scales a little by asserting that God is not responsible for every action or thought of Christians. If He were, God would be guilty of causing us to sin (1 John 1:8-10). In fact, the backlash of such current claims will be an undermining of faith when tragedy occurs. "*Why did God let this happen?*" is frequently asked now by agnostics and atheists. But let the uninformed Christian begin to think of God as though He is the great Puppeteer who holds us at the

end of strings and orders our every movement, and when trouble does come, he too will become bitter toward God and blame Him.

Laws of nature (originally set in order by God) are the cause of much that is occurring today. A child born blind is not a direct punishment of God for sin (John 9:1-3), but may be the result of some birth malfunction or hereditary disorder. Job knew that his troubles were not due to sin. Even though his friends kept pointing an accusing finger. God had not directly caused any of Job's problems.

The point is that we must guard against making God in our image! It is possible to wish for something so much that we convince ourselves: "God wanted it that way," when in fact He had no direct part at all in our decision. The prophet Jeremiah wrote against the religious leaders of his day who made wild claims about the Lord. They became so intolerable, the Lord warned them not to use the expression, "the burden of the Lord," i.e., "this is the Lord's word." (Jeremiah 23:33-40). Though they said, "I have dreamed," they prophesied lies (Jeremiah 23:25) and spoke a vision of their own heart and not the Lord's (Jeremiah 23:16). Their message was devised out of the imagination of their own mind, and consequently they were cursed for leading God's people astray.

When Christians today assert that God put every thought in their heart, they're one step away from the claims of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet. He had a convenient vision for everything he wanted to do - even to immoral polygamy! He evidently became convinced the Lord gave him his every desire!

What we need to do is give God thanks continually for the good (Philippians 4:6-7); and pray that His will be done in our lives (1 John 3:22; 5:14-15). But when our hearts desire something, search by the Bible whether or not we are within the realm of His will (Galatians 1:6-8; Psalms 119:104). If our desires are Scriptural, gratify them! But don't blame God as though He is in our image giving us thoughts we devise of our own imagination. God does not hold us by puppet strings. We are in His image - free moral agents.

- Robert Harkrider, via *The Way*, 02/24/1977

Should Christians Defend the Gospel?

By such a question what is meant is, should Christians maintain and support the doctrine of Christ when it is attacked by unbelievers and pseudo-Christians (wolves in sheep's clothing)? Should Christians vigilantly protect the integrity of the Lord's message when it

is attacked and criticized with hostility? Good soldiers of Jesus Christ do (2 Timothy 2:3-4)!

Paul referred to the Philippian Christians in this way: "both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me." (Philippians 1:7). They shared in the defense of the gospel, even while the courageous apostle was imprisoned. He wrote, "most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear ... knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;" (Philippians 1:14-16). All of these Christians joined together in the verbal defense of the gospel, and God blessed them together.

The gospel was never defended with carnal weapons of warfare (cf. Ephesians 6:10-20). The battle was and is against unrighteous thoughts, speculations, false knowledge, human wisdom and arguments against the words revealed by the Holy Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 10:3-6; 1 Timothy 6:20; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13).

Paul was not the only Christian who defended the gospel of Christ, but we have examples in Scripture of occasions where he did (Acts 17:17; 19:8-10). He disputed the strong words of hardened opposition. He persuaded reasonably with those who gave a fair hearing. His gentleness and patience were effective among those who invited him to speak. He and the other apostles of Christ used "many convincing proofs" to logically persuade listeners "of the things concerning the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3). Their plea was for all people: "we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20). In defense of the gospel, consider Apollos, "mighty in the Scriptures", who "powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." (Acts 18:28). He used his great knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures to convince the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was certainly the fulfillment of their own cherished prophecies.

Christians everywhere and throughout this final age are exhorted to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." (Jude 3). God's people develop strength, conviction and courage in order to meet the standard described by the apostle Peter: "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;" (1 Peter 3:15).

Facing the enemies of the gospel of peace is serious business and must be done with great diligence. Darkness and wickedness we must resist! Combat success is achieved "against the schemes of the devil" by skillfully utilizing, as Apollos did, "the sword of the

Spirit, which is the word of God" (See Ephesians 6:10-20). This is how Christians "Fight the good fight of faith" and "take hold of the eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:12).

Are you set for the defense of the gospel?

- Gary Smalley

* "God provides food for every bird, but He does not place it in the nest!"

* "When success turns a man's head, it more often than not leaves him looking in the wrong direction!"

* "Don't put a question mark where God puts a period!"

* "Today is the harvest of yesterday's sowings; tomorrow will be the harvest of today's!"

* "If a man's conscience is as comfortable as his mattress, he should have no trouble getting a good night's sleep!"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)