



THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN

A GFC DISTINCTIVE



THE DEPRAVITY OF MAN IS THE DOCTRINE WHICH
TEACHES THAT EVERYONE IS DEPRAVED OR
CORRUPTED BY THE POWER OF SIN. WE ARE NOT
AS SINFUL AS WE COULD BE BUT EVERY PART OF
US HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY SIN IN SOME WAY.
SINCE THIS DOCTRINE HAS TREMENDOUS
IMPLICATIONS FOR US, IT IS IMPORTANT TO
UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS. HERE IS A
SUMMARY OF WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT IT:

1. GOD CREATED MAN SINLESS

Genesis 1:31 says that, after God created the universe, "He saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." This means that the sky was good and the earth was good. The sun was good and the moon was good. The plants were good and the animals were good and so was man. Human beings were created exactly the way that God wanted them to be.

The word "good" in Hebrew is *tov* which means "agreeable or pleasant." However, it can also mean that something works and is "good" in a functional sense because it fulfills its purpose. The Bible says that God created mankind that way because initially we were "very good."

As a result, the Scriptures teach that we obeyed God. We gave Him glory and honour. We kept all of His commandments and His laws and we pleased Him in every way. However, something happened to change how we were originally created and that leads us to our next point.

2. MAN SINNED

Genesis 3:6-7 says:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened.

To understand the context for this verse, earlier it says that the Lord gave Adam and Eve just one command to follow after He created them. He told them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Many people today complain because God has given them so many commands but, originally, God just gave us one law and we broke it.

We do not need to downplay the significance of that for it is a terrible thing to break anyone's law but it is even worse if you disobey God's law because there are terrible consequences if you do. In fact, the Lord told Adam and Eve exactly what would happen if they disobeyed Him.

Genesis 2:17 says "For in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." This meant that Adam and Eve would die physically because, from the moment they ate of the fruit, their bodies would begin to expire.

However, it also meant that they would die spiritually because, for the first time, they would stop doing what was "good" in God's eyes. They would no longer obey Him or give Him glory and honour because mankind would now be at enmity with God. He and the Lord would be enemies which brings us to the last point.

3. NOW ALL OF US SIN

The Bible says that, as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience, the entire human race was plunged into sin because their decision affected us all. As Romans 5:12 says:

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned . . .

Paul says that death has spread “to all men.” It has touched every corner of the human race and the reason is “because all sinned.” Adam and Eve were not the only ones to do it. They were the first to start this terrible trend but everyone else just picked up where they left off.

However, this is not the last word on the subject because Romans 5:15 says:

But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Paul says that, just as Adam sinned and plunged the whole human race into sin, so Jesus Christ did not sin and He gives us something better. He gives us His grace and offers us the free gift of forgiveness. As William Barclays writes, “Just as Adam’s sin was the cause of death, so Jesus’ perfect goodness conquers death and gives men life eternal.”[1]

Jesus did what Adam and Eve never could because He kept all of God’s commands. He fulfilled all of God’s law and pleased Him in every way throughout His life so that we can enjoy the benefits of that now if we will just believe in him and repent.

CONCLUSION

Few doctrines in the Bible are as disturbing as the doctrine of man’s depravity and few doctrines are as easy to prove because we see evidences of it every day. All you have to do is turn on the news and you can see more than enough proof that man is sinful.

Yet that is why Jesus came. God sent Him in order to deal with our sin problem which is why this is a distinctive of our church. Nothing explains what Jesus did better than the doctrine of man's depravity.

If you have any questions about this doctrine or anything else in this pamphlet, we would love to hear from you.

[1] William Barclay, The Letter to the Romans in The Daily Study Bible (Philadelphia, Penn.: The Westminster Press, 1957) 81.



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