

MAN IS UNKNOWN TO HIMSELF

Men do not know their real selves!

By Pastor Del Wray

The doctrine of Total Corruption also called Total Depravity or Man's Inability, no matter what man calls it according to the Bible our human nature has been corrupted totally. Scripture fully proclaims it and Jesus' own Words testify to this truth, Paul the Apostle in his letter to the Church at Rome wrote,

"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" Rom. 3: 10-18.

It's important to understand the nature of man. If we don't understand who we are, if we don't diagnose the human condition properly, we won't look to the right solution for our problems; we won't go to the right source to get the help that we need, and we desperately need help; and we won't reach the amazing goal that can be reached. Who are we? Why are we able to think, feel, reason, will, love, hate, care for others, yet hurt the ones we love? Why do humans want peace and justice, yet find that peace and justice are so hard to achieve? Why aren't we content? So often we are so unhappy? Disillusioned? Depressed? Bored? Confused? Why are there laws, police, courts, jails, militaries, wars, crimes, terrorism, alarms, safes, locks, security codes, passwords, lie-detector tests, psychiatrists, psychologists, mood-stabilizing and mood-enhancing drugs? Why can we be kind and cruel, wise and foolish, generous yet greedy, selfish and shortsighted? The Bible is the only "Source" that adequately answers these questions about the nature of man. Here's what it tells us: Human beings were made by a personal, Creator God. They were made in His image with the essential elements of personhood: with mind, emotion and will; with the amazing abilities to think, to feel, to reason, to choose. But the image of God was marred by the "fall". In the beginning of human history, Adam and Eve joined the rebellion of the fallen angels. As a result, they were alienated from the Creator. After the fall, when they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, instead of getting closer to God, they ran away from Him and hid from Him. Not only was the image of God marred, and their relationship with the Creator ruined, but Adam and Eve's destiny was ruined. Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat from the Tree of Life and were exiled from the delightful Garden of Eden. They were no longer headed toward life, but death, the First Death, physical death, followed by the Second Death, eternal death, Hell, the Lake of

Fire. The Apostle Paul stated this in 1 Corinthians 15:22 in four simple words when translated into English: ***In Adam all die***. And if we will not believe in Jesus Christ, who is truly the Jewish Messiah, and come to know who He is, and become a born again Christian. We will perish, decay, be destroyed, come to ruin, expire, and pass away, we will die.

The Catastrophe of Eden affected every aspect of the humanity of Adam and Eve, their bodies, their souls, their wills, their minds, their emotions, their spirits, their relationship with God, with nature, later their relationship with other humans, their destiny. Every aspect of who they were became damaged, broken, and corrupted. As a result of the “fall”, sin, the sin nature, domination by the demons and death took control of humanity. What happened in Eden didn’t stay in Eden. That corruption of body, soul, will, mind, spirit, sexuality, relationship to others, relationship to God and nature, loss of eternal life, all of it was passed on like a horrible disease, infecting all of their descendants, you and me. In the next generation, of the first two children born to Adam and Eve, Cain murdered his brother Abel. Later, Lamech killed a man. Eventually all of humanity became violent and corrupt and had to be put down, with the exception of one family. Theologians have a term for this ruination of human nature. It’s called “Total Depravity.” It doesn’t mean that we are as bad as we can possibly be. It means that the consequences of the fall have affected every aspect of who we are. Here is how one of the greatest men who ever lived, King David, who was a divinely inspired prophet, described how the Fall has impacted human nature: *They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from Heaven on all mankind to see if there is any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good not even one.* No one seeks God enough or seeks Him properly. Humanity has gone astray. All have become corrupt. No one is good enough, not even one human being. This is a description of humanity apart from divine intervention. The Apostle Paul, divinely inspired representative of the risen and ascended Lord, described the human condition, quoting these same words of King David in Romans 3: *Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”* Then, assembling verses from the Tenach that mention various parts of the body, Paul reinforces this truth. *“Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.”* Humans are liars. They use the God-given gift of speech to lie and destroy others. *“The poison of vipers is on their lips ... Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”* Their words can be very nasty, full of hate, deadly. Moving to the bottom of the body: *“Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.”* Humans find it easy to harm others, violate others, even kill others. Coercion, violent crimes, senseless violence, rape, murder, terrorism and war are endemic among humanity. Moving back to the top of the body: *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”* Humanity doesn’t respect God, honor God, reverence God, fear God, treat the glorious Supreme Being the way He should be treated. So, from head to foot, from top to

bottom, apart from divine intervention, all of humanity, Jews and Gentiles included, are liars, haters, godless. There is none righteous. We are not right with God. We don't consistently do the right things. Our spiritual understanding is severely lacking. We don't pursue God sufficiently or in the right way. We are corrupt. No one is good enough.

What is human nature like? We're basically good, right? We just need a little improvement to be okay, right? Good laws and good education and the right kind of politics and the equal distribution of wealth will usher in utopia, right? We are improving, advancing as we evolve? No. The prophet Jeremiah declared this about human nature:

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

Human nature does not improve over the centuries, because at the core of who we are, we are deceitful and very wicked, and that doesn't change. If at the core of who we are, we are deceitful and wicked, how well can we know ourselves? That's why we often don't understand ourselves, why we feel the way we feel; why we're driven to do certain things; why we react to things the way we do. If we don't understand ourselves, how well can we really know others? Especially when people put on a false face, lie, deceive and betray. That's why great care must be taken when considering a partner for marriage, or a business partner, or considering someone for a position of leadership in society or in God's Community. It can take years to get to know someone. Some husbands and wives will attest that it took them years to get to know the person they were living with, and in some cases, they never really knew them. Jesus knew what was in man, He knew that human beings are inherently unreliable and untrustworthy. Consider these words recorded in John 2:23-25:

"Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the holiday, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man".

