

The Doctrine of Total Depravity

Gen 6:5; “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Definition: **The Westminster Confession of Faith**

Chapter IX

Of Free Will

III. “Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.”

- what the historical term **“Total Depravity”** is meant to convey, is the idea that sin has completely infected the entire being of man
- that sin has tainted the whole person down to his or her very core
- now, a more contemporary term to describe the **“Total Depravity”** of man is the term **“The Inability”** of man
- Charles Spurgeon, in his sermon titled **“Human Inability”** said this; “Through the fall, and through our own sin, the nature of man has become so debased, so depraved, and corrupt, that it is impossible for him to come to Christ without the assistance of the Holy Spirit Man’s nature is so corrupt that he has neither the will nor the power to come to Christ unless drawn by the Spirit.” Charles Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol 4, page 138

Scripture References:

Gen 6:5, Job 5:7, Job 14: 1,4, Job 15:14-16, Psa 51:2-3,5, Isa 64:6, Rom 3:9-18,23

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Introduction:

- why is it God has to “foreknow, predestine, and elect” men to salvation ? ? ?
- what is it that is essentially wrong with man that he needs to be “drawn, quickened, and made alive” unto salvation ? ? ?
- what is inherently and intrinsically wrong with man ? ? ?
- for centuries theologians have said of the unregenerate man that he is “**totally depraved**”
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- beloved, that is the Bible’s teaching, for as early as Gen 6 we are told that; “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Gen 6:5
- Jer 17:9 declares; “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”
- so, that brings us to Point I

I. Man's Condition: Rom 5:12

- loved ones, since the fall of Adam and Eve “sin has entered” all men
- Rom 5:12; “through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned”
- Rom 3:23; “for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
- you see, sin has encapsulated the entire being, the whole core of all humanity
- so, the clear teaching of Scripture regarding man is that he was born in sin
- in fact, Scripture teaches that man was a sinner even in his mother's womb
- Job 5:7; “Yet man is born to trouble” meaning sin
- Job 14:1,4; “Man who is born of woman is of few days full of trouble (and) who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? No one !”
- Job 15:14-16; “What is man, that he could be pure? And he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous? If God puts no trust in His saints, and the heavens are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is abominable and filthy, who drinks iniquity like water!”
- Psa 51:2-3,5; “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”
- friends, Scripture clearly evidences the fact that all men are born in iniquity and sin
- yes, “through one man sin entered the world and (sin) spread to all men”
- so, man's condition is clear, from conception sin has poisoned all men to the core
- now, I want to stop for just a moment and say that when Scripture speaks about the “total depravity” of man or “the inability” of man, it is not saying that man cannot do good things humanly speaking
- an unregenerate man can feed the homeless and give monies to the poor and needy

- an unregenerate man can protect a life from a murderer, from a rapist, from a thief
- an unregenerate man can perform many good deeds
- but, these are human good still based on a sinful nature
- that's why the word of God says that; **“we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags”** before God **Isa 64:6**
- in other words, even man's best deeds are still poisoned and tainted by his **“depraved”** nature
- now, with sin so prevalent in man, the Apostle Paul described in detail man's dreadful condition
- turn with me please to **Rom 3:9-18,23**
- what a descriptive indictment of **“man's condition”** prior to regeneration
- **“none is righteous, no, not one (and) there is none who seeks after God”**

II. Man's Further Condition: Eph 2:1-3

- you see, before redemption man is spiritually “. dead in trespasses and sins” Eph 2:1
- spiritually “. dead in trespasses and sins”
- one place that has another description of the “**depraved nature**” and “**man's further condition**” is found in Eph 2
- turn with me please to Eph 2:1-3
- this is another detailed description of an individual before he or she became a Christian
- this is another detailed description of an individual before he or she became a regenerated, born again believer
- notice, they are “. dead in trespasses and sins”
- notice that Paul doesn't describe “dead in trespass and sin” but “dead in trespasses and sins” **plural**
- ongoing, continued “trespasses and sins” a plurality of iniquity, that's the unregenerate man
- in other words, we are engulfed, encapsulated in “sin”
- furthermore, Paul makes the most profound statement to describe the non-believer before salvation, he says that that man is “. dead”
- the word “**dead**” comes from the Greek word “nekros” which literally means; ‘the actual spiritual condition of the unsaved man’
- you see, the unregenerate man is a spiritual corpse
- the unregenerate man is spiritually lifeless
- he's simply a “. **dead (corpse) in trespasses and sins**”
- but, Paul is not finished describing the unregenerate sinner, for the unregenerate man actively practices and pursues evil

