

# Do Born Again Christians Have a Sinful Nature?

*Jesus said, "If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand." Mark 3:25*

Do born again Christians have a sinful nature? Absolutely not! The Bible is very straightforward on this. Yet many Christians mistakenly think they have two natures within them, a new nature and a sin nature, which war against each other. They believe that their new nature loves God and wants to practice righteousness but that their old sinful nature loves sin and wants to practice lawlessness. They think that their Christian life reflects whichever of their two natures they yield themselves to the most. This lie is one of the greatest deceptions the devil has "sold" to the church and many Christians have bought this lie. Tragically, these Christians are then overcome by sin because they do not understand or believe the truth about Christ's triumph on the cross.

Jesus Christ said if you know the truth of His Word, He will free you from slavery to sin (John 8:31-36). With this in mind, let us look at three Scriptures that plainly state we no longer have a sinful nature after we are born of the Spirit. Here is the first one: "We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that our body of sin (*our sinful nature*) might be removed so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:6-7)." Here is the second one: "You are not in the flesh (*the sinful nature*) but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you (Romans 8:9). And here is the third one: "In Him you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of flesh (*the sinful nature*), by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11)." In all three verses, the apostle Paul teaches that we no longer have a sinful nature after we are born again of God's Spirit.

The Bible contains two powerful pictures to show us that our sinful nature was removed from

us when we were born again. Circumcision was the seal of righteousness in the Old Covenant. In circumcision, the foreskin was removed. Paul taught that this portrayed that our sinful nature was removed from us in Christ (Colossians 2:11). Water baptism is a seal of righteousness in the New Covenant. In baptism, the old man is given a water "burial." Again Paul taught that this portrayed that our sinful nature was removed from us in Christ (Romans 6:3-6). Thus both the Old Covenant and New Covenant clearly portray what happened to our sinful nature when we were born again. Our sinful nature died and God completely removed it from our being.

This is what Paul called the mystery of the gospel (Colossians 1:27). How could Christ, who is God's Holy One, spiritually live in a people who were born with a sinful nature? God solved this dilemma by performing a divine heart transplant so that we would be born again. When Christ died on the cross, He not only bore our sins on the cross; He also bore our sinful nature on the cross with Him. Therefore, when Christ died, God exchanged our terminally sin-sick heart with His Son's divine heart to deliver us from the power of sin and death (2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 4:6). This divine operation of the cross, by which God removed our sinful nature and replaced it with Christ's nature, is the promise of the New Covenant, the purpose of Christ's Atonement and the power of Christ's gospel. It was also foretold by the Old Testament prophets: "I will *give you a new heart* and put a new spirit within you; and I will *remove your heart of stone* from your flesh (Ezekiel 36:26-27; see also Jeremiah 31:31-33)."

Some Christians are confused when they read Romans Chapter 7, and think perhaps the person described in this passage is a Christian. But Paul wrote this particular chapter to his fellow Jews (see Romans 7:1) to convince them that in Christ, they died not only to sin; they also died to the Mosaic Law. Paul describes the frustration and anguish of a person who is not yet born again and wants to obey God but who cannot do so because

of his sinful nature. That person finally cries out, "I am a wretched man! Who will set me free from this body of death (*this sinful nature*)? (Romans 7:24)" Paul then provides the answer based on his own personal experience, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:25)" God knew that man's sinful nature was his Achilles heel, which Satan would use to continually snare him in sin. This is why the Old Covenant could not accomplish God's eternal purpose since man's sinful nature prevented him from truly obeying God's commandments. Therefore, what the Law was powerless to do because of our sinful nature; God did in the New Covenant by sending His Son who perfectly fulfilled the Law and then become sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ (Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

When God completed His divine heart transplant, He did not leave us with two natures. If God had left a sinful nature in us, we would be divided in heart and mind. We could never stand up to Satan's attacks and accusations. If we still had a sinful nature, the devil would always have a spiritual foothold of sin within us to defeat us. This would have been a woefully incomplete and pitiful salvation. But thank God that Christ's death on the cross has given us complete victory over sin! By the cross, God delivered us not only from the penalty of sin; He also delivered us from the power of sin by destroying and removing our sinful nature. We are now a holy new creation in Christ. But if our sinful nature is dead and gone, then why do we still sin? Because our spiritual mind needs to be renewed and transformed by God's Word to the point that we act on the truth that we have died and been freed from sin (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23). This is the whole gospel that Paul practiced: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God (Galatians 2:20)."

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinth 5:17*