Clips from Psalms

Psalms 105:25-27

"God turned the hearts of Egypt to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants. He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. They set among them his signs, and wonders in the land of Ham."

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Are we Born Sinners?

"Surely I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5).

Psalms 55:5 has been used by Calvinists to teach that people are sinners at birth. The "T" in the acronym TULIP stands for "total hereditary depravity." Albert Barnes writes that David's sin with Bathsheba was not "an offence committed under the influence of strong temptation, but that it was the result of an entire corruption of his nature, a deep depravity of heart, running back to the very commencement of his being... a depravity so deep as to demonstrate that it must have had its origin in the very beginning of his existence... The idea is simply that he was born in iniquity; or that he was a sinner when he was born; or that his sin could be traced back to his very birth... he was a born sinner" (Barnes' Notes on Psalms volume 2 page 85). The NIV Bible words this verse just as Barnes explains it. Psalms 51:5 reads, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (New International Version Bible).

Let us consider the context of this statement and the continuity of God's word. David has committed adultery with Bathsheba and to cover it up he had her husband, Uriah, murdered. The one problem David could not erase was that the omniscient God of heaven saw the sin (2 Samuel 11:27). God sent his prophet Nathan to correct the error of the king. Nathan succeeds by producing great guilt in the heart of David (2 Samuel 12). David acknowledges his iniquity and prays that God would have mercy on him and forgive the sin. If David was a born sinner and could not help himself why would he need to pray to God for forgiveness? Secondly, why would David feel the sting of guilt and shame if God had created him as a sinner? If God creates man as sinners why should we be ashamed of how we are made? The Apostle Paul said, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why did you make me like this?" (Romans 9:20)

Furthermore we must look to what sin and iniquity is. The Apostle John defines sin as a violation of law (see 1 John 3:4). The Apostle Paul tells us that if there were no law then there would be no sin (see Romans 4:15 and 7:7). When man sins against God's laws he actually works against God's divine expectation (see Leviticus 11:44 and 1 Peter 1:15-16). The problem...
that the Calvinist runs into is that God's divine expectation for man is absolute perfection (see Matthew 5:48; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 4:17 and Revelation 2:4, 14, 20; 3:3; 15-16; 18:4 just to name a few). How can God expect something of man that he did not create him to be if all men are born sinners? Again, sin is defined as a violation of law as seen above. What law is there that a new born baby has violated? If the psalmist meant to say that David has inherited the sins of his mother who inherited them from Adam then he violates other scriptures. Ezekiel said that "The soul that sins 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" (Ezekiel 18:20).

David's words, at verse five, take into consideration his own current sin and God's overall teaching on the subject. The natural conclusion is that he was born into a world where sin was a real choice for man to make. David's own mother lived and sinned in this same world. This is the only conclusion that fits both context and the rest of the Bible on the subject of sin. To say David was a born sinner is to violate other scriptures. We know that God is not the author of confusion (see 1 Corinthians 14:34). Every man, who has ever lived on the face of the earth, with the exception of Christ has chosen at some point to sin (Hebrews 4:15 and Romans 3:23). The most popular rout to take in this world is sin (see Matthew 7:13). The influence of fame, fortune, and power is very difficult to fight (see Zechariah 9:1ff and Revelation 13:3). Those who choose to walk as Jesus did; however, will be meek and they will glorify God (see Zechariah 9:9).

Jesus, recognizing the strong draw of sin, told his disciples to pray because "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). The word "weak" (Greek "hasthenes") means "without strength, weak, and feeble" (LS 123). Man makes the conscience choice to either serve the passions of the flesh or to live by the spirit of God (see Romans 8:5-10). Prior to Paul making these remarks about the flesh and spirit he commanded baptized believers to sin no more (Romans 6:1-7). The point is clearly made throughout the scriptures. Man is born into a world where Satan rules and we all have the responsibility to fight the good fight of faith and not sin (see John 14:30 and 1 Timothy 6:12). To say that we are born sinners by nature is to excuse our behavior. God has never given man an excuse for sinful behavior but rather a remedy through Christ (see Matthew 26:26). The Apostle John sums up the entirety of the world we live in at John 2:16 saying, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." All of us are born into this lustful vainglorious world and we are challenged to be separate from sin (see 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

**Bible Baptism**

**Introduction**

Anabaptist believe that baptism is an outward personal sign or testimony that the person's sins have already been washed away by the cross of Christ. The Baptist church believes that baptism is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to the believer’s faith in the final resurrection of the dead. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament." Catholic baptism includes infants and sprinkling. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that baptism should be performed by complete immersion (submersion) only when an individual is old enough to understand its significance. They believe that water baptism is an outward symbol that a person has made an unconditional dedication through Jesus Christ to do the will of God. Presbyterians believe that baptism is a sacrament, a symbolic ritual, and a seal of the adult believer’s present faith. It is an outward sign of an inward grace. The Seventh Day Adventist do not believe baptism is essential for salvation but is necessary to become a member of their church. There are many more religious groups to examine yet for the sake of space we can only look at a few. There are so many different beliefs about baptism. Let us look to the Bible to see what it says and let that settle the matter.

**First**, baptism is the fulfillment of God's promise to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4).

**Secondly**, people enter into the kingdom of God, church, through baptism (Acts 2:37-44).

**Thirdly**, baptism saves one by water. Noah and his family were saved by water when they complied with God's command to build and faithfully wait (1 Peter 3:21).

**Fourthly**, baptism is a cleansing of sins (Acts 22:16 and Titus 3:5-6).

**Fifthly**, baptism is compared to a death to sinful living and life to righteousness (see Romans 6:1-11).

**Sixthly** people put on Christ through baptism (Galatians 3:27).

**Seventhly**, baptism clears the conscience and is the answer to the interrogating questions of the sinner regarding salvation (see 1 Peter 3:21 and Hebrews 9:11-14).

**Conclusion**

God commanded baptism for forgiveness and entrance into his church. All who subject their will to the will of God will be saved if they continue in faith and obedience. Both the Bible and religious denominations have much to say about baptism. Will you believe men or will you believe God?