

Total Inherited Depravity

One of the most prevalent doctrines in denominations is Calvinism. The starting point of Calvinism is a doctrine titled "Total Hereditary Depravity." It says that man's nature is completely corrupt, and man does not have the ability to choose spiritual good over evil. The doctrine claims that this sinful, hereditary nature has been passed down through humanity since the time of Adam.

This doctrine reasons that men cannot know God naturally without an extraordinary means of conveying the knowledge of Him to their hearts -- the Spirit must penetrate our hearts to convince us of God's will. One of the most detestable "side effects" of this doctrine is that infants are lost in hell. In our day, this is regarded as anathema by most people. The doctrine is so unpopular that in 1910 the Methodist Church rejected it.

A "proof text" of total depravity is Romans 5:12-19. Paul discusses how sin entered into the world. By one man, Adam, sin entered the world and death by sin; so death passed on all men on the ground that all sinned. Through one act of righteousness, the free gift came to all men. Another "proof text" of total depravity is Psalm 51:5: "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" His mother was in sin, not David. If he were brought forth in a garden and conceived in a pumpkin patch, would he be a pumpkin? Jesus was born in a stable; laid in a manger, but He was not a colt or a bale of hay. Jesus was born of woman (Galatians 4:4). Was He totally depraved? What David referred to was the environment in which he was conceived and born. It is a world of lust and evil influences. Nothing in these texts suggest the doctrine of total depravity.

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