

## Session 2

### Chapter 2 Depravity of Man

[Salvation→Regeneration→and at the root of it is the state of the fallen man]

A first step toward salvation is regeneration, but without properly understanding the state of the fallen man, the need for regeneration is not readily grasped.

One passage that clearly indicates the depravity of man is Romans 3:10<sup>b</sup>-2: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

#### I. The Original Sin

The depravity of man begins and ends with what happened at the Garden between the devil (represented by the serpent) and Adam.



Gn. 3:1-12: Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

#### A. The devil’s ploy

1. First, he causes the first couple to doubt God’s word, saying, “Did God really say?”
2. Second, he questions God’s goodness, implying that the truth was kept away from them because God feared having an equal. (“You will be like God.”)

#### B. What Adam did

1. Adam rebelled against God by disobeying his direct commandment.
2. This, thereby, constituted “trespassing”: a willful failure to keep the law.

## II. Adam's Position on Earth

The question here is whether Adam acted alone: Did his action affect only himself, or was he representing others, thereby, his action affecting them as well?

### A. Adam the figurehead

Though no one else was around when the first couple capitulated to the devil, Adam was not acting just for himself; he was representing the entire human race to come.

1. He is called “the first man Adam” as opposed to “the last Adam,” that is, Christ (1 Cor. 15:44).
2. Apostle Paul refers to him as “a pattern of the one to come” (Rom. 5:14), which certainly alludes to Christ but can also be extended to humanity itself.
3. In this manner, Adam was the representative and personal substitute of each one of his posterity; this is called the federal headship.



### B. The effect of Adam's headship on those whom he represented

First, it needs to be recognized that Adam, as the federal head that represented all humanity, present and future, was in the probational period.

1. The descendants of Adam, as his direct heirs, were to inherit whatever consequences that were to come out from Adam's probationary (of the Covenant of works).
2. That is, they were eligible to receive either eternal life, based on good merit, or receive spiritual death, as the penalty for Adam's mistake.

## III. The Imputation of the Consequences of Adam's Fall



“The wages of sin,” says apostle Paul, “is death” (Rom. 6:23<sup>a</sup>); this, then, is the ultimate consequence of Adam's sin: a spiritual death—that is, separation from God.

Before amplifying this theme, let's first underscore how his action affected those whom he represented in two main ways:

### A. Imputation of the original sin

Simply put, under the federal head of Adam, his sin was imputed to his descendants in the same way that Christ' righteousness is imputed to those who believe him.

1. That is, all humanity sinned in Adam before any sin was ever committed by his descendants.

Rom. 5:12<sup>a</sup>, 17, 19: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men,. . .”

<sup>17a</sup> “By the trespasses the one man, death reigned through that one man,. . .”

<sup>19</sup> “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners.”

2. Thus, every human being is born a sinner. King David once confessed, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5).

**Discussion<sup>1</sup>:** What are some biblical/theological terms that you use that you aren’t quite sure what they mean?

## B. The imputation of slavery



The devil, in tempting Jesus following his 40-day fast, made an extraordinary claim. After having taken Jesus to a high place and showing all the kingdoms of the world, the devil said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to” (Lk. 4:6).

1. What Jesus said and didn’t say in response to the devil’s temptation is very telling.
  - a. First, Jesus rebuffed this temptation with a deft response: “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”
  - b. However, he did not challenge the devil’s premise that “all the kingdoms of the world are his and that they were given to him?”
  - c. This, in effect, implies that the devil was telling a truth.
2. But who gave the kingdoms of the world to the devil? God?

No, it was lost when Adam gave into the devil’s temptation at the garden.

- a. When God created Adam, He granted him the absolute power and authority to rule over all the rest of creations:

“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’” (Gn. 1:28).

b. In light of Peter's assertion, "A man is a slave to whatever has mastered him" (2 Pet. 2:19<sup>b</sup>), Adam, upon being mastered by the devil, ceded the governance of the earth to Satan.

c. And this is how devil became:

- "The ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Eph. 2:2)
- "The dominion of darkness" (Col. 1:13).
- "The god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4).

