A BIBLICAL STUDY OF MAN AND SALVATION

TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY

The Nature of Man and the Work of the Spirit in Salvation

BEN M. BOGARD

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by

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Total Hereditary Depravity

and

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

How Can a Totally Depraved Man Be Saved?

Scriptural Discussion of a Basic Doctrine

By

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INTRODUCTION

To fail to understand the Bible doctrine of hereditary depravity and the work of the Spirit in salvation is to fail in every way in the understanding of the way of salvation and all that pertains to the Christian life.

To fail at this point is like a surveyor failing to get the right starting point in the survey of a plot of land. The surveyor must start at the right place or the whole survey will be wrong.

The doctrine of the depravity of the human race is fundamental. Wrong in that doctrine—all else will be wrong. The following pages give what the Bible teaches; the student should become as familiar with the Scriptures on the subject as he is with the multiplication table or the alphabet. Everything depends on a correct understand of this doctrine.

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TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY

Definitions:

Depraved—Evil, wrong, tending to sin.

Total—All, body, mind and spirit, entire man.

Depravity—Adamic nature, Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The correct meaning of *total depravity: entire destitution of the love of God.*

Man is totally depraved in the sense that there is no love in his heart for God. Total depravity does *not* mean:

1. That man is as mean as the devil, or
2. That we cannot get any worse.

Total depravity does mean, the *total man* is bad.

By total depravity we do not mean that *man* is *depravity,* but that he is *depraved.*

His mind is bad.

His body is bad.

His spirit is bad.

The entire or total man is bad by nature.

We are sinners by nature, Romans 5:12, "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

There was a time when we did not have faith. Romans 14:23, "*And he that doubteth is*

damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

The best thing you ever do before you are saved is sin. If you pay your debts, it is sin. If you do not pay your debts, it is a worse sin. If you provide for your family, it is a sin. If you do not provide for your family, it is a worse sin. If you eat, it is a sin. If you walk, eat, sleep, or whatsoever thing you do without faith in God is a sin, for "*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*"

I Corinthians 10:31 tells us, "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*" Then *where does the sin in supposedly good deeds come from?* It is because he has not, in the good deeds, glorified God. This shows that the best an unsaved person can do is sin. Even if he tries to save himself, it is sin when he leaves God out.

In Proverbs 21:4, we find these words, "*An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.*" The word "*plowing*" here means *light.* Even the light of the wicked is sin.

Those in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:7-9, "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"

WHAT IS MEANT BY "FLESH"?

Bible Definitions of "Flesh"

Flesh does not mean meat, bones, hair, as most people think. *Flesh means the natural man.*

1. Flesh has a *will.*

John 1:13, "*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (Meat, bones, hair do not have a will.)

2. Flesh has a *mind.*

Colossians 2:18, "*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*" Meat, bones, hair do not have a mind.

3. Flesh has a *body.*

Colossians 1:22, "*In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.*" (Meat, bones, are a part of the body.) Jesus was made flesh, John 1:14, and his flesh had a body.

4. Flesh has *lusts* or *desires.*

1 Peter 2:11, "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*"

5. Flesh has *wisdom.*

2 Corinthians 1:12, "*For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly*

wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

6. Flesh has *works.*

Galatians 5:19, "*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.*"

Thus, we see that "*flesh*" *is the entire human nature.*

A saved person is not "flesh" (natural man). Romans 8:9, "*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"

The new birth is an engrafting of spiritual life. James 1:21, "*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*"

The graft is something added—imparted.

Some people teach that a sinner is totally depraved and dead to sin, which is true, but they go further to say that a dead man cannot see, feel nor understand; therefore there is no need to preach to sinners. They teach that God must regenerate the sinner before he can see, feel and understand. When the person is regenerated, they teach, then it is time to preach to him.

A good answer to this is, if the unsaved man *cannot see, feel, or understand,* then it will follow that, *when a sinner gets to hell, he cannot see, feel, nor understand; therefore, it will*

not hurt him to be in hell, because he cannot feel or understand. The absurdity of this answers completely.

Total depravity does not mean that a sinner cannot see, feel nor understand. The sinner, though he is totally depraved, can understand and it is our business to teach him.

