

## Bible Study Opportunities

"How To Study the Bible" Study Guide

Inspiration and Preservation of the Bible (Bible Study Material with Questions)

Bulletin of the Month

Some Recent Daily Bible Messages

Topical Study Material

Free Bible Study Offers (Kankakee, Illinois Area)

Bible Correspondence Course (*U.S.A. Only*)

The DaVinci Code - Why It is Broken

### Links

Expository Files

Links and Area Churches (Kankakee, IL area)

Nationwide Church Locator Assistance

[Return to Homepage](#)

## Bible Study Opportunities

"How To Study the Bible" Study Guide

Inspiration and Preservation of the Bible (Bible Study Material with Questions)

Bulletin of the Month

Some Recent Daily Bible Messages

Topical Study Material

Free Bible Study Offers (Kankakee, Illinois Area)

Bible Correspondence Course (*U.S.A. Only*)

The DaVinci Code - Why It is Broken

### Links

Expository Files

Links and Area Churches (Kankakee, IL area)

Nationwide Church Locator Assistance

[Return to Homepage](#)

---

## Are We Born Sinners?

By Jon W. Quinn

It is a fundamental part of Calvinism, and therefore found in the official doctrines and histories of most Protestant churches. But not only that, it is also an integral part of Catholicism. One Catholic theologian put it this way; he said, "...all men except Jesus and His blessed mother are born subject to death and deprived of grace..."

The Protestant reformers, including Luther and Calvin, included the idea in their creeds as well. For this reason, Catholic and many Protestant denominations practice infant baptism. At least originally, the practice began as a way to save the infant from spiritual and everlasting condemnation due to the sins he or she inherited from their parents at birth.

Essentially, this doctrine holds that sin is inherited; that a child is lost in sin at birth and a child is totally depraved at birth. When it is pointed out that Jesus was born of Mary, it is explained that Jesus did not inherit sin because Mary was sinless (this in spite of the fact that the Bible plainly tells of Mary offering her sin offerings according to the Law; (see Luke 2:22-24 and Leviticus 5:7-13). When

asked how it was that Mary was born without inheriting sin, the answer is that Mary, herself, was “immaculately conceived.” The Scriptures nowhere teach anything like this at all.

The doctrine that we are born in sin is a false doctrine, pure and simple. It contradicts plain Bible passages concerning the nature of sin and the definition of sin. We see this in the teaching of God's prophet Ezekiel, for example. The Spirit inspired Ezekiel to teach: "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." (Ezekiel 18:20). The creeds of men say the son does bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, but the word of God says he does not. The choice is ours as to which to believe.

### **Passages Used By Those Who Believe We Are Born In Sin**

There must be some defense that is offered from the Bible to advance such teaching. Of course, even Satan will misuse Scripture to his own ends. The question is, “Does the Bible teach that we are born in sin” not “Can I force the doctrine into a passage?” Let's take a brief look at the best defenses of the doctrine that are offered. If there is any merit to it at all, this is where we will find it.

1) (Psalm 51:5) “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.” This is from a Psalm of David after his sin with Bathsheba. It deals with the sin of an adult, and shows the repentance of an adult (vs. 10-13). David does not say he was a “sinner baby” but rather that his mother conceived him in sin. Read it again and see! David was born into a sinful world. Sin was all around him from birth, so he was 'brought forth in iniquity.” The Jewish writers who wrote of this Psalm say the same thing.; David is saying that he was born into a sinful environment.

2) (Psalm 58:3) “The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.” First, note that if these people were born astray then they could not “go astray from birth.” Infants are born into a sinful world with their eyes and ears wide open. They are so inquisitive, beginning to learn immediately through taste, touch, sound, sight and smell. They are watching, and they see evil all around them constantly from birth. They may not know it is evil yet, but it is there and it does influence them. The clincher is this: the ones going astray speak lies, so the going astray has to be accomplished, at the very least, only after the person has learned to speak!

3) (Ephesians 2:3) “Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” What made these people “children of wrath”? Was it something they inherited or something they had done? Verses 1 and 2 help us to answer that question. “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world...” They were “by nature” what they were. “Nature” here does not refer to constitutional character but rather to habit... sin became natural, or we sometimes say, “second nature” to them by their long and diligent practice of it.

### **Passages Which Contradict The Concept of Being Born in Sin**

1) (Matthew 18:3) "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus said we must become converted and like little children. He would not tell us to do this if children were truly born totally depraved. If they were born as

totally depraved that would mean that there is nothing in them that is not depraved and therefore we should not become like children in any sense. But Jesus said there was something in children that we need to take as our example (their humility). This passage shows that children are not born totally depraved (see also Psalm 106:36-39).

2) (Hebrews 12:9) "Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" Here, God is referred to as the "Father of spirits." While we inherit our physical attributes from our physical parents, our inner person, our spirit, we get from God. Our spirit is created 'in His image.' If we are born totally depraved, then we are depraved in body and spirit. If that is the case, then we inherit our sinful, depraved spirits from God! But in God there is no evil, and therefore none to pass on to us.

3) (2 Timothy 3:13) "But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." If we were born totally depraved, then we could not get worse.

4) (Luke 8:15) "...these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance." If total depravity is true, then there is no such thing as "good and honest" hearts.

One final point. God defines sin for us. It is not something inherited, nor does He define it as something we are born with. Lord, what is sin? God answers: "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4). Sin is not something we are born with; it is something we do. When we break God's law, we sin. The good news is that the gospel of Christ is the power of God to take away our sins.

Reprinted From the Bradley Banner  
Bradley Church of Christ  
Bradley, Illinois  
January 28, 2001