

We all agree that total depravity does not mean man is as sinful and depraved as he could be.
Revelation 20:11-15

Total depravity is described by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1-3.

Calvinist View

“Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not—indeed he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit’s assistance to bring a sinner to Christ. It takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation, but is itself a part of God’s gift of salvation. It is God’s gift to the sinner, not the sinner’s gift to God.”

David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, Romans: An interpretive Outline

Traditionalist View

Because of the fall, man is unable to save himself. The sinner is dead and blind to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. However, the sinner, upon hearing and understanding the gospel, **can place his faith in Christ** and as a result of his faith, will be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

Calvinist:

Because man is spiritually dead, he cannot believe the gospel. Therefore, he must be made alive, i.e., born again, regenerated by the Holy Spirit before he can believe.

“...it is natural to understand that regeneration comes before saving faith. It is in fact this work of God that gives us the spiritual ability to respond to God in faith.”

Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, p. 702

“We do not believe in order to be born again; we are born again in order to believe.”

R. C. Sproul, Chosen by God, p. 72-73

“We believe that the new birth is a miraculous creation of God that enables a formerly dead person to receive Christ and so to be saved.”

John Piper, What We Believe About the Five Points of Calvinism, p. 11-12

Verses the Calvinist Emphasize:

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;
and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:44

There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. Romans 3:11

And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:5-7

Traditionalist:

Even though man is spiritually dead, upon hearing the gospel and being convicted by the Holy Spirit, he is able to believe the gospel.

“Nowhere from Genesis to Revelation does the Bible teach that sinful man, without first being regenerated, is incapable of repenting of his sins, turning to God and believing the gospel. On the contrary, it is all too clear that faith precedes salvation and is in fact a condition of salvation.”

Dave Hunt, What Love is This?, p. 100

“Contrary to the claims of extreme Calvinists, there are no verses properly understood that teach regeneration is prior to faith. Instead, it is the uniform pattern of Scripture to place faith logically prior to salvation as a condition for receiving it.”

Norman Geisler, Chosen but Free, p. 228

“If I am to preach faith in Christ to a man who is regenerated, then the man being regenerated is saved already, and it is an unnecessary and ridiculous thing for me to preach Christ to him, and bid him to believe in order to be saved when he is saved already, being regenerate.”

C. H. Spurgeon, C. H. Spurgeon's Sermons: Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, p. 532

Verses Traditionalists Emphasize:

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 1 Cor. 15:1-2

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

John 16:7-11

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit,

Total Depravity or Total Inability

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he cannot enter the kingdom of God. John 3:5

Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' John 3:7

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁶that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:14-15

but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:31

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." ³²And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this *matter*." ³³So Paul departed from among them. ³⁴However, some men joined him and believed... Acts 17:30-34

So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. II Timothy 3:15

having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, I Peter 1:23

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. I John 5:9-10

- Adam and Eve
- The Unpardonable Sin
- Receiving Christ by Faith is not a work of righteousness and therefore, does not diminish the glory of God.