An Inheritance: Study On Original Sin

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday April 3rd, 2022

Text: I Peter 1:3-5

### Intro

1. Inheritance. We all know the jokes or stories or the day-dream of a long-lost uncle or aunt bequeathing something valuable to someone.
   1. One day a man hears that a distant uncle passed away:
   2. He's a little sad, but only a little, for they barely knew each other. Then, a few days later, a package arrives. It contains his inheritance from the estate: A violin and a painting. He has no idea what to do with them. After pondering the matter, he takes them to an appraiser. Not too long later the appraiser calls him: “I've finished my analysis, and I've got some good news. There's no doubt at all that what you have is a genuine Van Gogh and a genuine Stradivarius.” The man is ecstatic: “I can sell these for millions!” The appraiser says “Well, you can sell them, and they'll fetch some money for their novelty value. But not millions. You see, the truth is, Stradivarius wasn't much of a painter... and Van Gogh made lousy violins.”
2. Inheritance. We can inherit physical things of value from our family but can also inherit certain traits and looks (“He has his father’s eyes,” “She has her mother’s smile,” etc.), *and genetic conditions.*
   1. I find that sometimes I hear my dad in the things I say.
   2. Becky says she hears her mom come out in things she says.
3. Inheritance. There are things that we don’t inherit from our family.
   1. Likes and Dislikes (I don’t have my father’s love for Raisinettes).
   2. Some diseases or conditions are not genetic, such as conditions as consequence for ways we live our lives.
4. The spiritual question of inheritance today is whether or not we inherit Adam’s sin?
5. We know that if we are faithful, there is an inheritance of eternal life from God – I Peter 1:3-5
6. What do the Scriptures say about our inheritance?

