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## Do We Inherit Sin?

By Harold Turner

The title of this article deals with a very important matter. Are babies born into a lost spiritual state? If the baby should die shortly after birth, would it be lost eternally? If the child is lost from birth, what has God instructed concerning its safety? If the child is lost from birth, of what sin is it guilty? Does the child inherit the sin of his parents? These are questions that deserve an answer. What does the Bible teach about inheriting sin?

Our generation is not the first to question this matter. In the days of Ezekiel the people asked, "Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?" (Ezek. 18:19) Ezekiel then replied, "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." The prophet shows that the son is not responsible for his father's conduct. The person who sins shall be responsible for himself. Each shall pay the price for his own sins.

Ezekiel states that "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." This would imply that until the soul did sin, it would not die. Too, this indicates that sin is a personal matter. It is not something that another does for us.

Since we're dealing with a matter of sin it's important that we understand sin as it is defined in the Bible. In 1 John 3:4 we have one definition of sin: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." To transgress is "to overstep or break a law, commandment, etc.", according to Webster. To sin, then, is to overstep or break one of God's laws. Jesus illustrated this definition of sin in Matt. 15:3-6, he said, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, 'Honour thy father and mother'; and 'He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free, thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by

your tradition." These had transgressed God's law by overstepping and disobeying it.

A second definition of sin is seen in James 4:17. "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." From this definition we can see that there is more involved in sin than being inamoral and rebellious. To have knowledge of some good deed and refuse to do it is wrong. An example of this is seen in 1 John 3:17-18: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children; let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Christianity is being more than negatively good, we must not only avoid doing wrong things, we must do that which is good.

From these two definitions of sin we see three things involved: a knowledge of right and wrong, an attitude toward them, and action expressed toward them. Sin has its origin in the heart of man rather than just outward expressions. In Mark 7:20-23 Jesus shows the things that defile a man's relationship with God begin within his heart: "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

Do babies overstep and disobey the commandments of God? Do they have a knowledge of good and refuse to do it? Is their heart filled with the things Jesus mentioned that defile a person? Babies have no knowledge of good or evil, neither do they have any attitude toward either. Their heart is not defiled and corrupt with the intent to do wrong. One will never be more innocent of sin or pure in heart than during the first few years of his life.

When Jesus taught about true greatness and conversion into the kingdom of God he used a little child. In Matt. 18:1-4 the disciples asked Jesus, "Who is greatest in the kingdom of

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## Choosing A Mate

By Glynn V. Purdy

Very little consideration seems to be given to choosing a mate for life. In choosing a home, a car, washing machine, and many other things, often more thought and gathering of information is involved than in choosing a mate. This is proven when most people keep their homes, cars, etc., yet four out of ten discard their mates as not satisfactory! After we say "I do" it is too late to "don't" then. So if you are NOT married let us think together. First, your parents (if they are proper parents) know far more about character and traits of people than you do. They have a lot of time, money, and tears invested in you. They love you in a way that no other ever will. They will be the most unselfish people whom you will ever meet. They are concerned solely with what is best for you. So heed them in the company you choose, where you go and what you do! Ask them about your company before "puppy love" sets in. You know puppies have a habit of growing into big dogs.

The boy or girl you marry will be the same boy or girl you will live with. Boys and girls have a habit of thinking that regardless of how many bad habits the other has, or regardless of how obnoxious the other is; when he, or she, says "I do" the "caterpillar" will become a "butterfly." But it just is not so! If the boy is sloppy and shiftless when he walks to the altar, he is the same way when he walks away! If the girl's room at home looks like the garbage dump, your home will look the same! You had better take a good long look at what and whom you are sacrificing the rest of your life for and to. You still can not make a silk purse from a sow's ear! If you will open your eyes, you can see that the same one who went to the altar, is following you away. "I do" will not make a man of a mouse! It will not purify, nor sanctify anyone. It is said that love is blind, but that is not true. So called love can cause one to close his eyes to what he does not want to see, or does not want to accept!

