

5 - BORN IN SIN

by
B. G. ECHOLS

One of the ugliest doctrines ever conceived in the mind of man is that of original sin. Here is the definition from A Catholic Dictionary. "ORIGINAL SIN - the sin which we inherit by natural descent from Adam, our first father...this sin comes, not by imitation of Adam's transgression, but by propagation from him" (p. 682). The supposed consequences of original sin are different in Roman Catholic teaching than in Protestantism. The basic doctrine is wrong regardless of the form. One verse used in an attempt to prove original sin is Psalm 51:5. "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me." This is an example of Hebrew parallelism. The two statements are intended to teach the point in different words. Before we study this verse, let us consider one important rule of Bible interpretation.

If a verse is interpreted in such a fashion as to contradict another plain verse, that interpretation is false. Consider that a man's spirit comes from God. "The dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). If man has a corrupted spirit, did it come from God? Furthermore, the Bible teaches that man does not inherit sin from his earthly father. "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" (Ezek. 18:20). Sin is not inherited. It is the "transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).

Other explanations of Psalm 51:5 are consistent with the rest of the Bible without the concept of original sin. David is using hyperbole, a deliberate exaggeration to stress the depth of his sense of shame for his sins. Such language is not to be taken literally. He is simply

saying, "I have been a sinner all my life." This can be seen in another verse which is used in an attempt to prove inherent depravity. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58: 3). Here again we have hyperbole to stress the enormity of sin. The expression "estranged from the womb" is not to be taken literally because the manner of going astray is by "speaking lies." Newborns do not speak. Also, if they are born astray, which the doctrine demands, they cannot go astray. You can't go where you already are.

These verses can profitably be compared to Isaiah 6:5 which gives another explanation. "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips..." By seeing a vision from God, Isaiah was more conscious of his sins. The whole world into which he came was sinful. This is the same idea David is expressing. Sin is universal, but not inherited.

Children are born pure and innocent. It is this purity of innocence the Lord had in mind when He told sinners, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:3). If little children are born sinners, why would the Lord want anyone to become such? Obviously the condition of little children is desirable and is possible when one turns from his stubborn rebellious ways to obedience to Christ.

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