

"Born in Sin?"

When a baby is born, did God make him good or evil? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Some say people are born entirely in sin, but we want to hear from the Lord. We think you do too, so stay with us.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. We're here to search God's Word for the Lord's Way. And the Lord's way is the way to an abundant life on earth and an eternal life in heaven. And nothing is more important! Riches lose their luster, health and youth fade, but God's promises grow sweeter and better day after day. We're so delighted to have the privilege of coming into your home today. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

Years ago I heard a preacher teach that every person from birth has a nature that is totally corrupt, perverse, and sinful. And because of this inborn corruption, the natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good. The sinner is so spiritually bankrupt that he can do anything that pertaining to his own salvation. He cannot believe on his own, he can't repent of his sin. This natural man is enslaved to sin; and he is a child of Satan, rebellious toward God, blind to truth, corrupt, and unable to save himself or prepare himself for salvation.

He said when Adam chose evil in the garden, he plunged himself and the entire human race into such spiritual ruin that they cannot choose spiritual good over evil. Man no longer has free will, according to him, to choose right over wrong. He said men inherited this total depravity. And the only answer to these problems is a miraculous change from God; and once man is saved, he can never be lost. Well this doctrine also suggested that God arbitrarily chose from heaven who would be saved and who would be lost. And so man has no choice in the matter. Well, we're going to examine the Scriptures to see whether this doctrine is true. As always we want to know what God's Word says, because it is completely reliable.

We believe you'll want to know more about this, so we offer the information on this program. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study, Are Babies Born in Sin?, and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website www.searchtv.org and on YouTube.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Titus 2:11 to 14, and explore the Scriptures to see if we are born in sin.

Our reading today comes from Titus chapter 2 verses 11 to 14. And it talks about the grace of God that instructs and how that we have free will to answer.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Oh yes, we can change. God gave us that ability. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so thankful for You love we're thankful Father that You gave us an opportunity through the gospel to come and be Your children and to be people who love You and serve You in every way. Father help us always to do Your will and to love You and to love others. In Jesus name, Amen.

What does the Bible say about the spiritual condition of the soul at birth. Well, first, let's go to Romans 7:7 to 11. "What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would

not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the Law; (Paul says,) but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good."

Romans 7 teaches people to learn right from wrong from the commandments. When evil desires to cause us to break the commandments, we sin against God and we spiritually die. James 1:13 to 15 describes more specifically when spiritual death takes place: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he's carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." Now sin is an act, not a trait that's inherited. You can't inherit the act of stealing, gossip, or fornication. People choose to act. Sin is accomplished after a choice, not inherited.

God's Word everywhere holds each person responsible for his or her own sins. I urge you to read the entire chapter of Ezekiel 18 for yourself. God clearly doesn't hold children guilty for the sins of their parents or parents guilty for the sins of their children. Ezekiel 18:1 to 4 says: Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying that, 'The fathers eat the sour grapes, But the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore. Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die."

Now some think children inherit the guilt of their parents. Some say we as children of Adam and Eve have inherited their wicked nature and are guilty of their sin. Some say an infant who dies is lost eternally; others say they go to limbo. Now you can't find the concept of limbo in Scripture; it's human in origin. But little children who die aren't lost; they haven't inherited Adam's guilt. Why? Well, Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself." Now babies don't know right from wrong and they can't sin. One can only be lost for one's own sins.

Romans 14:12 says, "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God." You may be kin to the most godly person in the world, but you know what, that won't help you on judgment day. You can't inherit someone else's righteousness. Your father may be a preacher or an elder, and your mother may be a saint, but you cannot inherit salvation from your parents. You must choose to follow the Lord for yourself.

You may be kin to the worst of sinners, but God won't hold you responsible for what he or she has done. God will hold you responsible for your own actions. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

Now people tend to look down on others for their wickedness and then ignore their own sins. I received a card from a viewer who said, "As much as I would be astonished at the sins of others, with an honest appraisal I am much more astonished and offended at my own." You know if I'm lost on judgment day, I have no one to blame for my sinful life but myself. I may have learned to sin from other people, but I chose to do it myself.

Spiritual death means a person is separated from God's grace. Isaiah 59:1 to 2 says, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." You know when people commit sin and iniquity, they separate themselves from God. Sin means that God turns His back to us and will not hear our prayers.

Now sin causes animosity between God and man. Sin takes place when a man selfishly says to God, well I won't live by Your rules. I'll do what I want to do. Now sin offends God and alienates us from God. James 4 and verse 4 says that "whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." It's when you choose to embrace a sinful world and reject God that you make an enemy of God. Now you weren't born an enemy; you became one through sin.