3. Another consequence of being born into this world.

a. In light of Jesus' statement, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (Jn. 8:34), Adam, by giving into the enemy's ploy, thereby willfully disobeying God, became his slave.

b. What did this mean for Adam's descendants? Not only was Adam's unrighteousness imputed on them, but his slavery to the devil as well.

(1) Thus, Paul states, "Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods" (Gal. 4:8)



(2) Once the devil began to reign on earth as its prince and god, he was in a position to exact the "power of death" over them, who, therefore, "all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Heb. 2:14).

So, what was lost at the Fall?

- Our original righteousness → Resulting in penalty of sin
- Our original freedom → Resulting in slavery to power of death

#### IV. What was Really Lost at the Fall

To understand regeneration, we need to know what was lost permanently when Adam committed the original sin, thereby becoming "slaves of depravity" (2 Pet. 2:19<sup>a</sup>).

##### A. The state before the Fall

1. Before sin entered the world (accompanied by both spiritual and physical death), there was neither death nor sickness in the world.
2. God, who is life and light, made everything to live forever; likewise, Adam and Eve were meant to live forever; that is, if they had successfully completed their probation period.

##### B. The state after the Fall

But once sin was introduced into the world, it first resulted in spiritual death.

1. Spiritual death is a state of separation from God because, as a result of Adam's sin, God's Spirit left him, for "light" and "darkness" cannot CO-exist.
  - a. Apostle John writes, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). Adam's banishment from the Garden reflects the departure of God's Spirit from Adam and Eve.
  - b. Other than that, there was no clear sign of death after their sin; thus, some may wonder, especially after noting that Adam lived until the age of 930 years (Gn. 4:4-5), why he didn't die right away.
2. To respond to this question, we need to understand how God created Adam in the first place.



## V. How the First Man was Made

Genesis 2:7 says, "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

### A. What is a living being?

Accordingly, God initially created a lifeless body (or, corpse).

1. Only when God breathed His Spirit into Adam did he become a "living being," which derives from the Hebrew word *Nephesh* that literally means soul, spirit, or mind, that is, the rational nature of man.
2. This can be presented as:  
Lifeless body + the Spirit of God = A living being or a "souled" person.



### B. An important distinction

Here, the distinction between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man needs to be made.

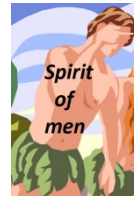
1. In accordance to Zechariah who said, "The LORD . . . forms the spirit of man within him" (12:1), what actually resulted from God's Spirit entering the lifeless body of Adam was the creation of the spirit of man (i.e., a souled person).
2. Paul affirms this when he stated, "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?" So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:11).

The letter “s” in “spirit of man” is in small cap;  
the letter “S” in “the Spirit of God” is capitalized.

3. This is the reason the dichotomist view of man presents him as consisting of body and “soul/spirit” rather than body, soul and spirit.

## VI. What Happened Ontologically (in the being of Adam) When Sin Occurred?

When Adam sinned, while the Spirit of God left him, the spirit of man, that is, his soul, remained in him.



### A. The result of the Spirit of God leaving Adam

1. As soon as the Spirit left Adam, the process of his body returning to its original state of lifelessness began; it was a matter of time before the body became completely lifeless.
2. It is like a fresh bouquet of flowers that look very alive, but they are actually dead.
  - a. From the very moment they were uprooted from the ground (spiritual death), they suffered death.
  - b. In a few days, its outward appearance will reflect it (physical death).



### B. How did the departure of the Spirit affect the image of God in man?

The Greek word *eikon* (“image” in English) means “correspondence to the original.” There are two aspects to the image of God that has been endowed in man.

