

Depravity – The Utterly Sinfulness of Sin

by Hendrik Joubert

In the New Testament humility is a positive concept, an attribute by which the favor of God is to be gained. However in the classical (older) Greek it is mostly negative as the root of the word is associated with rubbish – as in the filthy and useless stuff we disperse to the dump. The implication, though not a pleasant thought, is obvious. When suggesting that as a result of sin humans are reduced to rubbish – **ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS... Romans 3:12** – a sister in Christ once objected that God does not make rubbish. The point is not what God made us, but what we have become as a result of our sin. (**Romans 3:10-18**) This realization should contribute much towards realizing our lowly position as we approach the Most Holy God – **Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. (James 4:10)**

The Bible portrays sinful man in an uncomplimentary way. (**Romans 1:18-32; 3:10-18**) Passages describing the utterly sinfulness of sin and this degeneration is abused by some to suggest that as a result of Adam's sin man is born totally and utterly depraved, incapable of any good. The good that man does is bad because of his motives. Once touched by God these motives become pure, but until then they are evil.

The extent of man's depravity according to the doctrine is captured in the following quotation: *The undeveloped mind of the infant is "enmity against God." Moreover, that description is true at all times, though it is not equally so evident. Though the wolf may sleep, he is still a wolf. The snake which lurks among the flowers is just as deadly as when it lies among noxious weeds. Furthermore, that solemn declaration is true of the whole mind, of all its faculties. It is true of the memory: nursery rhymes, silly jokes and foolish songs are retained without effort, whereas passages of Scripture and spiritual sermons are quickly forgotten.* (http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/Depravity/deprave_09.htm)

Those advancing this doctrine consider their *admission* as a demonstration of true humility, and even that humility is produced by God – sinful man is not capable of any good at all. You could not be truly humble unless God first gives you the ability to be humble. Notice that this logic does not seem to hold when men change not only the identity of the church Jesus died for, but also the message by which sinners are called. That is a willful act of passing judgment upon the directions God gave concerning the church which He purchased with His own blood, as opposed to the many churches started by, or in the name of great theologians. He is **given as head over all things to the church, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23)**, and as such He makes the rules (**2 John 9; Matthew 15:9**) and is **the Savior of the body. (Ephesians 5:23)**

The Bible teaches that it was through the first man that sin (imperfection) was introduced into the world, and then everyone else followed that poor example. (**Romans 5:12**) As a result of this one simple act of disobedience everything changed. The utterly sinfulness of sin is demonstrated in this first act of disobedience – eating of a prohibited fruit in a garden full of perfectly legal fruits. Consider the consequences of this simple act. Eating fruit was not wrong, however eating this one fruit caused such dire consequences. Sin must be awfully serious – an elementary declaration by God Most Holy.

The idea that we do not have the same abilities and powers as Adam has results in a form of escapism – *the devil made me do it*. Although the proponents of the doctrine of *total depravity* work hard at making a person who has been denied the ability to choose between right and wrong guilty for his actions, the blame is shifted to Adam. Ultimately they are excused, because God has chosen them for salvation. They do not deserve it, but they were just blessed because they received it. Do not blame us, God chose us and you cannot question His decisions. To prove this they use Paul's statement concerning the acceptability of Gentiles – He sets the conditions of salvation and man cannot and should not question or taint His fairness.

We, like Adam, have to take responsibility for our own depraved actions. Like Adam we were created spiritually alive, but we followed in the footsteps of Adam, and therefore cannot lay the consequences of our actions at his feet. Through the apostle Paul we learn: **For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (Romans 7:9)** Just like Adam, Paul was alive once and just like Adam he received the commandments of God and disobeyed, causing his death.

How this happens becomes obvious from **Nehemiah 8:2: And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.**