A good example of this is found in Ezekiel 37. It is our business to preach to dry bones (dead sinners), and it is God's business to resurrect the dry bones (regenerate the dead sinners). After we have preached the Word to the dead sinner, we should call upon God to bless our work (regenerate the dead sinner). Ezekiel 37:9, 10, "*Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, and exceeding great army.*"

What need do we have to preach if God does all the saving and we are to pray that God might save the lost? Why not just pray for God to save the lost and do no more?

Answer: We pray for bread and then go work for it, do we not? We pray for the sick and then use the means necessary to get well, do we not? We pray for the lost and then preach to them, should we not?

Some will put up this objection: if total hereditary depravity is true, then all who die in infancy go to hell.

Answer: 1 Timothy 4:10, "*For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*"

The Greek word for men here means *mankind.* He is the Savior of *all mankind.* Christ died for babies and insane people, who are not responsible for their sins.

Revelation 5:9, "*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*" If Christ did not die for babies, then there would be a division in heaven; those who died in infancy should not sing this song: "*for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*"

The twenty-four mentioned in this passage are representative because there were not enough of them to come out of every nation, for there are more than just twenty-four nations.

MAN BY NATURE IS DEPRAVED

Ephesians 2:3, "*Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the*

children of wrath, even as others." (The word "conversation" here means life. The "flesh" means *natural man.*)

A common objective to this argument is that the word "nature" does not mean what we are by birth, but it only means "custom" because, in 1 Corinthians 11:14, we are told that "nature" teaches us it is a shame for a man to have long hair, and that cannot be anymore than "custom"; that is, custom teaches that it is a shame for a man to have long hair. It is true that *nature does teach that men should have short hair and women should have long hair,* because it is a fact that women's hair is ACTUALLY MUCH LONGER than a man's hair. Let alone from infancy, a girl's hair will be more than *three times as long as a boy's hair.* NATURE DOES TEACH THAT A MAN'S HAIR SHOULD BE SHORTER than a woman's hair. The average length of a man's hair, let alone to grow its natural length, is about eight inches, and the average length of a woman's hair, let alone to grow its full length, is TWENTY EIGHT inches. Man's hair is naturally much shorter than a woman's hair. So Paul used the word "nature" in the ordinary sense—meaning what we are by natural birth—and it is not used in the sense of "custom."

WE ARE BY NATURE, NATURAL BIRTH, children of wrath. The FACTS destroy this stock objection to the doctrine of hereditary depravity.

Romans 3:9-20, "*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the WAY OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN: there is NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*"

Isaiah 64:6, 7, "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

"*And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.*"

Suppose a man offered a bundle of dirty rags for a home? You try to buy a mansion or a

home in heaven with your own righteousness, and it will be even more absurd than to buy an earthly home with a bundle of filthy rags. *Our righteousness is as filthy rags.*

Ecclesiastes 8:11, *Heart fully set to do evil.*

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

Psalm 51:3-5, *Born in state of sin.*

"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I WAS SHAPEN IN INIQUITY; AND IN SIN DID MY MOTHER CONCEIVE ME."

Job 14:4, *Uncleanness from parents.*

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."

BEGIN TO DO WRONG FROM BIRTH

"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely" (Psalm 58:3-5).

NO GOOD IN THE NATURAL MAN

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present

with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:18, 19).

Romans 5:12, *Depravity is hereditary.*

"*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

NATURAL MAN CANNOT PLEASE GOD

"*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*" (Romans 8:7, 8).

If there is anything *good in a natural man,* God would be pleased with it. But this passage distinctly declares there is "no good thing" in the "flesh," the natural man.

The doctrine of TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY shows the necessity of obtaining a new birth, the imparted, grafted nature we get in the new birth. The doctrine being true, it excludes all boasting, for the unsaved man has no good in him to boast of. It shows the self-righteous man his real condition and brings on conviction for sin. If men are totally depraved, there must be a power above themselves to bring to them salvation; hence the need of the Holy Spirit to quicken the dead sinner.

Get this doctrine straight in your mind, and you are prepared to understand something of the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and

you are prepared to understand salvation by grace. If one is wrong on this subject, he will be wrong on all parts of the ground. What you believe on this subject will determine what you believe on all other New Testament doctrines.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN SALVATION

Many think of the Holy Spirit as a sort of fluid or something like electricity, when in fact the Holy Spirit is God. There are three persons in the God-head: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but these three are one. There are not THREE GODS but three personalities in the ONE GOD.

