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THE SURE WORD By Jonnie Hutchison

ARE BABIES BORN SINNERS?

One of the tenets of the doctrine known as Calvinism is the idea that every baby born into the world inherits the guilt of Adam's sin. This, according to this teaching, every baby is born a sinner. The logical conclusion to this is that babies are spiritually lost from the moment of birth. One of the primary passages in the Bible that is used in an effort to prove this teaching is Psalm 51 where David acknowledges his personal sins and seeks God's forgiveness. David writes of "my transgressions" (Vs. 1), "my iniquities" (Vs. 2), "my sin" (Vs. 2-3), and "I have sinned" (Vs. 4). David was not addressing the sin of Adam in this chapter, but the sins David had personally committed and for which he sought God's forgiveness.

One statement David makes is found in verse five, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." One will note immediately that in this passage there is no reference to the sin of Adam. David was accountable for his own sins, not the sin of Adam or his mother whom he mentions in this passage. Was David's mother a sinner? Yes. The Bible tells us "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin is universal and impacts every accountable human being. The meaning of David's statement is simply that, like all human beings, David's parents were sinners just like David was a sinner.

It is impossible for babies to inherit the guilt of Adam's sin. The reason is clearly stated by the inspired prophet Ezekiel who wrote, "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" ("Ezekiel 18:20). The guilt of sin cannot be passed down from one individual to another or to future generations. As a sinner, one is not guilty before God because of Adam's sin nor those of one's parents. Each of us are guilty before God for the sins that we each personally commit. In Psalm 51 David did not request forgiveness for the sin of Adam. Instead he declared, "Blot out **my transgressions**, wash me thoroughly from **mine iniquity**, and cleanse me from **my sin**" (Psalm 51:1-2).

Jesus clearly did not accept that babies are born sinners. Instead He used little children to illustrate the innocence and purity of character necessary for those who would be in the Kingdom of God (Mark 10:14-15). Visit our website at greenplainchurchofchrist.org.