

Written Debate On Inherited Sin

Between R.L. Vaughn, Missionary Baptist and Steven F. Deaton, Christian

Vaughn's First Affirmative

ARE YOU BORN IN SIN? Or are you born without sin? Mr. Steven Deaton and I invite you to consider the following proposition:

The Scriptures teach that, as a result of Adam's fall, all men are born sinners.

DEFINITION OF THE PROPOSITION

The Scriptures - 66 books inspired by God, often called the Holy Bible [quotations are from the King James Version].

Teach - cause to know

Result - something that arises as a consequence of

Adam's fall - Adam's disobedience to God's command (Genesis 2:16,17) and his subsequent separation from God (Gen. 3).

All men - the whole number of the human race.

Born - having certain characteristics from birth.

Sinner - one that sins.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSITION

Why should I take time to read this? Is it important? Certainly! The Bible should define all Christian belief. On this subject hangs the very nature of man, the nature of his need, and the nature of his remedy. If we cannot determine the sickness, how can we determine the cure??

PROOF OF THE PROPOSITION

Romans 5:12, 18- Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Clearly, by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world. Death comes as a consequence of sin: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:17). Death passed upon ALL MEN, not all adults! Romans 6:23 tells us that "the

wages of sin is death." The consequence (death) passed from father to son, therefore, the cause (sin) passed from father to son. Adam was created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26,27). Everything God made was very good (Gen. 1:31) and there was no death before Adam's transgression of God's covenant. Adam begat a son in HIS OWN likeness, after HIS image (Gen. 5:3). Adam, the son in his likeness, and successive generations, died. The intervening element was sin. Many are dead through the offence of ONE, Rom. 5:15. The offence of the one (Adam), not the many (his descendants), is offered as the CAUSE. The reign of death is not by the sins of all, but by the offence of ONE (Adam):...by ONE man's offence death reigned...(Rom. 5:17). By the offence of ONE judgment came upon ALL...(Rom. 5:18).

By the one act of disobedience of Adam judgment came upon all men to condemnation. To those who were brought into condemnation (all men), the free gift of justification to life was brought through the one righteous act of Jesus in His substitutionary death on the cross (Rom. 5:18). This guarantees that no one (infants included) will be condemned for Adam's sin. Only those who do not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God are condemned. He that believeth on him is not condemned (John 3:18). Jesus died to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). What is the ONE singular sin of THE WHOLE WORLD, both infants and adults? The sin which caused our sin nature! Jesus was sent to be the Saviour of the world, and is a special Saviour to those who believe (I John 4:14; I Tim. 4:10). In what sense can he be the Saviour of ALL MEN? His righteous act took away the Adamic sin for ALL!

I Corinthians 15:22- For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. This is a parallel passage to Romans 5:12. The context is physical death and bodily resurrection. That ALL DIE IN ADAM directly and distinctly ties the source of death to Adam. All who are in Adam die. ALL DIE, even infants, therefore all are in Adam. All in Adam represents the totality of the human race.

The scriptures teach that both sin and death are universal and that one is the consequence of the other. As the consequence, so the cause. The universality of sin (the cause) and death (the consequence) indicate a common source for both. Romans 5:12 identifies that source - Adam. It is incredible to be asked to believe that ALL are born into the world pure and innocent, but ALL who live to an accountable age sin. How much more consistent that all are born sinners and that all sin. If all are born pure and innocent, it seems at least a few would live without sinning, yet the Bible declares that sin is universal - ALL HAVE SINNED. If all are BORN

pure (without sin) and remain so until they choose to sin, how is it that in all the history of the human race, not even one solitary individual has chosen not to sin?

Some verses that teach the universality OF SIN: Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:22; I Kings 8:46; Eccl. 7:20; OF DEATH: Heb. 9:27; II Sam. 14:14; Eccl. 3:20; Eccl. 8:8.

Ephesians 2:3- Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were BY NATURE the children of wrath, even as others. Here Paul declares what we are by nature and he implicates all in this nature. This word is used elsewhere in the New Testament to indicate the inherent character or basic constitution of a thing. For example: homosexuality is against the inherent NATURE of men and women, Rom. 1:26,27; uncircumcision is the way of NATURE (the way man is born), Rom. 2:27; those who were born Jews were Jews BY NATURE, Gal. 2:15. Those who are BY NATURE children of wrath are BORN children of wrath. If not, then how does one become a child of wrath BY NATURE?

Syllogism One

1. All people who are subject to death are in Adam.
2. All infants are subject to death.
3. Therefore, all infants are in Adam.

