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THE 2012 LECTURESHIP IS “IN GOD WE TRUST”

“In God We Trust” as the theme of the 2012 Memphis School of Preaching lectureship is a timely study of the most basic of all individual and national relationships. (This subject was suggested by Barry Grider, evangelist for the Forest Hill congregation which oversees the school.) Forty-seven speakers, God-willing, will be here starting the last Sunday in March to discuss the urgent need for this country and for Christians actually to return to trusting God. The phraseology, “In God We Trust,” appears on American coins, but it is quite evident that this nation is more secular than spiritual. A recent (September 13, 2011) issue of “USA Today” carried an article entitled, “More Americans customize religion to fit their personal needs” (sic.). The author of the foregoing article, Cathy Lynn Grossman, quotes George Barna (a “religion statistics expert”) reporting that Americans now say: “I believe God, I believe the Bible is a good book. And then I believe whatever I want.”

One of the studies in this year’s series is by Ken Ratcliff, an elder at the Schertz, Texas congregation and former Colonel in the Judge Advocate General’s office, and also a former candidate for president of the United States on what the courts have done to undermine the values in this nation. Ken’s manuscript is 36 pages long and contains material that starts with this nation’s Declaration of Independence until the present. There will be several studies on “whatever happened to” various values in America. Mark Mosher’s study of the terrible conditions in which many American children find themselves and Joe Wiley’s study of Christian education are invaluable materials. (Brother Wiley is president of Freed Hardeman University.)

Christians in America live in perilous times since, according to Barna (above) most are doing what is “right in their own eyes” (cf. Jud. 21:25). Agnosticism rules the day in this nation and are being led by the groups such as the anti-Christian ACLU. This lecture series is designed to encourage Bible believers not to give in and to inform them that there is always hope for those who trust in God (Psa. 56:4).

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
Dean of Academics

YOKEFELLOW

Vol. 39, No. 1

January 2012

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IS MAN BORN WITH A SINFUL NATURE? (An Examination of Psalm 51:5)

Curtis A. Cates

One of the many sectarian doctrines which has made its way into the modern so-called “versions” of the Bible is that of original sin, the Calvinistic tenet that Adam’s sin is imputed to every human being at conception or birth, thereby making him hereditarily totally depraved and wholly inclined to evil. This is especially apparent when they translate Psalm 51:5.

The Living Bible, The New Jerusalem Bible, and the New International Version are guilty. “But I was born a sinner, yes, from the moment my mother conceived me” (LB). “Remember, I was born guilty, a sinner from the moment of conception” (JB). “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (NIV). Contrast the translations above with those of the *King James Version* and *American Standard Version* (1901), which do not contain this fatal error.

Does Psalm 51:5 teach original sin, hereditary total depravity? This verse has been erroneously described as the strongest evidence for this doctrine in all of the Old Testament, and warnings have been strongly urged against twisting the verse in order not to teach that one inherits the “Adamic nature.”

Often when this scripture is discussed, the following false averments are set forth. 1. Man is born with a sinful nature. 2. Sin is the result of man’s pollution in the garden. 3. Man is racially polluted; his stock is corrupt. 4. Each person’s heart is entirely corrupt; otherwise, he would not have sinned. 5. Man does not even tend toward goodness. 6. The flesh is inherently frail, morally. 7. Sin was in the body when David was conceived; he was corrupt, his soul stained, his very constitution ingrained with sin – transmitted from his parents.

Briefly, the above errors disregard the fact that man, like sheep, goes astray when he transgresses God’s law (Isa. 53:6; Psa. 14:3; 1 John 5:17; 3:4). Babies are born innocent, sinless, safe (Psa. 106:37-38; Deu. 1:39; Rom. 9:11; 7:9; Mat. 19:13-15; 18:3). Each person is responsible for his own sins, not the sins of his parents (Eze. 18:20, 30; Deu. 24:16; Rom. 14:12; Eze. 33:20; Rev. 22:12; 1 Pet. 1:17). The spirit is the offspring of God, thus righteous and holy (Heb. 12:9; Acts 17:28; Zec. 12:1; Ecc. 12:7). The child who is conceived is no more innately prone to sin than were Adam and Eve when they were created!

