

THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

This doctrine suffers from misconceptions. It does not mean man is bad as can be, for many are good, kind, generous, moral, etc. Rather the true definition lies in the fact that natural man is as bad off as he can be, before a Holy God. What's involved? Not man's estimation of man, but God's estimation of man. The Scriptures do not measure men by men, but by GOD who has created them. The doctrine of depravity does not refer so much to conduct, but rather to state. In Galatians 3:22 we find "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin" - a universal pronouncement. When Adam fell, it was all the way. He became totally depraved, unable to do anything to please God - "short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

There are three aspects of sin:

1. The personal aspect is of acts - manifestations of the exercise of a person's will (Romans 3:23)
2. Another aspect refers not to acts, but to the nature which produces those acts (Romans 7:25; 8:2). In Romans 3:10-21 some of its fruits are listed.
3. The third aspect is stated in Gal. 3:23 - "all under sin" refers to the state in which man has been placed by God. See Romans 3:9.

Man must recognize five great facts to understand the doctrine of depravity:

1. All men are under sin (Gal. 3:2; Romans 3:9).
2. They are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) - physical death is a result of spiritual death (Romans 5:12).
3. Also man (who is under sin and spiritually dead) is under condemnation (John 3:18, 36; Romans 1:18; 2 Thess. 1:9).
4. Also, natural man is under the power of Satan, under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 1:13).
5. Finally, the doctrine of depravity presents the truth that natural man is lost. This condition is presented in Eph. 2:12, and the answer for it is given quickly in verse 13.

There is only one answer for change - JESUS CHRIST. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Salvation is by grace, through faith - the gift of God - not of work (Eph. 2:8, 9; Romans 10:9, 10).

The Word of God contrasts human wisdom with the wisdom of God. See 1 Cor. 1:18-25. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:13, 14). But the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convince man of sin (John 16:7-11), and to minister through the Word (the Bible), for "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).