

I was recently amazed to discover that there are some who believe that we only become *sinner*s when we commit sins – i.e., we are born sinless! They stumble over a proper understanding of God’s creative acts regarding man (and really, of all of created life); God created Adam and Eve in His own image as sinless beings. What we must not miss is that they, along with all other life, were created by God with the ability to reproduce after their own kind (Genesis 1:12, 21, 25); God specifically commanded Adam and Eve: “Be fruitful, and multiply [become many], and replenish [fill] the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28a).¹ The reality is that God placed within His living creation the ability to reproduce without His ongoing creative involvement, otherwise on the seventh day He could not have declared His creative work to be *ended* (completed, finished; Genesis 2:2).² Isaiah recorded these words of Jehovah: “I have made the earth, and created man upon it” (Isaiah 45:12); both *made* and *created* are in the perfect tense, which means that they are identifying a completed action.³ It is not that God has abandoned His creation, for we are also told that through Jesus *all things* (speaking of creation) *consist* (Colossians 1:17b). The Greek word used is *sunistao* (*consist*), which primarily means to put together and, within this context, speaks of the continual functioning of the universe in all of its complexity.⁴ The Lord ensures that all of the planets, galaxies, and stars continue in their patterns of movement as they were created so that “while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22). The Lord is actively involved in sustaining His creation, but His creative work is now limited to the new *creation* that we can become in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). Therefore, with every new life that is born on earth (whether human or creature), we see evidence of God’s original creative acts and not of God continuing to create today; this is an important understanding, particularly in light of those who believe that children are born sinless.

With this understanding as a foundation, we can then consider how the descendants of Adam and Eve come into this world. Jesus said, “Suffer [permit] little children [*paidia* – infants or small children] to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16).⁵ This, and the other similar passages, are claimed to provide proof that we are all born sinless; because God will not abide sin within His kingdom, such small children must, therefore, be sinless. Yes, Jesus identified that His kingdom is made up of those who bear the special qualities of small children (*such as*),⁶ which is why He went on to say that unless we accept His kingdom as a little child, we will absolutely not enter into it (Luke 18:17; the Greek *ou* and *me* negatives, along with *enter* being in the subjunctive mood [which normally indicates something that is a possibility but not a certainty], makes this a very strong negative).⁷ When the disciples questioned Jesus as to who would be the greatest in His kingdom, He said this: “Except ye be converted [*should be changed inwardly* (subjunctive mood, passive voice; we must choose to be changed, but it is God Who does the changing – cp. Romans 12:2)], and become as little children [*paidia* - plural], ye

¹ Strong’s Online: <https://onlinebible.net/>.

² BDB, *Bibleworks* 8.

³ Strong’s Online.

⁴ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon (*Bibleworks* 8).

⁵ Stephanus 1550 NT, *Bibleworks* 8.

⁶ Friberg Lexicon.

⁷ https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-negation.htm

shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall [*may – humble* is in the subjunctive mood – this is our choice, a possibility] humble [active voice – we must do the humbling] himself as this little child [*paidion* - singular], the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3-4).⁸ Even though Jesus says that His kingdom is made up of those who are **like** little children, if we consider His words carefully, we can see that it is not because they are sinless, but because they have a special quality (*humble*) that we must have in order to enter His kingdom. He clarifies that it is their humility, evidenced by their innocence and lack of personal pride that they are held as an example of those who are in His kingdom. Little children are totally dependent on their parents to care for them, they do not hold themselves in high regard and they have no concept of what is right or wrong. Jesus says that we should *humble* ourselves like a little child (it is a choice that we must make): place ourselves under the Father’s care, live in humility before Him, and permit His Spirit to guide us into all truth (which means that we may have to relearn what is right and wrong). However, the innocence of a little child does not last long; too soon they all begin to express a mind of their own, thereby revealing their *sin nature* – there is a natural rebellion that stirs within them.

“Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin [*hamartia*] entered into the world [*kosmos* – mankind, all of humanity], and death by sin [*and through sin (hamartia) death*]; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned [*thus to all men death extended because all did sin (hamartano* – the verb form of *hamartia*; the sin that entered humanity through Adam is active within all of us as evidenced by death)]” (Romans 5:12).⁹ Through his sin of disobedience, Adam inflicted all of his posterity with sin (*hamartia*) – separation from God is the natural determination for all of humanity. Paul describes us all as having been *by nature the children of wrath* (Ephesians 2:3); *nature (phusis)* speaks of a natural endowment or ability (as opposed to something that we learn), and the Greek root (*phuo*) means to be born.¹⁰ Therefore, Paul is teaching that, left to his own devices, everyone is abiding under God’s wrath for we are all *naturally* separated from Him; “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). Paul is quoting the Psalmist: “God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God ... *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psalm 53:2-3). To be described as being *righteous* requires an evaluation of one’s actions, which is in keeping with the Hebrew that Paul quoted that says that *none doeth good* – i.e., no one is *doing* that which is morally right (*good*) so that they might be called *righteous*. Since both *righteous* and *doeth good* speak of living according to God’s Word (within this context), neither one can be applied to *little children* because they cannot *do* anything – they are innocent, free from being guilty of doing anything wrong, but also incapable of doing anything of their own volition.¹¹

We have just seen that it was through one man, namely Adam, that sin was brought into this world, and what came with *sin* was death. When Adam sinned, *death* not only came to all of his offspring, but it also inflicted all of the rest of God’s living creation; everything that had been

⁸ Strong’s Online; Stephanus 1550 NT.

⁹ Stephanus 1550 NT; Strong’s Online.

¹⁰ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

¹¹ <http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/innocent>

placed under man's dominion would now experience corruption and death (Genesis 1:28). When Eve was deceived, it was Satan who deceived her through the medium of the serpent; therefore, when Adam chose to disobey the Lord, he, in fact, turned away from the Lord as his Master and submitted himself to the authority of Satan, the deceiver. Through Adam's sin, Satan became the authority over man and everything that God had placed under him. We see this exemplified when Satan tempted the Lord Jesus: "And the devil, taking him [Jesus] up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power [*exousia* – authority] will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me [perfect tense (a completed, one-time action with ongoing results); passive voice (it was given to him by Adam)]; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:5-8).¹² Satan offers the Lord Jesus authority over all of the kingdoms of the world, and he is not questioned as to either his ability or his right to do so; he is called the *prince* (*archon* – a ruler, one who has authority) of *this world* and the *prince* (*archon*) of the power of the air (John 16:11; Ephesians 2:2).¹³ Everything in this world is subject to death, and death came into this world through the sin of Adam: the just recompense for sin is death (Romans 6:23), yet even the creation that does not sin has been made subject to death. Therefore, we understand that the influence of Satan is far broader than just mankind, and we can see that the consequences of sin (corruption and death) reach even to that which cannot sin. Paul described that which has overtaken all of creation as being *corruption*: "Because the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage [*douleia* – slavery] of corruption [*phthora* – perishable, subject to decay] into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).¹⁴ Every generation of the earth's plants, animals, birds, fish, insects, and every creeping thing bears the consequence of Adam's disobedience (i.e., death). Therefore, it is not difficult to see that the innocent child, although being the likeness of all who make up the Lord's kingdom, also carries within him the sentence of death and the propensity to sin; once the *innocence* has been outgrown, then sin will enter and his name will be removed from the Book of Life (Exodus 32:33).

When Moses was somewhat delayed in returning from communing with Jehovah, Aaron, in responding to the demands of Israel, made a golden calf to which they could look as a physical representation of the God Who had led them out of Egypt. Moses returned, chastised the people for their sin, and returned up the mountain to plead their case before Jehovah. Moses asked the Lord to forgive Israel for their sin of idolatry, and then said: "if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exodus 32:32). In other words: Lord, if you will not forgive these people, then I want You to remove my name from Your Book. However, in His response to Moses, the Lord said: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus 32:33); it is the one who has sinned (perfect tense, a completed past action) against the Lord who will have his name removed (*blot out* – imperfect mood, indicating an incomplete action) from His Book. If