(Continued on Page 2)

Bobby Liddell, Editor
FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST
Under the Oversight of the ELDERS
NEWSLETTER FROM MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

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Psalm 51 is often called a penitential psalm, for in it David pleaded for mercy and grace, having repented of his sins. The psalm's inscription states, "A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba." Likely, David was repenting of all of the events from the time of his adultery to the murder of Uriah—not of his inherited, sinful, depraved nature, as the Calvinists teach. David asked the Lord to blot out his sins according to His lovingkindness and tender mercies (verse 1). He wished to be cleansed from all iniquity; he had transgressed God's law, having sinned previously (verse 2). He did not seek to excuse or justify his sin, and he had been constantly reminded of tremendous guilt, e.g., Bathsheba heavy with child (verse 3). He threw himself upon God's mercy, though he had ruined a marriage, killed the husband and married the wife. The whole of the sin had been a grievous insult and offense to God. He was not pleading for the so-called "double cure" of the Calvinist—from individual sin and from corrupt, depraved nature (verse 4).

David then confessed, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (verse 5). David's fellowship with God was very vital to him; his vivid consciousness of the severity of his sin and his deep remorse over his own transgressions are shown in this statement. Did he have in mind the terrible penalty which some in his ancestry had paid for immorality?

Deuteronomy 23:1-2 reads: "He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord. A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord." First, a man who was sexually mutilated was excluded from public worship (verse 1). One will recall that no animal with blemish or defect could be offered in sacrifice (Lev. 22:23-25). The Ethiopian eunuch, though he had journeyed 1,000 miles to worship in Jerusalem, had to stop at the outer court of the temple (Acts 8:27). Oh, how the eunuch must have rejoiced that in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, the church, there is no such restriction! Isaiah prophesied: "...neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs...Unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls (the church) a memorial (the Lord's Supper) and a name (Christian) better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off" (Isa. 56:3-5).

Second, a child who was born of an illegitimate union, including incest, could not enter into the assembly to the tenth generation (Deu. 23:2). (The Edomite and the Egyptian children of the third generation could enter (verses 7-8)). Did such immorality take place in the ancestry of David?

The student of the Old Testament will recall that Tamar, daughter-in-law to Judah, dressed as a harlot, tempted Judah, conceived by him, and bore two sons—Pharez and Zarah (Gen. 38). It was through the younger of these boys, Pharez, that David (and Christ) descended. This immoral act was incest.

Notice, now, that Pharez is listed in David's (and Christ's) genealogy (Ruth 4:18-22; Mat. 1:3-6); count the generations: Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse—then David (the tenth). David was much aware that Jesse, his own *father*, was the ninth generation of God's *judgment* against this illegitimate relationship between father-in-law (Judah) and daughter-in-law (Tamar), which sin was judged to the tenth generation. Thus, David was the first descendant since Judah who could enter the assembly; what cause for rejoicing (Psa. 122:1)! Yes, it was in this sense that David states, "...in sin did my mother conceive me," a literal reference.

That David was "a sinner from birth" is fatal mistranslation, poisoning the fountain of truth, upholding damnable Calvinistic doctrine.

Editor's Note: We commend brother Cates' excellent article. *The English Standard Version Study Bible*, in an explanatory note, teaches error on the meaning of Psalm 51:5: "David thinks of himself as a sinful person from the time of his birth...each worshiper learns to trace his sinful tendencies to the very beginning of his existence—not only from birth but even from before that, to conception."

The truth is that David thought no such thing, and neither should we.

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

The family of Jean Penn, the mother of Danny Penn (MSOP 79). She passed away on November 23.

The family of Jeremy Newland, son of Kerry Newland. (MSOP 85). Jeremy was killed in a motorcycle accident in Alabama on October 29th.

Arnold Kelley's (MSOP 72) wife, Susan, who has been on dialysis for almost two years, while awaiting a kidney transplant.

Gladys Bobbitt, wife of deceased elder James Bobbitt. She broke a vertebrae, in a fall. Sister Bobbitt is in severe pain and will have a long road to recovery.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (2)

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

The ESV translators used footnotes to "inform the reader of textual variations and difficulties in translation" (Preface) which practice allowed them to insert some of their own theology in such notes. For example, the ESV text at Daniel 3:16 reads: "If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king." The footnote, however, translates: "If our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, he will deliver us from the fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king." Instead of what the Hebrew has questioning whether the king will carry out the sentence, the footnote questions God's ability to save. (Those interested in more study of the ESV can visit their website at www.gnpchorg/page1 au-statement of faith and will discover that the translators were totally Calvinistic.)