Paul preached to some pagan philosophers in Athens, who didn't know God. And in spite of this, he said to them in Acts 17:29 that we are all "the offspring of God." Hebrews 12 verse 9 reveals that God is "the Father of spirits." Whether you know God or not, the spirit inside you came from God. You are His offspring, created in His image. God didn't make you evil. You chose to do evil. Psalm 58:3 says that, "Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies." Now they're not born astray; they go astray.

The Scriptures don't describe us as totally depraved; rather they describe us as weak. Saying humans have a weakness to sin is not the same as saying they're totally unable to do any good. The Lord Jesus told the apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41) You know we want to do good but often find ourselves doing wrong thing.

God told Adam and Eve not to eat fruit from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Now this is not the tree of the knowledge of evil and evil. Adam and Eve received knowledge of good as well as evil. They were not totally corrupt in knowledge. Though they had sinned, they had knowledge of good.

The Lord God said in Genesis 8:21, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." Now all of us have these selfish, evil desires inside us. They tempt us to sin against God. And we have to fight them all our days, but that doesn't mean that we cannot also do good.

Now think with me. In the parable of the sower, there are different kinds of soils and hearts. The Bible says in Luke 8:15, "But the seed on the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop." Now this good and honest heart belongs to a person who is not yet a Christian, not yet saved. Remember Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. Acts 10 verse 2 says that Cornelius, though not saved was nevertheless "devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly."

The apostle spoke of a spiritual battle that was going on him. You remember Paul said in Romans 7:21 to 23, "So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members." Now we all face this battle of wanting to do right and often finding ourselves doing the evil that we hate. But this doesn't mean that we're totally corrupt and incapable of believing.

Let me ask here some questions to those who believe we're totally depraved and incapable of good. Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Why would God demand faith, when He knows that men are incapable of believing what is written in His Word? The Lord Jesus

said in Luke 13:5, “unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Why would Jesus Christ condemn people for failure to repent if they’re incapable of repenting or doing any good toward their salvation?

Luke 18 verses 15 to 17 says, “And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for them, saying, “Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of (heaven) God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.” Well, how can this be if infants are born wholly corrupt and unable to do good? Why would the Lord speak so glowingly of babies if they were so bound up in sin?

You know at this point, someone is probably asking, “Phil, don’t you know about Psalm 51:5? Well, here the NIV reads “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Doesn’t this imply that we’re born in sin? Well, the NIV translates poorly here. Literally, David’s words would be translated: “Behold in iniquity I was born and in sin my mother conceived me.” David is saying that he was born in an evil and sinful world. Let’s remember sin is an act, a transgression of God’s law. Sin is not an inherited trait; it’s learned and acted out.

Now I speak English because I was born in an environment that speaks the English language. In Acts 2 the apostles spoke with the miraculous gift of tongues to people from many nations. And when they heard the apostles, they marveled and said, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?” (Acts 2:7 to 8). You see people are born in a language. That is one learns a language by being born into an environment that speaks it. And in the same way, one learns sin by being born into a world that practices it.

To make this passage say that David was born depraved and sinful as a baby would make it contradict what David says in Psalm 22:9 to 10, “Yet You (that is God) are He who brought me forth from the womb; You (that is God) made me trust when upon my mother’s breasts. Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother’s womb.” From the time that he was little, David learned both good and bad, both trust in God and sin. And God didn’t make us totally evil and incapable of believing or incapable of repenting. We’re all weak, yes, but we can change. Thank God!

Let’s pray together. Father we’re thankful for Your love for all of us and for Your grace that opens the door for us to be able to change our lives. To come to believe You and repent and to love You. And Father we pray that we will always chose to do Your will, to love others and to love You. In Jesus name, Amen.

2 Corinthians 5:19 to 20 says that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (and) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; (and) we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” Why do Christians urge others to be reconciled to God? The word “reconcile” means “to bring back into harmony.” If an infant is born in sin, he cannot be reconciled because he was never in harmony with the Lord in the first place.

But infants are born innocent. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 19:14 that, “the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” We aren’t born totally depraved but spiritually pure. They’re separated from God when they’re old enough to choose sin. When people sin, they need to be reconciled to God by obeying the gospel. The gospel is God’s answer to be freed from sin. The gospel declares the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and urges people to believe, repent, and to be baptized. Jesus died on the cross to atone for our sins. And He offers salvation to those who respond in faith, love, and obedience. Now even in our sins, we have the ability to respond to the gospel. Because of God’s grace, we can change.

Believe Jesus is the Christ! Repent from sin and turn to the Lord. Confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. And be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2 and verse 38). "Be saved from this crooked generation." God made you capable of faith, repentance, and baptism. And so don't remain in sin. In Acts 2:41 those who gladly received the word, these were lost people, were baptized. And then they became saved. All through the book of Acts lost people responded to preaching, believed and obeyed. And you can too!

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Show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. And as always we want to say to you keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.