To the person whose mate is dead, God has commanded that a Christian be selected for the next mate (1 Cor. 7:39). The first marriage is not so commanded of God, but every one knows that two

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**FULTON COUNTY  
GOSPEL NEWS**

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen  
and Harold Turner

# How Does God Speak To Man Today?

By Clovis Ragsdale

There are many examples in the Old Testament where God spoke directly to men, such as Noah, Adam, Cain, the prophets and others. These men received instructions, encouragement, and judgments pertaining to responsibilities for themselves and others. Sometimes angels were used to bring God's message to man. However, in the New Testament we find a change in God's method of communications with man.

In Matt. 17:5, the voice of God declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." In Matt. 28:18 Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And in Hebrews 1:1-2 the writer tells us, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds."

The above passages make it clear that God no longer speaks directly to man, and that Christ became his spokesman for those under the New Testament. Jesus taught face to face with men for about three and a half years. During this time he chose and trained the apostles to continue his teaching after he ascended back to the Father. He assured these men that they would be aided by the Holy Spirit, as we see in John 14:20: "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." These men were to take Christ's message to the world, which they did, both through publically preaching and through writing. Jesus promised them that they would receive "All truth" John 16:13. And Paul stated in Acts 20:27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." All of God's message was made known through these men.

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"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133:1

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on the head! Pick the type person who will make the proper mate, then be prepared to live with that mate as long as the two of you live. Select a mate with the understanding that it is to be a mate for life. If you will do this, you will do it more carefully.

Why, then, do some today make the claim that God has spoken directly to them? Could this be true and be in harmony with the teachings of Christ and his apostles? Too, if God speaks to some today and not to everyone, would not this make him a respecter of persons? Yet the Bible teaches that God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11) Which are we to believe, the inspired writers, or the claims of men? Could men be deceived into believing that God has spoken to them? In 2 Thess. 2:9-11 we read where some will be deceived into believing a lie rather than the word of God.

The truth of the matter is that God speaks to all men today, but he does so through the writings of Christ and his apostles. These writings contain the complete will of God for all men. And the invitation is for all to come - "And the Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17)

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"If you can't believe all you hear, you should at least believe all that you say."

"The devil has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all."

"Wild tongues run down more people than wild driving."

"When tempted to gossip, breathe through your nose."

"God's love for poor sinners is very wonderful, but God's patience with ill-natured saints is a deeper mystery."

"Happiness isn't found half as often as it is earned."

"No one can make a fool of you, but someone can give you the opportunity to do a thorough job all by yourself."

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes." Prov. 12:15.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14:12

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23

## Choosing A Mate (Cont.)

Christians have a better chance to pattern a home after God's plan. There are principles to encourage Christians to marry Christians, but to say this is a sin the first time, is not of faith. God does not forbid the first marriage from being "out of the Lord," but we all know that it is better to marry in the Lord. Thousands of young men and women who are Christians marry out of Christ and join their mates, or leave religion altogether. Yes, there are many who convert their mates, which leads to this - unless the Lord is first in the heart of the Christian who marries the non-Christian there is no hope for uniting the family in Christ.

A woman who is choosing a husband should look for a man whom she can admire, respect, love and trust. One whom she can be proud of and have confidence that she will be loved, respected, and cared for all of her life with him. One whom she would be proud to have as the father of her children and capable of "bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) Some thought and plans should be made to be sure that the children are brought up to serve God. Why bring a child into the world to feed the Devil's fires? There are enough of these now. Select a man of sterling character and integrity, for he must last a life time! The man is looking for a mother for his children, a companion for life, a keeper at home; one to share his joys and sorrows, to support him in success and failure, to be the "apple of his eye," pure and true; one whom he can admire, respect, and trust. When he says "This is my wife," he should be able to do it with joy and pride. This person whom you are dating now, does he, or she, meet these standards? If not, if you marry him or her, it will not change a hair

# The Two Of Us

By Harold Turner

In Romans 7:19 Paul reminds us of a truth that, no doubt, we would like to escape. He said, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." No matter how hard we may try to do what we know is right, we are brought face to face with the fact that we so often fail. This fact is true because, as Paul shows, there are two great forces warring within us. He said, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Paul shows here that even though his will and delight was to do that which was good, there was a weakness in his flesh that caused him to fail. This warfare is certainly real to every person who is striving to do God's will. How true are the words of the following poem:

Within my earthly temple  
 there's a crowd.  
 There's one of us that's humble  
 one that's proud,  
 There's one that's broken-hearted  
 for his sins,  
 And one that unrepentant  
 sits and grins;  
 There's one that loves  
 his neighbors as himself,  
 And one that cares for naught,  
 but fame and pelf,  
 From much corroding care  
 I should be free  
 If I could once determine  
 which is me!