Syllogism Two

1. All who die are in Adam.
2. All who are in Adam are sinners.
3. Therefore, all who die are sinners.

Syllogism Three

1. All who are subject to death are sinners.
2. All infants are subject to death.
3. Therefore, all infants are sinners.

R. L. Vaughn

Deaton's First Negative

Mr. Vaughn states at the beginning that this is about the NATURE of man. So, this discussion is NOT about whether or not man sins, and it is NOT about whether or not men die a physical death as the result of Adam's

fall. It is about whether or not men are born with a depraved, sinful nature inherited from Adam.

Re: Romans 5:12, 18: These verses do not say, "All men have sinned in Adam." They give a comparison and contrast of the actions and results of Adam and those of Christ. Adam introduced sin into the world, like AS Christ introduced a way of escape from sin. Notice Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were MADE sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be MADE righteous." Consider: Thomas Paine MADE many infidels, but was his infidelity transferred to them? No, by his actions he influenced many to reject the belief of God. Likewise, by the actions of Adam, many have been influenced to commit sin because he introduced it into the world.

Mr. Vaughn says, "The consequence (death) passed from father [Adam - sfd] to son [Cain, Able, Seth - sfd], therefore, the cause (sin) passed from father to son." The Bible says, "The SOUL THAT SINNETH, IT 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). Which will you believe?

We agree that Adam's sin brought physical death upon all men because mankind was separated from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). However, we deny that Adam's sin brought spiritual death upon all men because each man is responsible for his own actions, and not those of another (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Ex. 32:33; Eze. 18:4, 20).

Our friend claims that John 1:29 is saying that Jesus took away the "ONE singular sin of THE WHOLE WORLD" which fell upon them as the consequence of Adam's sin. If so, then how could all men be born with a sin nature? Note the verse, "...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Following Mr. Vaughn's logic, this verse teaches that Jesus died to take away only "the ONE singular sin" which resulted from Adam's fall. That means that Jesus did not die to take away the sin of fornication, idolatry, covetousness, etc. (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-11). We do not charge Mr. Vaughn with believing such, but it is the consequence of his reasoning.

Several times Mr. Vaughn says that "the totality of the human race" comes under the umbrella of inherited sin from Adam. If that is so, then Jesus was born a "sinner - one that sins!" "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of FLESH AND BLOOD, HE ALSO himself likewise

TOOK PART OF THE SAME... For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but HE TOOK ON HIM THE SEED OF ABRAHAM. WHEREFORE IN ALL THINGS IT BEHOVED HIM TO BE MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN..." (Hebrews 2:14-17). "And THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH..." (John 1:14). Dear reader, do you believe Jesus was born a "sinner - one that sins?"

In regard to Ephesians 2:3, our friend says that it proves men are born with a sinful nature. Notice, the verse does not say that! One can have an acquired nature through habitual practice of a thing. Some people are said to have a talent or skill that is "second nature," that is, a thing which they have developed and are able to perform with ease. This is true of sin. Also, Mr. Vaughn says that HOMOSEXUALITY is against human nature (and I agree with that) but then why are some people practicing such? If we are sinners by NATURE, as Mr. Vaughn says, then why are some folks homosexuals AGAINST NATURE? Too, if man is born with a NATURE to sin, then how could Paul say, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, DO BY NATURE the things contained in the law..." (Romans 2:14). Gentiles were said to do by NATURE that which was good! Can one be born with a depraved nature and have a nature that causes them to keep the law?

Mr. Vaughn asks why there has not been one man who has not sinned. The Bible says there has been--the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Syllogisms must have a valid major premise (point 1) and minor premise (point 2) in order for the conclusion (point 3) to be true. Mr. Vaughn's second and third syllogisms are invalid. In the second one, point 2 is invalid. Here he "begs the question" (assumes what is to be proven). Likewise, in the third syllogism, point 1 is false. Again, he "begs the question." CONSIDER: SYLLOGISM 2: 1. All who die are in Adam; 2. All who are in Adam are sinners; 3. Therefore, all who die are sinners--IF So, Christ died, therefore, he must have been in Adam, and he must have been a sinner! SYLLOGISM 3: 1. All who are subject to death are sinners (Dear reader, was Christ "subject to death?"); 2. All infants are subjects to death (Baby Jesus was subject to death for Joseph fled with him into Egypt and later was recalled when all who sought the young child's life were no longer a threat--Matt. 2:13-23); 3. Therefore, all infants are sinners (Thus, Christ was a sinner since he was obviously subject to death, else why flee into Egypt when the command came to slay those under two years of age?). Who can believe such?