#### Original Sin

* 1. There is a popular doctrine that has existed for hundreds of years that teaches that mankind has inherited the sin of Adam.
  2. Its origins can be traced back to the writings of Augustine of Hippo (354–430), who was the first author to use the phrase “original sin.”
     1. He lived during a period when religious leaders were debating the sovereignty of God and its relation to the free will of man.
     2. Pelagius (350-425) was a British monk who refuted the teachings of Augustine. He emphasized human choice in salvation and was branded a heretic.
     3. When the topic was formally debated in the Councils of Carthage (411-418) in Rome, the “church council” favored Augustine’s position.
     4. Catholic church historians point to this event as the crucial decision that shaped their doctrine later on (after AD 600).
     5. The Catholic Church’s Council of Trent (1545–1563), among many other things, confirmed their stance on original sin. Mankind has inherited Adam’s sinful nature, not his personal sin.
  3. In response and consequence to this teaching, infant baptisms were taking place in the early church. Tertullian (160-220) wrote against infant baptisms.
     1. As early as A.D. 400 Augustine appealed to the universal practice of infant baptism as proof that the church saw infants born with the stain of original sin.
     2. The Catholic Church’s Catechism teaches baptism is for the remission of sin, both original sin and actual sin—only original sin in the case of infants and young children, since they are incapable of actual sin; and both original and actual sin in the case of older persons.
     3. Since infants, either the day of birth or the 8th day, are baptized, new modes for baptism were invented such as sprinkling or pouring.
  4. During the Reformation in the 1500’s the reformers were not trying to form their own churches but to reform the Catholic Church. They were rejected and some even had to flee for their lives.
     1. One such case was John Calvin (1509-1564), who tried to bring Catholicism back to Augustinian Principles.
        1. This is like King Jehu abolishing the idol worship of the Baals and Asherah and then taking Israel back to the golden calves of Jeroboam!
        2. ***It is the wrong type of reform!*** (II Kings 10:28-31)
     2. Calvin was rejected and fled for his life to Sweden!
     3. He called “original sin,” “Total Depravity.” *(1st part of his TULIP doctrine)*
     4. His view of original sin crept into nearly every denomination over the next couple of hundred years or so.
  5. Many denominations practice infant baptism. Both those who teach and those who don’t teach an original sin doctrine do it as a “Christening” or a “Dedication to Christ” ceremony. Sprinkling & pouring are acceptable in such rituals/ceremonies.
  6. Scriptures used to support Original Sin/Total Depravity
     1. Matthew 19:13-14
        1. *Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*
        2. ***This passage can be used to refute this doctrine as well!***
        3. They reason that if children are welcomed into the kingdom then they need to be baptized to do away with the sinful nature of Adam.
        4. They also reason from the Greek word used *(G3813)* that also includes “infants” that Jesus meant they needed to be baptized.
        5. The children are innocent. They do not need to grow up to be saved but adults need to become like children to be saved! (In faith)
     2. Psalm 51:5
        1. *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*
        2. We don’t know the circumstances of David’s birth, but whatever the meaning of this verse is, nothing forces a conclusion that David was born with sin, and thus all children are!
        3. If sin is inherited through our father, then this is the wrong passage.
        4. If sin is inherited through our mother, then this is the wrong passage, for it would mean that Jesus was also born with sin (Galatians 4:4: Jesus was born of a woman), and we know He was sinless (II Corinthians 5:21).
        5. This verse may describe the sinful condition of David’s mother at his birth.
        6. If so, it still doesn’t mean David was born sinful. Consider: If he were to say, “In drunkenness my mother conceived me,” no one would infer that David was born a drunk!
        7. This most likely describes the general condition of the world into which David was born.
        8. Consider: If he had said, “In a world of cannibalism my mother conceived me,” no one would think David was born an automatic cannibal! He may become one later but would have to be introduced to it.
     3. Psalm 58:3 (vss. 1-5)
        1. *The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.*
        2. This verse doesn’t say they were born astray, but says they “go astray from birth.”
        3. David is using strong language to describe the wickedness of the congregation and the judges mentioned in Psalm 58:1.
        4. How could these statements be about infants?
           1. 58:2: *“In heart you work unrighteousness”:* Children do not commit wickedness at birth!
           2. 58:2: *“You weigh out the violence of your hands”:* Infants are incapable of violence at birth!
           3. 58:3: *“These who speak lies go astray from birth”:* Infants cannot speak, let alone tell lies at birth!
           4. David’s prayer for them in 58:6-8: *“Shatter their teeth in their mouth”:* Infants don’t have teeth to shatter!
     4. Romans 3:10-18
        1. Paul quotes from Psalm 14 and many other OT passages here to demonstrate that both Jews and Greeks turned from God. This is not a discussion of the state of mankind at birth!
        2. How could they *“ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS”* (3:12; Ps. 14:3) if they were born that way?
        3. Could these statements describe an infant?
           1. *“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE”* (3:13; Ps. 5:9)?
           2. *“WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING”* (3:13; Ps. 5:9)?
           3. *“MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”* (3:14; Ps. 10:7)?
           4. *“THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD”* (3:15; Is. 59:7)?
        4. None of these descriptions fit a newborn but they do describe an adult who has turned away from God to commit sin!
     5. Romans 5:12-19
        1. Paul is writing about how sin was introduced into the world and brought death through Adam, and that by obedience and righteousness of Jesus there is salvation and hope!
        2. Notice 5:12: *“Death spread to all men, because all sinned.”* It does NOT say, “Death spread to all men, because Adam sinned.”
        3. 5:19: *“For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”*
        4. If this teaches that all mankind inherited universal sin through Adam, then it also teaches universal salvation through Jesus! ***Neither one is taught here!***
        5. By Adam’s sin conditions were brought about that make every person subject to temptation (I Corinthians 10:13: We will be tempted but there will be an escape)
        6. By Jesus’ sacrifice and resurrection, He brought about conditions that make each person subject to righteousness.
        7. But each of these is by choice, not inheritance! (Romans 6:16-18: Notice the word “obey”: “you are slaves to what you obey”)
  7. The Scriptures teach that children are innocent, and that each person is responsible for their own actions!

