

Salvation—The Fall and Depravity of Man (2nd)

(Today we conclude our study of the fall and depravity of man and its connection to salvation.)

In the previous podcast regarding the fall and depravity of man we saw that when God made man He put him in the Garden of Eden to dress and keep it, and that he could eat of everything in the garden with the exception of one tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Furthermore, Adam was told that if he ate of that tree he would die. Literally, we are told that it says in “dying thou shall die.” In other words, he not only would die spiritually, but that he would begin to die naturally which concluded 930 years later. The Scriptures affirm in several places that death, spiritual death, passed on all mankind as the results of the sin of Adam. Roman 5:12 declares, “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.” Notice “death passed upon all men.” Earlier in the epistle of Romans, Paul proved that “both Jews and Gentiles” are “under sin,” and that “all the world” is “guilty before God.” Romans 3:9-19 gives a good description of the natural man and his deadness in sin. He is “under sin,” unrighteous, does not understand, does not seek God, unprofitable, does not do good, has deceitful and poisonous speech that is “full of cursing and bitterness,” quick “to shed blood,” a lifestyle of “destruction and misery,” does not have peace in his life, and has no fear or respect for God. In addition, Ephesians 2:1 tells us that before regeneration man is “dead in trespasses and sins.”

I Corinthians 2:14 speaks to the natural state of man as follows: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” It is amazing that many teach and preach to sinners that they will be saved if they will only believe. However, the Scriptures teach that the natural man does not receive the things of God. He not only cannot receive the things of God but they are foolishness to him. Furthermore, the text tells us that the things of God are foolishness to him and he cannot receive them, but that he also cannot know them. It is misleading for a minister to teach his congregation that if a person will simply believe he will be justified and saved. It is true that the believer will be saved, but it is misleading and confusing to preach that “if you will believe you will be saved” without further instructing that it is essential for the Lord to first open the heart of the sinner before he can believe.

Some will content that a person can believe if he will, but the Scriptures teach otherwise. Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day,” John 6:44. Notice the language, “no man *can* come” to Christ except first the Father draws him. Even I Corinthians 2:14, as previously quoted, affirmed that the natural man “neither *can*” know the things of God. Therefore, the natural man is unable to come to Christ or believe on Him. Why? Because he is “*dead* in trespasses and sins.” Again, Jesus told the unbelieving Jews, “Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word,” John 8:43. The reason the natural man does not understand the gospel and obey it is because he “*cannot hear*” the Word of God. Previously, in the Gospel of John, Jesus told the unbelieving Jews that with all of their searching and studying the Scriptures that they would not come to Him. He said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life,” John 5:39-40. So we see that the natural man does not have the *ability* (*cannot* hear) nor the *will* to hear the truth of the Word of God. Therefore, a dead sinner *will* not go to Christ nor *can* he go to Christ. The only reason a person has a will to go to hear the gospel or go to Christ is because God first changes his will. Psalm 110:3 says, “Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.” When God moves on the heart and soul of a person in regeneration his will is changed so that he then desires “the things of the Spirit of God.” Equally (as previously seen in John 6:44) the reason a person can go to Christ, or has the ability to believe in Him, is because God the Father draws him. The Greek word for draw in this verse is ἐλκύω (helkýō),

hel-koo'-o) and literally means “to drag.” Note how this word is used in a few other places in the New Testament. John 10:18 declares, “Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.” Obviously, there was no resistance or assistance from the sword of Peter. Next in the Gospel of John we see the word in chapter twenty-one and verses six and eleven as it relates to dragging fish in the net: “And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.” ... “Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.” Allow me to impose on your patience by quoting Acts 16:19 and 21:30: “And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers,” ... “And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.” It should be abundantly clear that the drawing of the Father as stated in John 6:44 is an irresistible force acting on the dead sinner causing him to have the ability and/or will to flee to Christ. (The Lord willing, we will say more about the irresistible force of God in regeneration later.) The point is that in the fall of Adam, the whole human race was condemned and come into the world “dead in trespasses and sins,” Ephesians 2:1.

When we say that a person is dead in sin and totally depraved, we do not mean that each and every human is as wicked and sinful as he can be. No, there are many people that have a kind spirit or disposition and perform many beneficial acts toward others. However, their acts are not done for the glory of the Lord. Notice Proverbs 15:8, 29; 21:27: “The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.” “The LORD *is* far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.” “The sacrifice of the wicked *is* abomination: how much more, *when* he bringeth it with a wicked mind?” From these verses we find that if the heart (or motive) is not right it is not accepted by God. For example, if a person worships, sacrifices, or offers prayers to God for the purpose of obtaining spiritual benefits or salvation from God, his sacrifices are unacceptable to God. When the heart is made right by God, the person worships, sacrifices, and prays to God to simply honor and glorify Him because God gave him salvation. As I John 4:19 says, “We love him, because he first loved us.” However, before the Lord moves on the heart of an individual, he not only **will not** come to Christ, he **cannot** come to Christ; he does not have the will or the ability to seek and know the Lord. Even our Lord Jesus Christ told Nicodemus that unless one is born again (literally from above) he “cannot see” or “enter into the kingdom of God,” John 3:3, 5. Note again that it says **cannot** see or enter the kingdom; that is, he does not have the ability to do so.

The Scriptures further teach that the man who is dead in trespasses and sins is unable to do anything toward his salvation, but they also teach that all of his actions are unacceptable to God. Proverbs 21:4 says, “An high look, and a proud heart, *and* the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin.” While plowing and providing for his family is beneficial for their health and livelihood, his labors are not done for the glory of God, but for his personal gain. Many people are involved in many religious activities and charitable organizations and from all outward appearance it appears that many good deeds and works are being performed. Nevertheless, unless their actions are tempered by a heart prepared by the Lord in regeneration, they are merely treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, cf. Romans 2:5. This is the condemnation Paul wrote regarding the religious Jews and their being “ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness,” cf. Romans 10:3.

Though the Lord regenerates and changes the will of man in His people, they still retain this fallen nature so that there is a continual warfare and struggle within them. Paul writes of this struggle in the seventh chapter of Romans. While we do not have time to quote all the verses and comment on them, I will quote verses fifteen through twenty-three to show this struggle. “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Paul also spoke of this warfare in Galatians 5:17, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” While the conflict rages with the child of grace due to his sinful nature, it is encouraging that the battle goes both ways. Though our sinful nature does prevent us from living as holily and godly as we desire, thankfully the Spirit equally wars against the flesh so that we, as regenerated children, do not go into the depths of sin that we would otherwise. I John 4:4 says, “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

Yes, the whole world fell into sin in Adam, and were it not for the ruling power of the Holy Spirit in regeneration we would not have the will or ability to believe on Christ and obey His Word. Thankfully, we who have been born again have the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and sustain us in our daily walk with the Lord. As the prophet Jonah declared, “Salvation is of the Lord,” Jonah 2:9.

Our time is up for today. Farewell.