

## Inherited Sin

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There is a prominent teaching in the religious world today that mankind is a fallen creature. What is meant by this is that since sin entered the garden through the sin of Adam and Eve, it has caused man to become inherently sinful – that all men since the time of Adam have inherited a “sinful nature.” This is one of the basic foundational doctrines of Calvinism and many other denominational groups. This concept is very flawed, as it directly contradicts clear Biblical teachings. For instance Ezekiel 18:20 states, *“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...”*

If men inherited the sins of Adam, then sin would not be their fault. They would not be able to keep from it. If this were true, then why should they be condemned? Why would God punish someone for doing something from which they had no choice? I can see where some could point out a deficiency with this idea and conclude the religion of God as mere foolish inconsistency. This perceived concept of inherited sin has caused many to turn away from God and His Word.

I called this a “perceived” concept, because that is exactly what it is. The Word of God in no way teaches this concept. It does tell us that all have sinned; (Rom. 3:23) and that there is no one righteous. (Rom 3:10-11) But in this we see it was because of choice. Notice what Paul said about the ancient gentiles: they once knew God, but they willfully rejected Him. (Rom 1:21) They knew the difference between right and wrong. (Rom 1:32) Yet, they intentionally forgot God so that they could feel justified in their sins. (Rom 1:28) Because of this willful rejection God “gave them up...” (Rom 1:24, 28) while allowing their sins to bring about their natural consequences. (Rom 1:27).

Sin comes about because men and women willfully choose it. Those who cannot understand the concepts of right and wrong, obedience and disobedience, lawful and unlawful – very young children and infants or mentally handicapped persons – are not accountable for their sinful actions, because they do not have the capacity to understand that they are doing wrong. Everyone else, though, is accountable. Even those who are ignorant of some of the Laws of God, are not ignorant of the weightier moral matters. E.g. lying, stealing, murder, etc.

With the sin of Adam and Eve, in Genesis 3:6, we see that they chose sin – they chose rebellion against God. Notice that with Eve, “she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise...” She had an opportunity to sin in that she saw the tree and in doing so (and in listening to the serpent) she developed an unlawful desire for its fruit, thus she was tempted. At this time, she was faced with a choice and she was in no way compelled by the serpent or by her “nature” to act on this unlawful

desire. She chose to do so. The Bible says that she, “took of the fruit thereof, and did eat...” Again we see that temptation, plus her choice to act upon it is what resulted in her sin.

Her husband, Adam, was faced with the exact choice. He accepted the fruit when she gave it to Him and ate from it. He was tempted when he saw her with the fruit, perhaps he saw her eat from it and desired to share with her the “wisdom” which the fruit would grant them. He was not compelled to eat from it by either the serpent or by his “nature.” He knew that it was wrong, because he had been expressly forbidden to eat fruit from that very tree. His choice in that moment of weakness was the same as Eve’s – he gave into temptation and sinned – “he did eat...” The result of their sin was death – spiritual death at the moment of sin and later physical death.

SIN IS ALWAYS A CHOICE...

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