

EXTREMELY SINFUL: Psalm 51

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Psalm **51** records David's response to his sin with Bathsheba: heading of the Psalm, "*When Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone into Bathsheba*" (2 Samuel **11-12**).

David's redeeming quality was admission of his sin, his willingness to repent, and his concern to reach out to God for forgiveness: Psalm **51**:1-4, 7-17, which is the bulk of the Psalm.

David felt totally characterized by sin as when we say someone is a "born liar."

Similar comments are "*He is a born salesman*"; "it's second nature, like "breathing in and breathing out" (*My Fair Lady*).

David took full responsibility for his sin: "*Against you, and you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. So you are justified when you condemn.*" He is not blaming his sin on being born that way or claiming his mother conceived him in adultery.

David's being "*born in sin*" (**51**:5) is comparable to his statement in Psalm **58**:3, "*The wicked go astray from the womb, speaking lies.*" Of course, these babies did not talk immediately after birth; the point is, they "*have always been liars,*" characteristically so. Likewise in **51**:3 David says, "*My sin is always before me.*" Total degree is expressed by total time.

Other expressions involving babies and birth:

Psalm **22**:9-10 makes a positive statement about babies: "*You that brought me [David] out of the womb have made me trust you on my mother's breasts.*" The point is that David has had to trust God all his life. It is a stretch to say that brand new infants are literally trusting their mothers. They are hardly making any deliberate response in any way.

Luke **10**:21, "*I praise you, Father, . . . for hiding these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealing them to babies.*" People that are "like babies" (in their simplicity of faith/trust toward God) are called "babies."

Matthew **21**:16 draws on Psalm **8**:2 when he responds to the religious leaders' objection to the unbridled enthusiasm of the children at the Triumphal Entry, "*Out of the mouth of nursing babies, you have prepared praise for yourself.*" God is worthy of praise all the time by absolutely everybody.

Romans **2**:19-20 chastises religious leaders that think of themselves as so superior to other people that they presume to guide, enlighten, correct, and teach as if others are babies in comparison to themselves.

John **9**:34 quotes the Pharisees as telling the man born blind, "*You were altogether born in sins,*" as an explanation of the man's blindness. The implication is that they did not consider themselves to be born in sin. Sinfulness at birth had nothing to do with his condition; neither did his parents' sin (**9**:3). Sinfulness is not an explanation for experiencing tragedy.

1 John 5:16: “*sin unto death*” uses the other end of the time of life to talk about characteristic sin, a sin that is not just a “slip up”; it is ongoing, repetitious sin. Compare our comment, “*Talk something to death.*”

“*You are always making fun of me.*” Well, that is not true about every comment one person makes to another. It is an exaggeration for emphasis.

Note the threefold manner of emphasis using time to express it: from birth, always, till death.

Note Paul’s comment in Romans 7:9, “*I was alive apart from the law once, but when the commandment came, sin came alive, and I died.*” Paul was not born sinful. Sin is not imputed until knowledge of the law takes place. We call it “the age of accountability.”

Quick notes on natural depravity (fallen nature biologically inheritable from Adam and Eve’s sin)

1. Unnecessary

for explaining universal sinfulness

Adam and Eve sinned prior to “the Fall” that supposedly brought the depravity that causes everybody to sin.

Sufficient explanation for universal sin without speculating an in-born depravity evil influence: Satan creates doubt about God’s motives: “*he knows you will become like him.*”

Satan denies Adam and Eve will die like God said.

Satan makes false promises, half-truths: “*you will become like God/god’s.*” viewpoint of consciousness, which can become selfishness/self-centeredness.

Satan claimed the fruit would make a person wise, know good and evil.

pervertible physical desires (good for food)

Genesis 3 does not say our first parents lost any spiritual capacity, just physical elements: death, pain, labor to produce food, clothes, and shelter circumstances: dismissed from the Garden, separated from the tree of life, separation from God: sense of nakedness, fear

for explaining why people cannot save themselves

Perfection is the standard.

“Nobody’s perfect.”

Adam and Eve were dismissed from the Garden after one sin.

Once perfection is lost, by the nature of what it is, a sinner cannot regain it.

Salvation is reconciliation between persons (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

Forgiveness and restored friendship are always pronounced by the person sinned against. Repentance by the sinner does not restore the relationship: Esau was rejected in regard to his relinquished right of the first-born even though he sought it diligently with tears (Hebrews 12:17). Repentance by the sinner does not produce forgiveness by the one sinned against.

2. Inadequate basis

The texts appealed to are exaggerations for emphasis: Psalm 51:5; 58:3. They would create contradiction with other texts if taken literally: Romans 7:9. They would be unreal if taken literally: Psalm 58:3.

3. Impossible concept

Sin is an act, which by nature cannot be inherited.