¹² Strong's Online.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

we consider this carefully, this sin is an act or thought against the Lord and the consequence of this thought or deed is that God will obliterate the sinner's name from His Book. This means that before someone carries out a thought or deed against the Lord, his name is in God's Book; if it wasn't, God wouldn't be able to remove it when he sinned. This dovetails nicely with Jesus' words that His kingdom is made up of little children and those who will humble themselves to become like them (Matthew 18:3-4). During their time of innocence, little children have their names recorded in God's Book, but the moment that they sin against the Lord, their names are removed – but notice that this is not a completed action (it is in the imperfect tense) for there is more that can take place. Consider, for a moment, some scenarios of how this *imperfect* tense can be worked out in the long view: 1) an innocent child sins, his name is removed from the Book, and he never places his faith in the Lord for salvation – when he stands before God at the white throne judgment, his works will be reviewed (with no saving works found), his name will not be found in God's Book, and he will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:12-15). 2) An innocent child sins, his name is removed, he places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (his name is written into God's Book), and he lives faithfully for Him all the rest of his days – he will be taken by the Lord's angels when He comes for His own, and will abide with the Lord forever (Matthew 24:30-31). 3) An innocent child sins, his name is removed, he places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (his name is written into God's Book), but he falls into unfaithfulness and his name is removed from the Book – when he stands before God at the white throne judgment, there will be no saving works, his name will not be found in God's Book, and he will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Ezekiel 18:24; Hebrews 6:4-6). 4) During the millennium, an innocent child sins, his name is removed, he places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, his name is written into God's Book and he lives faithfully for Him all the rest of his days – when he dies (at the time when the old heaven and earth are removed), he will stand before God and, even though there will be no saving works on his record, because his name is in the Book of Life he will be welcomed into the glories of eternity with the Lord (Revelation 21:27). The word of the Lord to Moses was that the name of the one who sinned against Him would be removed from His Book; this speaks of the once innocent, little child (whose name is in His Book) sinning and, thereby, having his name removed.

Jesus asked: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29, 31). Indeed, the Lord notes the death of the creatures, but it is only for mankind that He established a means for restoring fellowship with Him; within all of creation, only man bears the image of the Lord God, and Jesus died for the sins that separate mankind from Him – He paid the price required to buy us out of sin. “He [Jesus] is the propitiation [the Means of forgiveness] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world [all of humanity]” (1 John 2:2).¹⁵ However, Jesus' death did not automatically write everyone's name into the Book of Life – the potential is there, because he died for everyone's sins, but salvation comes only to those who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for the cleansing of their sins **and** then live faithfully for Him all of their days on earth. Jesus also said: “And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful despite

¹⁵ Friberg Lexicon.

trials] unto the end, the same [this one!] shall [will (future tense)] be saved” (Mark 13:13).¹⁶ Faithfulness to the Lord is central to experiencing His salvation one day, and *faithfulness* only comes by abiding in Christ. Jesus was very clear: “If ye love me, **keep my commandments**” (John 14:15); “**Abide in me**, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me” (John 15:4) – obedience and abiding are inextricably linked. Paul wrote of this same relationship: “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are **in Christ Jesus**, who **walk** not after the flesh, but **after the Spirit**” (Romans 8:1) – abiding *in Christ* **and** living (*walk*) in accordance with the Spirit’s leading (obedience).

As we bring all of this together, we can see that couched behind the innocence of little children is a heart that will lead them into sin. Inasmuch as children are unable to actively sin against God or man, they abide within a state of innocence, yet they also bear an inheritance from their father, Adam, that will become evident as their innocence wanes. This is why it is so important to understand that Jesus died for the *hamartia* of everyone ever born into the world. “For God so loved [*agape* – a love that is a function of the will, not the emotions] the world [*kosmos* – humanity], that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever [this is singular in the Greek] believeth [*is believing* – present tense; active voice (the singular *whosoever* is doing the *believing*)] in him should not perish [*perish* is in the subjunctive mood, but as part of a purpose clause, it must be taken as *will not perish*; keep in mind that this is **only** for the one who *is believing*], but have [*will be having* – same as for *perish*] everlasting life” (John 3:16).¹⁷ God’s *love* is for all of humanity, but it will only bring salvation to those who are actively and continuously *believing* in the sacrifice that the Son made for sin.

When God determined to destroy mankind with a flood, He found Noah who willingly obeyed His instructions. Noah built an ark for the preservation of life, preached God’s salvation to everyone who would listen while he built it, yet there were only eight who entered the ark to escape God’s judgment by the flood. Moses brought God’s determination of how He wanted Israel to live, yet contained within all of those laws and ordinances (the Law of Moses) was provision to extend His salvation to all peoples: “And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever *be* among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; **as ye do, so he shall do**. One ordinance [*chuuqah* – something prescribed (by God), a statute] *shall be both* for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth *with you*, an ordinance [*chuuqah*] for ever in your generations: **as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD**. One law and one manner [*mishpat* – judgment; the Law in action, ordinance] shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you” (Numbers 15:14-16).¹⁸ Jehovah’s desire for Israel was that they would keep His commandments and become a nation of priests to the world (Exodus 19:6); although Israel never fulfilled the Lord’s desire, He included provision for the non-Israelite (*stranger*) among them. Salvation has always been for all men, and it has always been accessible only through faith in the Lord – either in His promises (OT) or in His Sacrifice (NT).

