

Sept. 30, 2017

THE SURE WORD

By Jonnie Hutchison

ARE BABIES BORN SINNERS?

One teaching that is widely embraced by many religious people is the idea of “original sin” popularized by John Calvin in the sixteenth century. This teaching states that every person born into this world has inherited the guilt of Adam’s sin. Thus, according to this teaching, every baby is born a sinner and is “wholly inclined to do evil.” Another term used to describe this is “inherited depravity.” Does the Bible teach the doctrine of “original sin”?

The Bible teaches that each person is accountable for the guilt of his/her own sin. “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). Since the son does not bear the guilt of the father then how would the guilt of sin be passed down from Adam to successive generations? The guilt of sin cannot be inherited or passed from one person to another. The son is not guilty of the sin of his father nor the father guilty of the sin of his son. Each one is guilty of sin when he or she commits sin which every accountable person has done (romans 3:23).

It is not the “inherited guilt” of Adam’s sin which man suffers today but the CONSEQUENCES of that original sin. Inspiration makes this very argument in the words of Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one-man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men BECAUSE ALL SINNED.” Why did spiritual death spread to all? Because all have followed in the steps of Adam in committing their own sin. We are not guilty of Adam’s sin. We are guilty and accountable before God for the sins we commit.

Babies are not born sinners! No person is a sinner until he or she violates God’s spiritual law (1 John 3:4). Babies do not have the capability to commit sin.

Logic and common-sense dictate that the idea of “original sin” is contrary to the very nature and character of God. It would be grossly unjust and unfair of God to condemn any soul for the sins committed by another. Yet, this would be the result if the teaching of “original sin” is true. But it is not true for God is both just and fair in all His dealings with man. “He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord” (Psalm 33:5).

God’s great desire is to see every sinner forgiven of his sin through the blood of Jesus (2 Peter 3:9; romans 5:8-9). Forgiveness is granted to the one who believes in Jesus (John 8:24), repents (Acts 17:30), confesses faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and is immersed into the death of Jesus for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38). Email your questions to greenplain@greenplainchurchofchrist.org.