Questions For Mr. Vaughn:

1. What caused Adam and Eve to sin? Why did they do it?
2. Was Jesus born a sinner? Why or why not?
3. According to your belief, what death, physical or spiritual, passed upon all men as the result of Adam's fall?
4. The Bible defines sin as a transgression of law (1 Jn. 3:4). What law have infants transgressed in order to be born sinners?
5. If by the offense of ONE (Adam), all men were born sinners, then are all men saved (Universal Salvation) by the act of ONE (Jesus)?

Steven F. Deaton

Vaughn's Second Affirmative

Answers to Mr. Deaton's Questions

1. The serpent deceived Eve, but Adam willfully disobeyed (Gen. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:14).
2. No. His body was created in the womb of Mary by the Holy Ghost. He existed BEFORE He was born.
3. Both physical and spiritual death. By what death did Jesus redeem us? Physical or spiritual?
4. They are born sinners before they sin. However, being born sinners, they immediately begin to transgress God's law. They lie "AS SOON AS they are born" (Psalm 58:3).
5. All are saved from Adamic sin; this is not universal salvation because all who do not believe on the Son of God are condemned.

Romans 5:12-19 is destructive to any argument that men are not born sinners. Mr. Deaton argues that the one act of disobedience by Adam merely "influences" men to sin. But this proves too much -- then Jesus' one act of obedience (death, Phil. 2:8) merely "influences" men toward salvation. Thomas Paine did influence many to be infidels, but I emphatically deny that he MADE infidels in the sense the word is used in Rom. 5:19 (rendered, appointed, ordained, caused to be). The passages

state that through Adam's act "many be dead" (v. 15), that "Judgment was by one to condemnation" (v. 16), that "death reigned by one" (v. 17), that "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men" (v. 17), and that "many were made sinners" (v. 19). Does this sound like Adam merely "influenced" men to sin? The tense of v. 12 is also important. The fact that death passed upon all men, and that all have sinned is placed in the past! When? At Adam's transgression.

Mr. Deaton believes that infants are born without sin. Therefore, he cannot say that Rom. 5:12 means physical death entered the world by sin and therefore physical death passes upon all men because all sin. This would make the physical death of each individual a result of personal sin. Yet he says infants have no sin -- but they die. He cannot say it means spiritual death, because Paul argues that spiritual death passed upon ALL MEN (this includes infants). This is exactly what he is denying!!

Ezekiel 18:20 -- The soul that sinneth, it shall die. This is exactly my position. ALL are subject to death, even infants. That they die proves they have sin guilt. If not, why not? Will Mr. Deaton charge God with injustice concerning infant death?

Death is an appointment for all men and judgment follows (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Heb. 9:27). Mr. Deaton cannot affirm that spiritual death is an appointment for ALL -- only physical death. In context of physical death and bodily resurrection, the apostle Paul announces, "the sting of death is sin" (I Cor. 15:56). The STING THAT BRINGS DEATH, yes, physical death, IS SIN. Will Mr. Deaton deny it? If so, what is the cause of physical death?

It IS NOT separation from the tree of life! Adam was separated from it "lest he ... take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." If he needed the tree of life to live forever, he obviously was already in a state of dying.

John 1:29 -- This one verse is not all the Bible teaches about the death of Jesus, but IT DOES TEACH SOMETHING ABOUT IT. HE DID die to take away THE SIN (singular, not SINS) of THE WORLD. What is THE SIN of THE WORLD? Murder? All have not murdered someone. Unbelief? Infants can neither believe nor reject. The only single sin that involved and affected the whole world (all mankind) was the transgression of Adam.

Eph. 2:3 -- Compare "nature" in Rom. 1:26; 2:14,27; 11:24; I Cor. 11:14; Gal. 2:15; 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:4. NATURE refers to the basic constitution of a thing, not something acquired through habitual practice. Does

homosexuality differ from something we get through habitual practice, or from the basic NATURE of men's and women's bodies? In Rom. 2:14, Paul refers to Gentiles who had been born again - they had the law of God written in their hearts (v. 15, Heb. 8:10), they were new creatures (II Cor. 5:17) created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10).

Dear readers, forgive me for assuming all would understand that Jesus is radically preeminent. The birth, life, and death of Jesus, while in man's realm, are all exceptions to the rule. The Son of God existed before He was born of the virgin (John 1:1-3,14). God prepared Him a body by miraculous creation of the Holy Ghost in Mary's womb (Heb. 10:5; Matt. 1:18-22; Luke 1:35). He lived a life of perfection toward God's law (Matt. 5:17) and remained sinless though tempted to sin (Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15). He was NOT SUBJECT TO DEATH (John 19:10,11; 7:30; 14:30). He voluntarily gave Himself and became obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8). In His death, He died FOR OUR SINS, not His own, and became sin for us (II Cor. 5:21).