Jesus knew that human beings can't be trusted. The spirit is willing, but our flesh, our ruined nature, is weak. We are susceptible to temptation and seduction. Even our good intentions can be foolish and shortsighted and cause harm. There are many ways that seem right to us, but lead to death. The road to Hell can be paved with the best of intentions – and still lead us to Hell. Even the best human beings, like prophets, priests, apostles, pastors and rabbis, can get corrupted. That means that our children can't be trusted; that teenagers especially can't be trusted; that groups of human beings, like organizations and institutions and governments, can't be trusted. Checks and balances and accountability and constant vigilance are required. This weakness and corruption of human nature explains why it was possible for the Holy Nation of Israel to be saved out of

Egypt, see a powerful revelation of God on Mount Sinai, hear His voice, promise to keep the Ten Commandments, and then only a short time later worship a golden calf. This weakness and corruption of human nature explains why Germany, which was the most cultured and educated nation in Europe, could be seduced by a Hitler and do such horrible things. The founding fathers knew this about human nature. That's why they created not one, but three branches of government, and added checks and balances into the Constitution – to prevent one man, or one branch of government, from becoming corrupt and tyrannical. That's why they added the Second Amendment, so that if the government did become tyrannical, the people would have weapons to resist and replace the government. Even the sons and daughters of God can be seduced, tempted, corrupted. Look at Ananias and Sapphira. That's why we need good shepherds watching over each one of the flock. *Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you* (Hebrews 13:17). We need good spiritual leaders to watch over us, to protect us, to hold us accountable. Reading the Bible on your own is not enough. Praying on your own is not enough. Watching a preacher on TV and giving to his ministry is not enough. You need a pastor or rabbi you can talk to, confide in, be accountable to, and receive correction from.

The Solution to Total Depravity

We are dead in trespasses and sins. Sin has killed us, all of us. And the dead can't give themselves life or a new, transformed nature. We can't save ourselves from our ruined nature. Even becoming religious won't necessarily help us, unless our religion is based on God's principles of salvation. Very religious people, if they aren't born-again, if they haven't received a new nature, are still dead in their trespasses and sins, and corrupt and impure on the inside. Christ told a group of deeply religious leaders:

Woe to you, teachers of the Torah and Pharisees; "Woe unto you, Scribes, and Pharisees and hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Because the Fall and our alienation from God has so corrupted our nature, there is not enough we can do on our own to end our alienation from God or its many tragic consequences. We can never be good enough or religious enough to end our alienation from the Creator or overcome the real and deadly forces of Satan, sin and death, and the sin nature. All human efforts are inadequate. We are not just a little sick and in need a little healing. We are dead in our trespasses and sins. Sin has killed us! We have no spiritual life. Just as the physically dead can't

give themselves life – they are dead – so the spiritually dead can't give themselves spiritual life. They are spiritually dead. The answer is not laws to control the worst of our behavior. Better education and better politics and more social justice are good, but not enough to help us where we need help the most! We are spiritually dead. We need new spiritual life. We need to be born again. Our nature has been ruined. We need a new nature. And, it's possible to get new spiritual life, to get a whole new nature! Messiah declared to one of Israel's greatest teachers: *Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again ... Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.* We need the Spirit of God to come to us in a new and greater way; live in us; give us new spiritual life; give us a new nature that loves God, wants to obey God, a nature that wants to end our part in the ancient rebellion against God, a new nature that can live with God forever and ever. We can't give ourselves a new, godly nature. We need help from outside ourselves, outside humanity. We need divine intervention. And that divine intervention has come! The good news is that what we are utterly incapable of doing on our own, God is completely capable of accomplishing! To overcome the real and ruinous forces of Satan, sin and death, and the corruption of human nature, we simply need to understand and accept what God has done to rescue us. God the Father sent His eternal Son whom He loves on a mission to rescue human beings from Satan, sin, death and a ruined nature. The Son of God left Heaven and through the incarnation, came into this world and became a human being. The Son of God was born into the Chosen People. The young carpenter from Nazareth became Israel's Messiah – our ultimate Prophet, Priest and King and Savior. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless, Torah-observing, God-honoring life. Jesus taught us great truths. He was used by His Father to do tremendous miracles, showing He was close to God, and would be the miraculous healer and helper and Savior of humanity and the rest of creation. Then, He accomplished His greatest work of all. The Son of God willingly allowed Himself to be whipped, beaten, spit on, humiliated, stripped naked and crucified! By dying in this way, the Messiah became the ultimate sacrifice to fully and completely atone for all of humanity's sins, and end our alienation from our Creator. When we understand this and transfer our loyalties to the Three-In-One God, we are saved! All our sins are forgiven! Our relationship with God is restored! We are freed from the control of Satan and the demons! We become born-again! We receive a new nature! We will not die, but live, and live forever! Paul put it this way,

You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Messiah even when we were dead in transgressions ... For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

God has made it possible to be rescued from consequences of the Fall of Man, from the Catastrophe of Eden – from control by Satan and the demons, sin, the sin nature, and death! Have you simply received what God has done for you? Or, are you trying by your own efforts to make yourself a better person and hoping that you will be better off that way, which is a false way, which is no way? Have you been born again? Is there evidence of it? A changed life a new nature new values, priorities, new passion to help others, especially where they need help the most – knowledge about the dead, risen and ascended Messiah, who gives His Spirit to those who become loyal to Him, so they can become born again? If not, make an appointment to talk to me – ASAP. Please don't wait. This is too important, time is too precious, life is too uncertain, and the consequences for failure are too awful. And the benefits that can be gained too real and too awesome to miss!