

## **Born in Sin**

### **Titus 2:11-14**

What is the spiritual condition of a baby when it is born? There are those who say a baby is born totally depraved and sinful. But what exactly does the Bible teach on this subject?

Let us start by examining **Romans 7:7-11** ***“What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.”***

Romans 7 teaches that people learn from the commandments what is right and wrong. When we allow evil desires to cause us to break the commandment, we sin against God and spiritually die. **James 1:13-15** describes more specifically when spiritual death occurs: he says, ***“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”*** Sin is an act, not an inheritable trait. You can’t inherit the act of stealing, or the act of 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 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 18:1-4** says, ***“The word of the LORD came to me: “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be***

***used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.***

There are those who think that 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 sins. Some even say that an infant who dies unbaptized is lost eternally. But I do not think scripture teaches this doctrine. Why do I say this? Let's turn our Bibles to **Ezekiel 18:20**, ***“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”*** According to God in **Ezek. 18:20** one can only be lost for his own sins. Babies do not yet know right from wrong; they cannot sin.

**Romans 14:12** says, ***“So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”*** You might be related to the godliest person in the world, but that won't help you on judgment day. Neither will being related to the evilest person in the world be detrimental to you on Judgement Day. You must choose to follow the Lord yourself.

God only hold you responsible for your own actions. **2 Cor. 5:10** 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.”***

We all tend to want to blame others for our sins or to look down on others for their wickedness. But we need to understand, on Judgment Day we will have no one to blame for our sinful lives but ourselves. We may have learned to sin from other people, but it was our choice to sin, we can only blame ourselves for our own sin.

Spiritual death means a person is separated from the grace of God. **Isaiah 59:1-2** says, ***“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear 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.”*** When people allow sin and iniquity in their lives, that is when they separate themselves from God. Sin means that God turns His back on us and will not hear our prayers.

Sin causes animosity between God and man. Sin takes place when man selfishly says to God, I won't live by your rules. I will do what I want to do. Sin utterly offends God and alienates us from God. **James 4:4** says, *“whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”* When you choose to embrace a sinful world and reject God, you make an enemy of God. You didn't start out an enemy, but you became one through your sin.

Paul preached to some pagan philosophers in Athens who didn't know God at all. And in spite of this, he told them in **Acts 17:29** that we are all *“offspring of God.”* In **Hebrews 12:9** it is revealed to us that God is *“the Father of spirits.”* Whether you know God or not, the spirit that is inside you came from God. You are His offspring, created in His image. And God didn't make you evil. You chose to do evil. **Psalm 58:3** says, *“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.”* Too many take this out of context to mean that babies are sinners from birth, but that is not what the psalmist is talking about. **Psalm 58** is about the injustice coming from rulers, whether human rulers and judges, or angelic beings maintaining order on earth. They are failing in their appointed tasks. Thus, an appeal is made to God for intervention – a Just God who will stand up for His people. Using poetic language **verses 3-5 and 7-9** speak to the character and wickedness of those in charge. Thus, he is not speaking of newborn babies, but leaders and judges who have gone astray from the Word of God.

The Scriptures do not describe us as totally depraved; rather they describe us as weak. Saying humans have a weakness to sin is not the same thing as saying that we are totally depraved and incapable of doing any good. Jesus told His disciples 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”* (**Mt. 26:41**). We want to do good but we often find ourselves doing the wrong thing.

God told Adam and Eve not to eat from the fruit of *“the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”* Though they sinned, they had knowledge of good. In **Genesis 8:21** God said, *“I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.”* Here God is

clear on the subject, man's heart is evil from his youth – not his birth. All of us have these same selfish and evil desires inside of us. Yes, they tempt us to sin against God. And we have to fight them all the days of our life, but this does not mean that we cannot do good.

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

The apostle spoke of this spiritual battle going on inside of him, that goes on inside all of us. In **Romans 7:21-23** we read, ***“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.”*** All of us face this battle, wanting to do what is right, but often finding ourselves doing the evil thing we hate. But this does not mean we are totally depraved or corrupt and unable or incapable of believing.

Let me ask so questions for those who believe we are totally depraved and incapable of good. **Hebrews 11:6** says, ***“without faith it is impossible to please God.”*** My question is, why would God demand faith from all men, when He knows that men are incapable of believing what is written in His Word? In **Luke 13:5** Jesus said, ***“unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”*** Why would Jesus condemn people for failure to repent if they were incapable of repenting or doing any good thing toward their salvation?

**Luke 18:15-17** says, ***“Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter***

*it.*” Now 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?

I can speak English because I was born into an environment that speaks English, I learned it from a baby up. In Acts 2 the apostles spoke with the miraculous gift of tongues to people from many nations. When they heard the apostles, they marveled and said, ***“And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?” (Acts 2:7-8).*** People are born into a language? One learns a language by being born into an environment that speaks it. We are not already speaking that language. In the same way, one learns to sin by being born into a world that practices it.

To make **Psalm 51:5** to say that David was born depraved and sinful as a baby, you would have to contradict what David said in **Psalm 22:9-10**, ***“Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.”*** From the time he was little, David learned both good and bad, both trust in God and later on sin.

God didn’t make us totally evil and incapable of believing or incapable of repenting. We are weak, but we can change.

**2 Cor. 5:19-20** says, ***“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore 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.”*** A reconciled husband and wife were once in harmony, and then they were separated, and later restored to harmony. If an infant is born utterly in sin, he cannot be reconciled because he was never in harmony with the Lord in the first place. God’s

answer to man's sin came in the form of preaching the cross of Christ, telling people what God did for them, so that they might believe, repent and obey. We are not totally depraved. Infants are born spiritually pure; they separated themselves from God when they sinned and they now need to be reconciled to God by responding to the gospel.

The Lord God gave up His Son Jesus to atone for our sins, and offered the gift of salvation to those who respond in faith, and love and obedience. And even in our sins, we can respond to the gospel.

Therefore, believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Turn your heart from sin 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. ***“Be saved from this crooked generation.”*** God made you capable of faith, repentance, confession and baptism. You don't have to remain in sin. In **Acts 2:41** those who gladly received the word were baptized. And all through the book of Acts lost people have responded to preaching, they believed in it and they obeyed it. And you can too!