#### Scriptures on Personal Accountability

* 1. Infants are sinless and thus are safe in God’s sight
     1. Matthew 19:13-14: *“Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”*
     2. Matthew 18:3: *“Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*
        1. Matthew 18:3 shows what Jesus meant – Adults must have the faith of children to be saved. *Jesus wasn’t saying you must be depraved or sinful to be saved.*
     3. II Samuel 12:15-23: David understood the innocence of his child who died. When his child died he stopped mourning and said, “I will go to him.” David was sure of his child’s eternal destination.
  2. Adults who sin or who turn to God will be condemned or rewarded for their actions
     1. Ezekiel 18:20: *“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.”*
        1. A child neither inherits sin or righteousness.
        2. No doubt, in life, the children may suffer the consequences of the sin of their parents (drunkenness, infidelity in marriage, etc.) but they do not bear their guilt. They do not have to walk down the same road!
     2. Romans 14:12: *“So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.”*
     3. II Corinthians 5:10: *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*
        1. Both of these passages speak of our actions, the choices we made, not sin that we inherited, but we will be rewarded for what we have done, “whether good or bad.”
        2. God holds the person who sins accountable.
  3. Adam introduced sin and death to the world and mankind has always had to make a choice: serve Satan or God.
  4. Jesus introduced righteousness and eternal life to the world and since then the choice is the same: Death or Life.
  5. To be righteous and inherit eternal life we must obey the gospel through baptism into Christ and to have our sins washed away! (Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:27)

#### Who Should Be Baptized?

* 1. Those who are taught, who hear the word of God – Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 18:8: Crispus and the Corinthians; Acts 19:4-5: Ephesian disciples (Rom. 10:14, 17)
  2. Those who believe – Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12-13, 36-37; 18:8; 19:4-5 (Rom. 10:8-13)
  3. Those who repent of their sins – Acts 2:38
  4. Those who confess Jesus is the Son of God – Acts 8:36-37 (Rom. 10:8-10)
  5. Those who receive the word of God – Acts 2:41; 8:12-14
  6. Those who wish to enter the one body (church) through the one baptism – I Cor. 12:13 (Eph. 4:4-6)
  7. Those who want their sins forgiven and to be saved! – Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16
  8. Can an infant do all those things?
  9. Who should be baptized? All those who want to obey the gospel (the word of God)!

## Conclusion

1. Infants have no need to be baptized because they are innocent and are safe and because there is no example of infants being baptized in the New Testament!
2. Infants cannot obey all the commands that precede baptism!
3. Those who have been baptized as infants are in the same condition as the Ephesian disciples of John the Immerser in Acts 19:1-5.
   1. When they realized they were not baptized into Jesus they immediately were baptized into His name.
   2. You can be baptized into Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins!
4. Original Sin and Calvin’s Total Depravity are false teachings that are contradictory to the teachings found in the Scriptures.
5. You have not inherited Adam’s sin, nor will you be held accountable for Adam’s sin, but you will be held accountable for what you have done!
6. If you want to inherit the blessings and promises of eternal life from God (I Peter 1:3-5), you can obey the gospel NOW by repenting of your sin and being baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins!
7. If not a Christian, why not obey the gospel now, recognizing that “now is ‘THE DAY OF SALVATION!’” (II Cor. 6:2). Repent and be baptized into Jesus’ name!
8. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
9. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

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| **Origins of**  **Original Sin** | **Consequences** | **Scriptures used to Support Original Sin** | **Scriptures on Children’s Innocence & Personal Accountability** |
| **Augustine of Hippo** (354–430), who 1st used the phrase, “original sin” | **Infant Baptism** – Happening as early as the 2nd – 3rd c. A.D. | **Matthew 19:13-14** | **Matthew 19:13-14; 18:3** |
| **Pelagius** (350-425), a British monk who refuted the teachings of Augustine | **Tertullian** (160-220) wrote against infant baptisms | **Psalm 51:5** | **II Samuel 12:15-23** |
| **Catholic Church’s Council of Trent** (1545–1563) affirmed mankind inherits Adam’s sinful nature | As early as A.D. 400 Augustine used the **universal practice of infant baptism** as proof of original sin | **Psalm 58:1-5** | **Ezekiel 18:20** |
| **Catholic Catechism** | Since infants, either at birth or the 8th day, are baptized, new modes for baptism were invented such as **sprinkling or pouring** | **Romans 3:10-18** | **Romans 14:12** |
| **John Calvin** (1509-1564) taught Original Sin as “Total Depravity” | **“Christenings” & “Dedications”** | **Romans 5:12-19** | **II Corinthians 5:10** |

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***Can infants take the steps that precede baptism?***

Table

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