1. One is the narrow image.
  - a. This refers to the original righteousness, knowledge of God, perfect purity, special awareness of God, which Adam possessed because the Spirit of God was in him.
  - b. However, once the Spirit left Adam, he ceased to be God-like in some important ways because the narrow image of God was lost.
  - c. And this state is what is meant by the phrase “spiritually dead” or “totally depraved” (discussed later).
2. The other is the broad image of God:

- a. This refers to that which was created in man when the Spirit of God entered Adam to form spirit within him, thus enabling him to possess the intellect, mind, soul and spirit (i.e., the rational nature of God).
- b. Despite the Fall, man, though spiritually dead to God (being devoid of the Spirit), continues to be a spiritual being, which distinguishes him from animals; this gives humanity an intrinsic worth that raises mankind above all animals.



## VII. What the Depraved Man is Incapable, as well as Capable of Doing

### A. His incapability

What does it really mean that the depraved man is spiritually dead?

Dead people cannot respond to external stimulus, whether it be an offering of a cool drink or a plateful of delicious food; similarly, the spiritually dead are wholly unable to respond to God's invitation to salvation.



1. Thus, Calvinism defines the total depravity of man as:

“Because of Fall, the sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is sinful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free; it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm.”

2. This raises the question of whether the spiritually dead (i.e., the unregenerate person) possesses free will in the spiritual realm?
  - a. Recognizing the loss of the narrow image of God in the unregenerate man, Arminius commented:
 

“Man has not saving grace himself, not of the working of his own free-will. In his state of apostasy and sin he can for himself and by himself think nothing that is good—nothing, that is, truly good, such as saving faith, above all.”
  - b. “So, man is a free agent in the sense that he is not controlled by any force outside of himself, but since he can't originate the love of God in his heart, he is bound and fixed under the power of evil.”
3. In effect, the unregenerate man is not at liberty to choose between good and evil, but only to choose between greater and lesser evil, which is not free will at all.

- a. While the “will can make decisions and take actions,. . . it is not free to cooperate with the grace of God.
- b. The will is so twisted and corrupted . . . . that it has no ability or desire to choose for God or for salvation.”<sup>1</sup>
- c. Paul says, “The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so” (Rom. 8:7). It means that while man still has the ability to exercise volitions but he is unable to exercise holy volitions.



**Discussion<sup>2</sup>:** How do you feel about discovering that our leading theologians disagree over fundamental issues such as salvation?

### B. His capacity

Because God’s broad image (i.e., His rational nature) remains in the fallen man, he is still able to act morally, have a sense of eternity, able to think and be creative,

1. Acting morally (however inept and partial).

Note that the doctrine of depravity of man asserts the inability of the unregenerate man to choose good over evil in the spiritual realm, which raises the question of whether he is capable of choosing good over evil in the realm of morality and civility.

- a. The Bible certainly presents several cases of unregenerate people doing what Reformed theologian R. C. Sproul calls “works of civil virtue.”<sup>2</sup>
  - (1) It was none other than Jesus who affirmed that even an evil father is capable of doing some good: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children . . .” (Matt. 7:11).
  - (2) The pagan islanders of Malta showed “unusual kindness” to Paul and others (Acts 28:1).
- b. How is that possible?
 

The only reason unregenerate “men, who have been made in God’s likeness” (James 3:9), are still capable of doing works of civil virtue is because “the requirements of [His] law are written on their hearts” (Rom. 2:14) as part of God’s broad image.
- c. So why did God leave His broad image in the fallen man?
  - (1) In short, it’s because God loves those whom He created

<sup>1</sup> W. Robert Godfrey in Horton p. 124

<sup>2</sup> R. C. Sproul, *What is Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1997), p. 128.



regardless whether or not they believe Him.

- (a) During Paul's missionary journey (46-48), he declared to the pagans in Lystra, "[God] did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17<sup>b</sup> NASB).

Here, Paul revealed that God "has shown kindness" to the worshipers of Greek gods by providing "plenty of food and filling their hearts with joy."

