

Total Depravity: Total Inability

1. As the result of Adam's transgression, men are born in sin and by nature are spiritually dead. If men are to become the children of God and enter into His kingdom, they must be born anew by the Holy Spirit.

Adam sinned.

- *Genesis 2:16-17 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Sin brought death.

- *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:*
- *Ephesians 2:1-3 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation 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.*
- *Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

Men are born into sin.

- *Psalms 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
 - *Psalms 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*
2. Because of this state of sin men must be born anew if they are to enter into the kingdom of God.
 - *John 3:5-7 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*
 - *John 1:12-13 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

3. As the result of the Fall, men are by nature blind and deaf to spiritual truth. Their minds are darkened by sin and their hearts are corrupt and evil.
 - *Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*
 - *Genesis 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.*
 - *Eccl. 9:3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in the heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.*
 - *Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*
 - *Mark 7:21-23 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*
 - *John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*
 - *Rom. 8:7-8 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*
 - *1 Cor. 2:14 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.*
 - *Eph. 4:17-19 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*
 - *Eph. 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*
 - *Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*
4. Before sinners are born into the kingdom of God through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, they are the children of the devil and under his control. They are slaves to sin.

- *John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*
 - *Eph. 2:1-2 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*
 - *2 Tim. 2:25-26 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*
 - *1 John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*
 - *1 John 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*
 - *John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*
 - *Romans 6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*
 - *Titus 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.*
5. The reign of sin is universal. All men are under its power. Consequently, none is righteous--not even one!
- *2 Chronicles 6:36 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near;*
 - *1 Kings 8:46 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;*
 - *Job 15:14-16 14 What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? 15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. 16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*
 - *Psa. 130:3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*
 - *Psa. 143:2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

- *Prov. 20:9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*
 - *Eccl. 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*
 - *Eccl. 7:29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*
 - *Isa. 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
 - *Isa. 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*
 - *Rom. 3:9-12 9 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; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
 - *James 3:2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*
 - *James 3:8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*
 - *1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
 - *1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*
6. Men left in their dead state are unable of themselves to repent, to believe the gospel, or to come to Christ. They have no power within themselves to change their natures, to incline their wills to God or to prepare their hearts for salvation.
- *Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*
 - *Jer. 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*
 - *Matt. 7:16-18 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth every fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

- *Matt. 12:33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.*
- *John 6:44 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 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*
- *Rom. 11:35-36 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*
- *1 Cor. 2:14 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.*
- *1 Cor. 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*
- *2 Cor. 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*

Conclusion

If it is really true that men are born in sin and are blind, deaf, darkened, corrupt, evil, and unable to help themselves then the plight of the natural man is more desperate than most realize. The issue which divided Protestant and Catholic in 1517 and which divides many Protestants today is this vital point. Either man still has some ability to believe in and of himself and be saved or he does not. There are those who still believe in some innate goodness and ability in man. The doctrine of total depravity strikes at the pride of fallen man. It also goes against much human observation for it does seem that men are religious. There are many noble and honorable unbelievers. Nevertheless, the truth cannot be denied. Individuals are as bad off as they can be at any given moment.