Some verses that have been changed as to meaning are: Hebrews 10:9, where the word "God" is left out, thus eliminating Him as the One who established the Gospel of Christ. The phrase, "first born" at Matthew 1:25 was left out, which term is clearly found in the Greek. The sentence in the ESV now leaves open to the reader the thought that Mary had children prior to having the Christ child. The ESV uses the word, "something" at Matthew 12:6, 41-42 and Luke 11:32 instead of the singular term, "one" or "a," thus implying that some inanimate thing is greater than the prophets, but not the man, Jesus.

There is a substitution of their premillennial leanings found at Matthew 19:28 where, instead of the correct "regeneration" (a reference to the Christian age) this Bible has "in the new world." They also decided that the earth would not be completely consumed by fire (2 Pet. 3:9-10) in the text, but in the footnote they have: "Some manuscripts have, 'will be burned up.'" In fact, the ESV clearly teaches premillennialism at Romans 11:25-27 implying that all Israel will be saved instead of following the Greek which states that Israel will "so be saved" as the Gentiles and that only by the Gospel. Also, the term "baptism" is removed from Matthew 20:22-23 without any footnote as to why. And, a denial of Luke's being inspired by God to write the gospel account is found at Luke 1:3 where the ESV has Luke saying about the history of Jesus, that the penman "followed all things closely." The text reads that Luke had "telios" or "perfect understanding" of the biographical information which statement implies verbal inspiration.

Romans 12:1 has in the ESV, "your spiritual worship," but then states in a footnote that the Greek has "your rational service." The former promotes the idea that all that a Christian does is worship. Mark 16:9-20 is placed in brackets and the footnote alludes to the passage's not being in the "earliest manuscripts." [The

latter footnote also states that the apostles "reported" to Peter implying that he was over them and equal to Christ in authority. And, at Matthew 16:18, the footnote alludes to the idea that Peter is the "rock" on which the church was built.]

The ESV translators left out "body broken for you" in the text of 1 Corinthians 11:24, but put it in the footnote because the Greek has it. They also left out "take eat." The golden rule at Matthew 7:12 becomes the "golden plated rule" in this Bible as it does in many modern versions, for the English word "would" replaces the term "should" thus changing the idea of the original teaching. One who is Christ's follower treats others well regardless of how that one is treated and does not treat others well just because one wants to be treated the same.

Because the ESV translators were wedded to the Westcott-Hort theory of manuscript transmission, a vital "the" was removed from before the term, "faith" in Galatians 2:16, but Paul meant the Gospel system of faith, not personal faith. In Acts 24:6-8 there is an outright error perpetrated by the translators. They removed verse seven and put it in a footnote. As they left the text itself, there is the implication that Paul was guilty of an Old Testament law for profaning the temple, which law was done away by the Christ (Col. 2:14).

For some reason known only to the translators, the word "inspiration" is not found at 2 Timothy 3:16 and they also imply that John 7:53-8:11 is not in the earliest manuscripts. But the latter passage is in those early manuscripts, only misplaced in Luke. (Which fact might lead one to question some things about such "early" manuscripts.) Many other verses (e.g. 2 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21; John 3:5; 1 Sam. 13:21; Acts 2:41-42; Rom. 1:17; Eph. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:9; Pro. 22:1; et al) have been diluted or changed or troubled in this version. One of the major issues, however, is found when "porneia" (the act of sexual intercourse with a human or animal) is translated as "sexual immorality" (cf. Mat. 19:9). Sexual immorality includes lust (such as viewing pornography) but "porneia" is the act not just the mental thought and lust (mental) is not grounds for divorce and remarriage. The ESV has in the footnote: "Some manuscripts add and 'whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.'" If sexual immorality is a good translation of "porneia," what would "adultery" be?

There is controversy also in this Bible because of its translation of "monogenes" (only begotten) at John 3:16 as "only." Many argue that "only" is a proper translation, but what does "mono" mean (only) and what does "genes" mean (gene)? Christ said that He was the "only gene" of God implying Jesus' Deity.

I am not impressed with this new version because of the translator bias I discovered in it. Those who use it should check it carefully with the King James and the American Standard of 1901.