¹⁶ Strong’s Online.

¹⁷ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon; https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm.

¹⁸ Strong’s Online; BDB; the only restrictions placed upon the *stranger* pertained to partaking of the Passover (Exodus 12:48) and his access to the tabernacle of the Lord (Numbers 1:51).

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul confessed that “the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (Romans 7:19); there was a battle being waged within him, with an innate tendency toward sin (either through omission, not doing the good that is known, or by commission, doing the wrong that is also known). The resolution to this conflict is to abide in Christ and live according to the leading of the Spirit of God (Romans 8:1); this requires considering our fleshly nature to be crucified with Christ (dead through Him) so that we might live in new life in Him (Romans 6:11). It means to put off the *old man* with its sinful propensity, and to put on the *new man* who has been created by God in Christ in *righteousness* and *holiness of the truth* (Ephesians 2:10; 4:22-24).

A promoter of the concept of children being born sinless clarified his position by declaring: “Men do not sin by nature. They obey God by nature ... All sin is against our nature. All righteousness [*sic*] conforms to our nature.”¹⁹ This makes it very evident that they are saying that a child is born without a sin nature; the child is not only innocent (in that they have not committed a sin) but there is no propensity to sin within them; therefore, since everyone will sin (*for all have sinned* – Romans 3:23), this means that everyone who grows out of “sinless childhood” will choose to sin, even though it is against their *nature* – in all of the children of Adam, has no one remained sinless in keeping with the nature with which they have been born? As we have seen, such a position simply does not conform to the message of Scripture: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

The only man Who lived a sinless life was the Lord Jesus Christ, and He was not born of Adam! He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary, who was a virgin in keeping with the prophecy made through Isaiah: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). The promise that Jehovah made to Satan, right after he had deceived Eve, was that through the Seed of the woman would come One Who would deal him a death blow (Genesis 3:15). The Scriptures are clear that sin came into the world through Adam (Romans 5:12), and, therefore, it is because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit that He remained sinless even though He had a body of flesh. On the other hand, all who are born of Adam are *by nature the children of wrath* (Ephesians 2:3); within the heart of everyone is the propensity to sin. We are not sinners because we act contrary to our natures; rather, we are sinners because we act in keeping with the sin-nature that we have all inherited from our father, Adam.

God, in His mercy, accounts innocent children as being a part of His eternal kingdom, and everyone must humble himself as a little child in order to enter into that kingdom (Matthew 18:3-4). Central to being counted as a member of God’s kingdom is having our names recorded in His Book of Life; having your name in the Lamb’s Book will grant you access to the New Jerusalem in the eternal new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:27), and if your name is not in the Book, then your place will be in the Lake of Fire for eternity (Revelation 20:15).

Jesus taught some very clear principles for us to follow:

¹⁹ <https://www.gospeltruth.net/OS100bibleverses.htm>

1. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Conditional to our *love (agape)* for the Lord is our obedience to His commands (*keep* is a command);²⁰ if we are not living in obedience to Him, then we cannot say that we *love* Him.

2. “I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:5, 8). We are to be abiding in the Lord, and so we will be His fruitful children and disciples; this *fruit* is a product of remaining in Him: *righteousness and true holiness* (in keeping with putting on the *new man* – Ephesians 4:24), which are an expected result of walking in accordance with the resident Spirit of God (Romans 8:1-4).

3. “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound [be increased], the love [*agape*] of many shall wax cold [wane]. But he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful through trials (the deception and waning love)] unto the end [our death or the Lord’s return], the same [it is this faithful one who] shall [will (future tense)] be saved” (Matthew 24:11-13).²¹ Once we have placed our faith in the Lord Jesus and have been grafted into Him (Romans 11:17-21), then it is critically important to our salvation that we remain in faithfulness to Him unto the end of our time on earth.

Even though we are not born sinless, God has made adequate provision for the restoration of our relationship with Him; we have been blessed with *every spiritual blessing in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3). We must be careful not to overlook or downplay the importance of being found *in Christ*; there is no hope outside of Him “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

²⁰ Strong’s Online.

²¹ Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.