- (b) And in Paul's letter to Pastor Timothy, he urged him to pray for "everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives . . ." (1 Tim. 2:2<sup>a</sup>).

Paul wanted prayers on behalf of pagan kings so that their prudent ruling may result in orderly and safe "physical life" (from the Greek word *bios*).

- (2) Thus, it can be stated that God wants our farming, economic and social structures to be in such a state that everyone, including pagans, can live peaceful and quiet lives, for God doesn't want people to live in social chaos.

- (3) Nevertheless, the best effort by some unregenerate to promote peaceful and quiet existence continues to be thwarted by the god of this age, the devil, who holds the power of death over the unregenerate, whose virtue pales in comparison to their vice.

## 2. A sense of eternity.

The fallen man, though totally depraved, can still yearn for God. King Solomon noted, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (Eccl. 3:11).

## 3. Able to think and be creative.

- a. Man's ability to think and be creative was on full display when Adam "gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field" (Gn. 2:20).
- b. When Apostle Paul, while preaching to the pagans of Athens, said, "As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring' (Acts 17:28), he, in effect, affirmed that natural man (represented by pagan poets) is capable of ascertaining some truth.
- c. This is why competent and creative artists, even if they do not believe in God, are still capable to capturing the type of beauty and design that can elicit, "God saw that it was good" (Gn. 1:18).

**Discussion<sup>3</sup>:** What does it say about God in light of the fact that He didn't take away

everything from the fallen men, that He kept intact the broad image of God in them?

### VIII. Can the Works of the Broad Image Save the Spiritually Dead?

This is to ask, “Can our capacity to perform the works of civil virtue, sense of eternity, and ability to think rationally overcome our incapacity to choose God in the spiritual realm?”



#### A. No, it cannot— but why not?

1. First, man's capacity for civil virtue, made possible by the broad image of God still remaining in man, does not make up for the loss of the narrow image of God that resulted in the Spirit vacating himself from the fallen man.
  - a. This cataclysmic loss cannot be undone “by observing the law” (Rom. 3:20<sup>a</sup>) since all it takes to be condemned as a sinner is breaking just one law (James 2:10-1), which we have all done—multiple times.
  - b. Whatever amount of civil virtues a man may accumulate, they are not sufficient to earn God's acceptance because, ultimately, the unregenerate man does nothing out of love for God.

The great Church Father Augustine said, “So, man is a free agent in the sense that he is not controlled by any force outside of himself, but since he can't originate the love of God in his heart, he is bound and fixed under the power of evil.”

Discussion<sup>4</sup>: What would you say to those who insist that men can save themselves by doing good?

2. Second, while a sense of eternity in the fallen man can make him “very religious” (Acts 17:22), he ultimately ends up worshiping creatures rather their Creator (Rom. 1:23).
3. Third, even as the unregenerate man still shares the rational nature of God, his thoughts are easily distorted since “the heart is deceitful above all things” (Jer. 17:9).

Effects of the Fall:

- a. Human observations and thoughts often get distorted because of the corrupt heart (nature of man).
- b. The conscience works but not as well; it's like a broken clock that tells the right time—twice a day.

#### B. Is there hope?

So then, is there any hope for the spiritually dead whose “will is so twisted and corrupted that [he has] no ability or desire to choose for God or for salvation?

The only hope for man and his will lies in God’s regenerating grace.”<sup>3</sup>

## Homework 2

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<sup>3</sup> Godfrey in Horton, ed., p. 124.

Read over the material covered in the last class and the additional Bible reading (if any).  
If you have any questions, please note them here and ask me later.

1. How did humanity become depraved?
2. What does it mean that the depraved man is spiritually dead with respect to his will?
3. In what way does the state of spiritual deadness affect the hearing and the understanding of God's word?
4. Are the spiritually depraved capable of doing some good? If yes, what kind of good are they capable? What does this say about God's concern for the world?