The syllogisms are based on arguments in the first affirmative, particularly I Cor. 15:22 and Rom. 3:23; 6:23. The only rebuttal is that Christ was not a sinner. I agree. Jesus was not subject to death, but said, "I lay down my life ... no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again (John 10:17,18)." The Bible says Joseph went to Egypt "...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet ... (Matt. 2:14,15)." Mr. Deaton says that point I of syllogism three - all who are subject to death are sinners - is false. Prove it by scripture!

R. L. Vaughn

Deaton's Second Negative

Regarding the questions:

1. Adam was made in the image of God, free of sin, which God called "good" (Gen. 1:26-27, 31). Yet, Adam sinned. The same is true today--we are created free of sin, "good," then chose to willfully disobey.
2. Read again Hebrews 2:14-17. We wonder if Mr. Vaughn thinks a person does not exist until they are born and how that may affect his view on abortion?

3. If both, then all babies are born alienated from God and doomed if they die in infancy. Jesus redeemed us by his physical death--sacrificing his body and shedding his blood (Matt. 26:26-28; Heb. 10:5-7).

4. How can one be a sinner BEFORE they sin? How many times has a newborn infant lied to you? The context of Psalm 58:3 is those who consider what they are doing. Verse 3 is hyperbole.

5. In his 1st affirmative Mr. Vaughn said, "... (death) passed from father to son, therefore, the cause (sin) passed from father [Adam] to son [Cain, Able, Seth, etc.]," and that "Jesus died to take away the sin [Adamic sin] of the world." If so, then no one this side of Jesus' death is guilty of it and he has conceded his proposition.

Mr. Vaughn then complains about "influences." Surely, no one but the Universalists would believe that Christ's death automatically ensures salvation for men. Rather it compels those of a soft heart to obey the gospel (Matt. 13).

Romans 5:12-19: Verse 12 says, "...as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so DEATH passed upon all men, for that ALL HAVE SINNED." It DOES NOT say "sin passed upon all men." Too, it DOES say that all have sinned! The passage clearly declares that what Adam did, Christ undid. If Adam caused all men to be lost without any action of their own, then Christ caused all men to be saved without any action of their own. Also, Mr. Vaughn says in reference to v. 12, "...all have sinned is placed in the past!" That is, he claims we sinned before our existence! Do you believe it (cf. Rom. 9:11)?

I do not believe Rom. 5:12-19 is discussing physical death. Spiritual death for Adam (as Mr. Vaughn affirmed in response to question 1) and all others results from their willful disobedience to God (cf. Isa. 59:1-2). It points out that "death passed to all men, FOR ALL HAVE SINNED."

Eze. 18:20: Mr. Vaughn ignored the rest of the verse. "The soul that sinneth, it 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." We do not inherit sin, guilt, or a sin nature from our parents, including the parents of the human race--Adam & Eve.

Mr. Vaughn affirms that 1 Cor. 15 is discussing physical death and bodily

resurrection. We agree, therefore, he has conceded that ADAM'S SIN is what brought PHYSICAL death upon the human race (1 Cor. 15:21-22). Mr. Vaughn says that Christ's death took away Adamic sin, so, according to his reasoning, it is not the cause of physical death. We wonder then, what causes infants to die?

John 1:29: Mr. Vaughn is missing the point. It is addressing the SIN of the world as a whole, that is, the aggregate of all the sins of mankind (cf. 1 Jn. 2:2).

The infant child Jesus WAS SUBJECT to death. The Bible says, "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to DESTROY him" (Matt. 2:13). Why would the angel warn of the child's destruction? Did the prophecy of v. 15 make the threat less real? Compare the accounts of God promising the throne of Israel to David, yet David's life was in jeopardy when Saul was seeking to kill him (1 Sam. 16:1-13; 19:1).

Mr. Vaughn challenges us to prove by Scripture that "all who are subject to death are sinners" is a false statement. Okay. David's son was subject to death (2 Sam. 12:19). Was David's son lost? Mr. Vaughn says David's son was a liar, and the Bible says liars go to hell (Rev. 21:8). Therefore, according to Mr. Vaughn's logic, David's son is in hell. Yet, David expected to join his son (2 Sam. 12:23). So, what does that do to David's condition if Mr. Vaughn is right?

Finally, we submit again Hebrews 2:14-17, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of FLESH AND BLOOD, HE ALSO himself likewise TOOK PART OF THE SAME... For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but HE TOOK ON HIM THE SEED OF ABRAHAM. WHEREFORE IN ALL THINGS IT BEHOVED HIM TO BE MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN...." If we follow Mr. Vaughn's reasoning, then we must conclude that Jesus came into this world a sinner, telling lies "AS SOON AS" he was born. If not, why not?

Steven F. Deaton