

Are babies born spiritually dead or alive? And if babies die physically where do their spirits go?

It is generally taught and assumed in the Church that because of Adam's sin we were all born separated from God or in other words spiritually dead. Equally it is taught that if a child should die prior to receiving Christ it is eternally lost. Certain scriptures are usually cited to support this doctrine among which are:

Psalms 51:5 **Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

According to Strong's Concordance the only words in the original Hebrew are those underlined. Is the sin being referred to the child's or the mother's? Especially in light of:

Psalms 139:14 **I will praise you; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are your works; and that my soul knows very well.**

Jeremiah 1:5 **Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations.**

If the spirit of a child is separated from God (dead) who puts it in the baby – Does God put a dead spirit in a baby or does Satan or is it inherited from the mother and/or father and dependant on whether they are spiritually alive or dead? Consider this verse especially the Living Bible version:

Ecc. 11:5 As you know not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so you know not the works of God who makes all.

(Living Bible version) **God's ways are as mysterious as the pathway of the wind, and as the manner in which a human spirit is infused into the little body of a baby while it is yet in its mother's womb.**

But didn't sin come into the world through Adam and hasn't Adam's spiritual death been inherited by every human since? This might appear to be the case based on these familiar scriptures:

Rom. 5:17 **If by one man's (Adam) offence death reigned...**

Rom. 7:20 **For if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.**

So I did inherit sin from Adam but where does that sin reside, in my spirit and is that what makes a baby spiritually dead? Or does the sin reside in my flesh?

Rom. 7:18 **For I know that in me, that is in my flesh nothing good (that would be sin) dwells.**

So, the sin I inherited from Adam is in my flesh and not (at least initially) in my spirit. That would suggest that babies are born spiritually alive and must first yield to the sin in their flesh in order to die spiritually? Consider:

John 1:9 **...the true light (Jesus) who lights every man (person) that comes into the world.**

If everyone therefore entering into the world, as a baby, is enlightened (alive spiritually) would this suggest that everyone's name is initially written in the Lamb's book of life? And then they only get removed or blotted out of the book of life (Rev. 3:5) if they reject Jesus?

Romans 7:9 **For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died**

Does this mean that the sin that separates a person from God is in fact their own sin and not the sin of our ancestral parent? Isn't that what we already know from the scriptures?

Isaiah 53:6 **All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all.**

Romans 3:23 **For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

Ezekiel 18:20 **The soul that sins, 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.

In other words we are only held accountable for our own sin (and ultimately not even that if we receive what Jesus did) and not the sin of Adam. But what about the unborn child or the child that is too young to know right from wrong, how does our loving and marvelous God deal with them? Lets look to see how God handled this in the Old Testament (a figure of the New Testament) especially with respect to who, of the nation of Israel, God held accountable for their rebellion against Him in the wilderness:

First though let's confirm there is an age of accountability with God:

Isaiah 7:16 **For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, ...**

Deut. 1:39 **Moreover your little ones, which you said should be a prey (to the inhabitants of the promised land), and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.**

Here God makes clear that there is an age before which a child does not know the difference between good and evil. Prior to that age, in the case of the people of the first covenant, God does not hold the children accountable. But with the adults He does. And what does God set as the age of accountability under the old covenant?

Numbers 14:29 **Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have rebelled against me,**

Numbers 14:30 **Doubtless you shall not come into the (promised) land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.**

Numbers 32:11 **Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:**

As we well know, only Joshua and Caleb of the adult population of Israel, together with all those that were under the age of twenty at the time of Israel's rebellion, ever entered the promised land (a type of heaven).

And what is the age of accountability for children under the New Covenant? Some suggest it varies according to the child and its development, but that for most children it falls between the ages of 3 and 5. If sin and spiritual death can impact a child's life at this age then shouldn't parents be bringing the Gospel to their children at this age? Dr. James Dobson in his October 2002 newsletter believes that 5 is the critical year in a child's life with respect to the call of Christ.:

2 Timothy 3:15 And from early childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

And what about the possible gap, desirably as small as possible, between when a child chooses evil and dies spiritually and when that child is born again?

1 Corinth. 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the (believing) wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the (believing) husband; otherwise your children would be unclean but now they are Holy.

For how long does this sanctification of the children by a believing parent continue? Could it be until the age of 20?

If children then are born spiritually alive but at some point, knowing good from evil, all willfully yield to the sin that dwells in their flesh, then wouldn't the scriptures consistently speak of our need to be re-united to God – since at birth we all once were united to Him? Yes, hence:

1 Peter 2:25 For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

II Corin. 5:18 And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be born again.

I Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Notice the consistency with which the scriptures speak of our returning to God, being reconciled to Him, by being spiritually born or begotten again – having already once been born but through sin (our own) died. But what of those children who may physically die before knowing good from evil, before the age of accountability? Do they go to heaven?

Mark 10:13 And they brought young children to Him (Jesus), that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them.

Mark 10:14 But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer (let) the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Matthew 18:10 Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Would we really have expected anything less than these wonderful truths from our God and Father who is good to all and does everything well? No, but as for our part doesn't it behoove us to introduce every child, for which God gives us responsibility, to the Savior at the very earliest possible time – and so minimize the awful vulnerable time between accountable sin (and spiritual death) and spiritual rebirth. Amen.