We are in so many ways two people, each pulling in a different direction. One wanting to do right and the other wanting to do wrong. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:17)

Living the Christian life involves, not so much perfection, but learning what is right, and then fighting with all our might to do it. The scriptures provide us the guidelines for this fight. In 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The scriptures inform us not only of the devices of Satan, but of our own areas of

weakness. They help us to see both of us, the fleshly nature and the spiritual. And they provide the instructions to help us grow out of the control of the fleshly nature.

Truly there is a fight to be fought against ourselves. In fact the greatest battle that any person will ever fight, is the battle within himself. May we have the courage to fight a good fight, and the faith to win the victory. There is more truth than poetry to the old saying: "Man is his own greatest enemy."

We will never attain perfection. But we have the assurance that as long as we keep fighting this battle we are not under condemnation for every failure. In Rom. 7:24, 25 Paul questioned the results of his failures, saying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" If he was unable to attain perfection, if he did wrong and failed to do good, who would deliver him from this condemnation? His answer, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And he continued in Rom. 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We can win the battle. We can overcome, but we must fight a good fight. May we never grow discouraged and give up to the weaker nature, but rather grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and some day it will be worth all the efforts we put forth to win.

# What Makes A Leader A Leader?

By Dub McClish

There are many books on the subject of leadership. Several companies offer special seminars on the subject. Countless words have been spoken and millions of dollars spent to discover the secrets of leadership. It is generally conceded that 'good leaders are made, not born.' While some may be more naturally blessed in appearance, stature, voice, or with opportunity, than others, some of history's most powerful leaders have risen to the top without such advantages. Leadership may involve some luck ("being in the right place at the right time" or "knowing the right people"), but it will always be more a matter of skill in acquiring certain traits.

The Lord's people ought to be keenly concerned about good leadership. No organization, including the church, can rise above its leaders. Those who would be defined as "leaders" in a local church would include its elders, deacons, and preachers, at least. Others who teach are also in a leadership role. Like many other positions, some are leaders "in name" only, while others truly are "out front." In the interest of improving our leadership abilities, consider the following checklist:

1. **A LEADER PROVIDES DIRECTION.** The term "leader" necessarily implies as much. He is sure of where he is going and can provide guidance for others. He is able and willing to do what he leads others to do.
2. **A LEADER GETS DISCOURAGED, BUT HE KEEPS GOING.** He sees others idle who should be busy. He suffers defeats and falls short of some goals, but he doesn't quit or give up.
3. **A LEADER GETS EXHAUSTED, BUT HE PRESSES ON.** In battle, the commanding officer has to be a man who can stay awake when all others have fallen asleep. Elders and preachers and other hard workers get exhausted, but only the followers stop. The true leaders press on.
4. **A LEADER GETS CRITICIZED, BUT HE DOESN'T QUIT.** Many a great project was nipped in the bud by withering criticism. Many a saint has had his zeal quenched by hypocriticism. The leader does not escape such, but he toils on in spite of it, like the greatest leader did.
5. **A LEADER MAKES MISTAKES, BUT HE LEARNS FROM THEM, CORRECTS THEM AND BECOMES A BETTER LEADER BECAUSE OF THEM.** Most people allow their mistakes to become millstones, dragging them down, but they are stepping stones to the true leader.

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# Labourers In His Vineyard

By W. L. Totty

Jesus said, "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard." The kingdom of heaven in this passage is the church, the labourers in the vineyard represent members of the church, and the householder is a figure of speech referring to God. Therefore, God looks upon members of the church as labourers to work in his church or kingdom. No doubt, too many of us fail to realize the importance and meaning of the word labourer.

There was a time when men who worked hard for long hours were classed as laborers. Industrial plants have workmen whom they classify as laborers. They are usually men who are unskilled in some trade; or we might be prone to refer to them as the "blue-collar workers."

That picture ought to give us an idea of what God expects of us in His church. He expects us to labor. The purpose of God's establishing the church was to save the world from sin, and our job is to direct the world to the church. We can do that through many channels. Gospel preaching is one of the ways to attract men's attention. Yet, on the other hand, there are many people who must be directed to the place where they can hear gospel preaching, and that is a job for all of us, whether great or small.

