

INHERITED SINS

Text: Romans 5:12

INTRO: One of the most common religious errors is the doctrine of inherited sin. It is commonly believed by Roman Catholics & many Protestants that man is tainted by Adam's original sin. This error has led to other errors such as infant baptism, the evangelical doctrine that Christ's personal righteousness is imputed to us, & the groundless Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary.

Let us examine the doctrine of inherited sin in the light of Scripture.

I. BIBLE DEFINITIONS OR DESCRIPTIONS OF SIN.

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, & sin is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4) (transgression, KJV)

All unrighteousness is sin... (1 John 5:17).

NOTE: Sin is not a "nature" to be inherited, but a deed that is committed by an accountable individual.

II. SIN & ITS GUILT ARE PERSONAL, NOT TRANSFERABLE.

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, & the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezek. 18:20).

But YOUR iniquities have separated you from your God; and YOUR sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2).

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak they will give account in the day of judgment. For by YOUR words you will be justified & by YOUR words you will be condemned (Matt. 12:36-37).

NOTE: It is true that we sometimes suffer consequences of the sins of others--but we do not bear their guilt nor receive their punishment.

III. SIN CANNOT BE INHERITED FROM OUR ANCESTORS
NOR PASSED ON TO OUR CHILDREN LIKE COLOR
OF HAIR, SKIN OR EYES.

- A. Sin is a matter of SPIRITUAL significance.
1. The SOUL that sins shall die, Ezek. 18:20
 2. Satan filled your HEART to lie, Acts 5:3.
 3. Whose SPIRIT was not faithful to God, Psa 78:8

- B. But we do not inherit our spirits from human ancestors. My dad is the father of my body, but God is the Father of my spirit. I cannot inherit sin from the Father of my spirit because He has never sinned.

Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him. (Zech 12:1).

Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, & we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (Heb 12:9, ASV)

For in Him we live & move & have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, "For we are also His offspring." (Acts 17:28).

- C. **IF** the spiritual condition of a person could be inherited by his children, then children of Christians would inherit righteousness rather than sin.

IV. PASSAGES USED TO TEACH THE DOCTRINE OF INHERITED SIN.

- A. Romans 3:23. The passage says all have sinned. It does not say that ANY of inherited sin or a "sinful nature." Adam was not created with a sinful nature, Gen 1:31, yet he sinned by exercising the power of choice. We have inherited the power of choice, & we become sinners by making wrong choices, just as he did.
- B. Psalm 51:5, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, & in

sin did my mother conceive me.” This passage does not tell us that David had inborn guilt or was born with a “sinful nature.” It simply recognizes the conditions of his parents & the world into which he was born.

- C. Psalm 58:3, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” This passage uses hyperbole to describe the wicked condition of certain individuals. Its statements are not meant to be taken literally. Do they literally SPEAK lies as soon as they are born? No, they GO astray.
- D. 1 Cor. 15:22, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” This passage speaks of physical death--a consequence of being separated from the garden of Eden & the tree of life. Tho all mankind suffers this physical consequence of Adam’s sin, there is no indication that we bear ANY of his guilt, or will take any of his punishment.
- E. Romans 5:12. This passage does speak of spiritual death. It does say that death spread to all men. But it also tells why & how death spread to all: because THEY sinned. Not because Adam sinned, but because THEY sinned.
- F. Romans 5:19, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.” This passage tells us that many were made sinners by Adam’s disobedience, but it does not say how they were made sinners. It recognizes the influence & environment into which each of us is thrust. REQUIRES CONSCIOUS DECISION.

In a similar vein, we could say that thru the obedience of Paul, many became Christians. By the rebellion of Madelyn Murray O’haire many are made infidels. None of these statements speak of inheritance. They speak of influence and environment.

CONCLUSION: None of these or similar verses teach the doctrine of

inherited sin. Sin is not passed on thru the genes in the chromosomes. Sin is an action of an accountable person in violation of the will of God. Someone else's sin will not affect MY relationship with God, but MY sin will separate me from Him.

La Porte, TX, March 11, 1984

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