- look at vs.2; “in which you once walked according to the course of this world”
- what is the “course of this world” ???
- corruption, deceitfulness, evil, vileness, wickedness, etc. etc. etc.
- the N.I.V. translated vs2; “you followed the ways of this world”
- you see, the unregenerate man always follows his fleshly “depraved” nature
- because, “sin” is so prevalent in him, that it is the driving factor
- the driving force governing his thoughts, the driving force governing his intentions, and the driving force governing his actions
- you see, the non-believer operates by the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” I John 2:16
- and Paul understood this, that’s why he finished his description of the unregenerate man as he did
- vs. 3; “. conducting ourselves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind”
- the N.I.V. rendered vs. 3: “. gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts”
- “. following the desires of the flesh and thoughts”
- how did God describe man back in Gen 6:5 ???
- Gen 6:5; “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
- well, there’s one more condition of man I’d like to bring to your attention, as if this is not enough

III. Man's Enslaved Condition: John 8:34

- now, before looking into Jesus' description of the unregenerate man, Peter made a comment in his second epistle regarding the non-believer
- II Pet 2:19; ". a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him" rendered the N.I.V.
- beloved, sin has "mastered man"
- his natural bent is to follow sin
- he's in bondage to corruption and he comes by it naturally
- now, that's precisely how the word of God also describes the unregenerate man, a "slave of sin"
- Jesus said; "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" John 8:34
- the word "slave" comes from the Greek word "duolos" which literally means; 'in bondage, unable to escape, a prisoner'
- and that's precisely the condition of all men before salvation
- they are literally; 'in bondage, unable to escape, a prisoner' of sin
- 'unable to escape' and choose divine righteousness on their own
- turn with me please to Rom 6:6, 17-19
- friends, all unregenerate men are under the captivity of sin and the compulsion to sin, 'unable to escape' the pull of the flesh
- and not only is the unregenerate man under the captivity of sin and the compulsion to sin, but he's under the control and tyranny of sin
- thus, it's an accurate description of all unregenerate men to say that they are "enslaved to sin"
- and no matter how hard they try, they will always continue in that state until God in His sovereignty releases that man

- to put it another way, there is nothing the unregenerate man can do to release himself from the bondage of sin
- in and of himself, the lost soul will never repent of his sinful nature and turn to God
- because John 3:19 says; “. men love darkness rather than the light because his deeds are evil”
- furthermore, John 3:20 continues; “for everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light”
- loved ones, we must realize that there is inherently and intrinsically something wrong with man, he is “dead in trespasses and sins” and a “slave of sin”
- and he cannot escape it nor will he escape it
- but, he will continue living in the flesh and serving the flesh

In Closing:

- if an unregenerate man is to be freed from the bondage of sin, from the imprisonment of sin, Someone or Something has to release him, remove him, rescue this man from his shackles
- Someone or Something has to “draw, quicken, and make alive” this man to receive salvation and the forgiveness for his sins
- a divine aid, a divine intervention must take place
- a divine impulse, a divine motivation must move the man’s heart to receive God’s grace and to repent of his sins
- now, it’s utterly important to remember that the spiritually “dead” man cannot discern spiritual matters
- “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing But (for) the natural man (the unregenerate) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
I Cor 1:18, I Cor 2:14
- so, how is the man who is “dead in trespasses and sin” and a “slave of sin” able to receive God’s grace, repent, and turn from his natural bent to sin ? ? ?
- and may I make it very clear that “dead” men cannot raise themselves to life
- so, how does a “totally depraved” man turn away from the constant desire to sin ? ? ?
- how does he do that ? ? ?
- may I say unequivocally that **God** is the responsible agent
- that **God** is the responsible aid
- that **God** is the responsible intervention to bring “dead” men to life
- what we must recognize is that God is fully, solely, and wholly responsible for bringing “dead” men to life by faith in Christ

- turn with me please to John 1:12-13, John 5:21, John 6:37-40,44-45, 65 I Cor 1:18, Eph 1:19, Eph 2:1-9, Eph 3:6-2, Titus 3:5-7
- beloved, “dead” men are made “alive” by the “drawing (and) quickening power of God” through the affectionate, effectual, and effective call of God on their hearts
- in other words, by God’s “irresistible grace”
- the divine agent, the divine aid, the divine intervention is God Himself by the power of the Holy Spirit
- and all who are in Christ respond in faith by the “drawing, quickening, and wooing power of God” upon the hearts of “totally depraved” men
- that’s why Paul unequivocally proclaimed; “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast” Eph 2:8-9
- are unregenerate men “totally depraved” ??? Yes, “dead in trespasses and sins” and “slaves of sin”
- but, it is the “power of God” that brings these “dead” men to “life”
- God “draws” them and “makes them alive” and from that time forward, they are eternally secured forever
- that’s why Paul proclaimed; “. we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation” II Thes 2:13
- shall we pray