An illustration may help to comprehend this mystery. Snow, ice and frost are certainly three, yet they are ONE. Any child can see the SNOW, the ICE and FROST, and can easily point out each of them. THEY ARE THREE, and yet, in fact, only one. Put the THREE into a bucket and let it stand awhile and any one can see the THREE ARE ONE. Yet, snow, ice and frost are very distinct. So, with the blessed TRINITY.

GOD SAVES the sinner on the MERITS OF THE SHED BLOOD OF THE SON, by the WORK OF THE SPIRIT. The PERSONAL PRESENCE AND POWER of the Holy Spirit is in every case of salvation.

The depraved sinner cannot act except by the ENABLING GRACE of God through the

Spirit. The Spirit is ACTUALLY PRESENT in the salvation of every soul.

The Spirit is present with the Lord's people continually. John 14:16, *"The Father... shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."*

The Holy Spirit opens the door of faith when the Gospel is preached. Acts 14:27, *"They rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."* In Acts 16:14, we read where God opened Lydia's heart *"that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."* Thus we see the gospel is preached and the Holy Spirit is PRESENT TO ACCOMPANY the word of God to the heart of the sinner. Acts 11:20, 21 says they *"Spake unto the Grecians... and the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed."* Thus, we see that the gospel was preached and in addition to the gospel, there was the "HAND OF THE LORD"—power in addition to the gospel.

The Apostle Paul saw the need of something MORE THAN THE GOSPEL when he said, *"Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified"* (2 Thessalonians 3:1). Paul had the TRUTH, he had the GOSPEL, but he said he needed something MORE and therefore asked that they PRAY FOR HIM that this something MORE might be with him. You cannot reason or argue a dead sinner into salvation. It TAKES THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT.

If all the power is in the gospel, the truth, why pray for something else? Paul had the gospel, he had the truth, and certainly he did not want them to pray that he might get what he already had. He needed something IN ADDITION TO THE WORD to save a soul.

God GIVES ENABLING GRACE to the depraved sinner. John 6:44, "*No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me DRAW him.*" When the truth is preached, the SPIRIT ACCOMPANIES THE TRUTH and DRAWS the sinner to salvation. The passage says that, "All shall be taught of God." Certainly, it shows that ALL ARE DRAWN by the power of God. Why then aren't all men saved? The answer is that God does not IRRESISTIBLY DRAW ANYONE. He gives ENABLING GRACE but does not FORCE anyone. While God CALLS, while God ENABLES, while God DRAWS, He does not FORCE. He does not destroy the FREEDOM OF THE SINNER'S WILL.

The Hardshell idea is that God IRRESISTIBLY DRAWS, and the CAMPBELLITE IDEA IS THAT GOD DOES NOT DRAW AT ALL, but the Bible idea is that God calls, draws, the Holy Spirit INFLUENCES, but does not FORCE.

Proverbs 1:22-26, "*How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?*

"Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded:... I... will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

Why preach to dead sinners? Being dead in sin does not mean to be unconscious. It means SEPARATION FROM GOD. God gives to ALL ENABLING GRACE so that they can come, hence all are left without excuse.

John 3:16 says that *"whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

It is wonderful to think that God so loved depraved, lost man, that He sent the GOSPEL, ACCOMPANIED BY THE SPIRIT that men might be saved. He does not FORCE but He does ENABLE all men to be saved so they are left without excuse for they have sufficient knowledge of God to repent and God leaves them without excuse. See Romans 1:20.

God *"now commandeth all men every where to repent"* (Acts 17:30), and He enables them to repent. Acts 3:19, *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."*

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Ben M. Bogard presents the doctrine of human depravity as a foundational truth for understanding salvation and Christian life. Like a survey that must begin from the correct starting point, he argues that errors concerning human nature lead to errors throughout one's understanding of redemption.

Drawing directly from Scripture, this concise study examines the meaning of the flesh, inherited sin, spiritual death, the new birth, the preaching of the gospel, and the indispensable work of the Holy Spirit in bringing sinners to faith in Jesus Christ.

Clear, direct, and Scripture-centered, the booklet is designed to help students grasp a doctrine Bogard considered essential to a sound understanding of the biblical way of salvation.

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