In every congregation there are those who are continually bringing others to the meetings of the church; and they are the ones who are responsible, largely, for the growth of the church. There are others of us who attend all the meetings, perhaps, but never try to interest other people in the meetings. We have the attitude that there is no need to invite and insist that others come, because we think they will not listen to us; and so, we just do nothing about it.

There is another group who are very irregular and indifferent toward attending the meetings themselves. They are the ones who, instead of doing something to build up the church and to save other people, are a burden upon those who are working, because the church must continue to insist that those persons be faithful in order that they may be saved themselves.

It is strange that people who know enough to be members of the church have such an indifferent attitude toward the church. There is a serious doubt as to whether such persons will be saved or not. The Lord commands us to try to save others, and it is exceedingly doubtful that we can be saved ourselves without trying to save someone else.

## Do We Inherit Sin? (Cont.)

heaven?" And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." If little children were born with a corrupt nature, surely Jesus wouldn't have used this corrupt nature to teach us true greatness and conversion.

Let's look at some of the scriptures used to suggest that sin is inherited. One passage frequently used is Psalm 51:5, which states, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Does this suggest that David was a sinner from the moment of his conception? Keeping in mind the Bible definition of sin, of what sin was David guilty at conception? There is nothing in this scripture that places the blame or guilt of sin upon David.

A second scripture used is Romans 5:12, which states, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." This is a reference often used to show that we have inherited sin from Adam. Through Adam, sin did enter into the world, and the penalty placed upon sin was death. This penalty of death passed upon all men, but why? Not because of Adam's sin, but because "all have sinned."

In Eph. 2:1-3 Paul shows when and how the penalty of death passed upon man. It was not at birth, but by the course of his actions. Notice, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Death had passed upon them because they "walked" after the course of this world, and a walk that was spurred by the desires and lusts of the flesh and mind. Man is not born a sinner, he sins by going astray when the desires and lusts of his flesh and mind begin to control his actions.

Another scripture that is important to consider on this subject is Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Does this teach that we are made sinners as a result of Adam's disobedience? If we are universally made sinners because of Adam's sin, then we would all be made righteous because of the Lord's

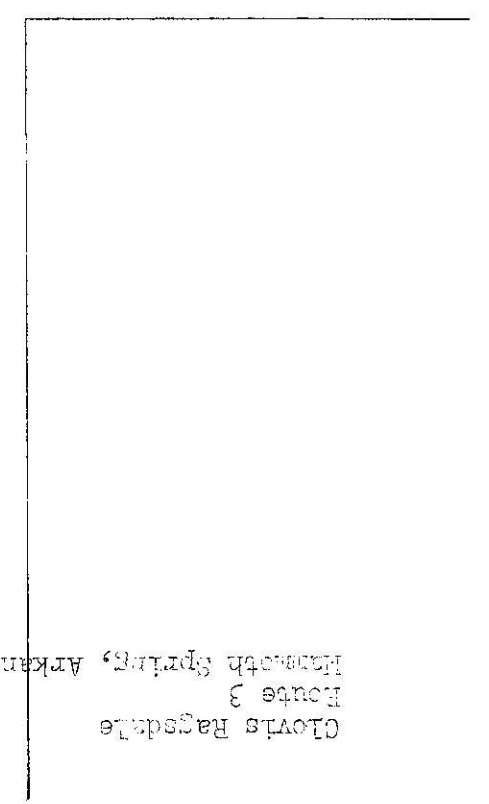
obedience; thus, we would have universal condemnation before Christ came, and universal salvation after He came. This, of course, is not in harmony with the other teachings of God's word. If men were saved solely by the obedience of Christ, there would be no reason or need for preaching the gospel. But men are lost because of sin, they need to hear and believe the gospel, and then act by that faith in obeying God's will in order to be saved.

We were not born with the guilt of sin. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. Each person is responsible for his own personal conduct. Sin is not inherited, it is committed. And before one can be saved he must turn from his sins and obey the will of God. Jesus assured us that not everyone is going to enter the kingdom of heaven. Only those who do God's will shall be granted this blessing. (Matt. 7:21)

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. 55:8-9.

"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart." Psalm 119:2

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Psalm 127:1



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