



Finally there is one very simple passage of Scripture which must be harmonized with Psalm 51:5 – Ezekiel 18:20.

The passage reads, **“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...”**

There is no way that the doctrine of inherited original sin can be true if this passage is also true!

Conclusion What David is saying is simple. In his grief over his own sin he laments the very condition of the world into which he was born. He was born into a world plagued by sin and even his own mother was not free from its influence. An entire system of thought has been built on a faulty and speculative interpretation of a very simple idea.

¹ These introductory statements at the beginning of the Psalms are often taken to be human additions. However, this conclusion is difficult to accept with any certainty given that these notes are included within the Hebrew text on which all translations are based, as well as the Greek Septuagint (c. 200 BC) and the Latin Vulgate (c. 400 AD) translations.

² We should note that the preface to the Amplified Bible admits that words in the brackets – “contain ... comments, whether implied or not, which are not actually expressed in the immediate original text...” (*Explanation of Arbitrary Punctuation Marks*, xv, Zondervan, 1962).

³ The Septuagint is simply a human translation, so it does not offer any definitive proof, yet it does show us how Jews before the time of Christ understood this verse.

⁴ Since Adam was denied access to the tree of life he died, as have all his posterity who were deprived with him (Genesis 3:22.)



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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

September 16
2012



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

What Does Psalm 51:5 Teach?

By Kyle Pope

One of the main texts used by those in the religious world who teach the doctrine of inherited original sin is Psalm 51:5. The text reads: **“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me”** (NKJV). The argument is that David in this Psalm claims to have been born with sin (though the text itself says “in sin”). The conclusion from this is that this sin must refer to Adam’s sin which he had inherited, (so they say). *Is this argument sound?*

What Is The Context?

The context of the passage is clear: David’s anguish over his sin. The Psalm begins with an introductory note claiming – **“A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.”**¹ In his sorrow over his horrible act of rebellion against God David writes the verse in question.

Key Words

There are four words in the text that are crucial to a sound interpretation: “in iniquity” and “In sin.”

“In iniquity” in the Hebrew is *BeAvown*. *Be* meaning “in” and *Avown* meaning “evil:– fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin” (Strong’s #5771). It is argued that *BeAvown* must mean “in a state of iniquity.” This is how the Amplified Bible in their highly prejudicial transla-



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tion puts it inserting in brackets “...I was brought forth in [a state of] iniquity...” This gives the false impression that “in iniquity” undoubtedly means that David bore the guilt of iniquity.²

Consider another text where *BeAvown* is used: Genesis 19:15 records the warning to Lot to leave Sodom, “...lest thou be consumed in the iniquity (*BeAvown*) of the city” (ASV). Clearly, this text is not saying that Lot bore iniquity himself, but rather that he was “in *the midst of iniquity*”. This may well be the very thing that David is saying. He was born into a sinful world, and in his sin he had followed its pattern of sinfulness.

“In sin” in the last part of the verse seems clearly to refer to the condition of David’s mother. The Greek Septuagint uses plural forms of both the word for “iniquity” and “sin” thus literally “in iniquities” and “in sins.” That could not be referring to Adam’s single act of disobedience in the garden.³ This is not to suggest that David’s birth came from an adulterous relationship on his mother’s part, but simply the fact that even his own mother (like all human beings) was subject to sin.

The Full Witness of Scripture

We should note that nowhere in the Old Testament is it stated that Adam’s sin was passed down! One would think that if Adam’s sin had such a monumental impact on his posterity it would at least be mentioned to in the account of his sin. Yet all that is declared is: 1.) Adam and his wife were cast from Eden (Genesis 3:23); 2.) This deprived

them of the tree of life, which deprived them of unending physical life (Genesis 3:22); 3.) The man was cursed with having to work for food (Genesis 3:17-19) and 4.) The woman was cursed with pain in child birth and submission to man (Genesis 3:16).

The New Testament deals more explicitly with the effect Adam’s sin had on mankind. I Corinthians 15:22 declares, “**For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive**” (NKJV). In the context of explaining the reality of the resurrection Paul describes the effect of Adam’s sin – physical death.⁴ Romans 5:12 describes a different effect of Adam’s sin claiming, “**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.**” There is little question (from the context) that this refers to spiritual death, yet how does the text say this death was passed? Through imitating Adam’s example of sin! Notice – “**...thus death spread to all men, BECAUSE ALL SINNED**” (Emphasis Mine).

Psalm 51:5 From Various Translations

LITERAL

King James Version – “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

American Standard Version– “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

New American Standard Bible– “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”

New King James Version– “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”

English Standard Version– “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Revised Standard Version– “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

ANCIENT

Brenton Version (From the Septuagint) – “For, behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me” (50:7).

Douay Version (From the Vulgate) – “For behold, I was conceived in iniquities: and in sins did my mother conceive me” (50:7).

BIASED

New International Version – “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

Today’s English Version – “I have been evil from the time I was born; from the day of birth I have been sinful.”

Jerusalem Bible – “You know I was born guilty, a sinner from the moment of conception.”

Amplified Bible – “Behold, I was brought forth in [a state of] iniquity; my mother was sinful who conceived me [and I, too, am sinful].”