

Studying the Psalms

Psalms Of Repentance

Psalms 51

September 10, 2023

Psalms 51 – Psalms of Repentance

Psalms 51:3–4, *“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.”*

- Acknowledgment – this is what repentance is about! David knows that he has committed MANY sins and he lays them open. He is no longer hiding what he had done (unlike prior to Nathan confronting him).
- There are many times when we, as part of our repentance, need to lay open our sins to those involved (James 5:16; Psalms 38:18)
- How often do we not specifically admit what we are guilty of because we don’t really want to let all be known? There are times when a general confession is sufficient, but at other times we need to be specific so that there is no doubt of our intent to change.

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- “My sin is ever before me” – a serious sin will always be remembered. We cannot undo the damage, but have to live with it. This does not mean it is something to dwell on. Instead, we need to move on, forgetting the things behind. (Philippians 3:7-14)
- “Against You, You only, have I sinned” – every sin, even those against men, are also against God. When we sin, no matter how small and who ever else is involved, we have a problem with God FIRST.

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- We need to work it out with those we have sinned against. That is a part of our repentance. But peace with God is the ultimate need.
- And we must understand that with Him there is NO deceit or twisting of words. He knows your heart and words. (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalms 7:9; 139:1-4, 23-24; Jeremiah 17:10)
- “So that you are justified when you speak” – DON’T ever blame God for YOUR sins!
- Furthermore, ACCEPT the consequences of what you have done.

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Psalms 51:5, *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”*

- David acknowledges sin in his life. This verse is misapplied by many to say something it doesn’t say.
- This is because of the Calvinist leaning of some translators. Believers in the false doctrine of Original Sin (Total Hereditary Depravity) use this as a proof text to show that men are born sinners.
- The determining question is: To whom is the sin attributed, to the infant David, to his mother, or to the world into which he was born?

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Many English language translations (loosely defined) place the sin on the infant David, as having been born a sinner. Consider these versions:

- NIV – *“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*
- NLT – *“For I was born a sinner – yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.”*
- NET – *“Look, I was guilty of sin from birth, a sinner the moment my mother conceived me.”*
- NCV – *“I was brought into this world in sin. In sin my mother gave birth to me.”*

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By contrast, other translators attribute the sin to David’s mother, and/or perhaps the sinful world into which he was born. Consider these versions:

- ASV – “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*”
- ESV – “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*”
- KJV – “*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*”
- NKJV – “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*”
- RSV – “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*”

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Psalms 51:5, “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*”

Is this verse teaching Original Sin (Total Hereditary Depravity)? No!

- The Calvinistic doctrine which says that we inherit the sins of Adam is contrary to the word of God (Ezekiel 18:19-20; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 18:3; Mark 10:14)
- It is also contrary to the nature of God. God does not hold us accountable for what our parents did. (Psalms 62:12; Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:5-11)