

NEW TESTAMENT SAYS WE ARE TOTALLY SINFUL

The doctrine of total depravity does not mean that we will do all the violence we can do but that all the good we do is really just hypocrisy and we do all the evil we can and only act good so that we can carry on with our addiction to sin.

The Bible says God is love. God and love are somehow the same thing. Sin is the opposite of love according to the Bible. If God is goodness then he cannot dwell in a sinful heart.

The total depravity doctrine teaches that people may think they love God but they don't for nobody can love God unless God helps them to do it. It teaches that we have no ability to love God on our own or to love at all. The fact is that if we are all sinners as the Churches say and that as the first epistle of St John says we are lying if we say we are free from sin then total depravity is true. To do good while having an attachment to a sin would mean you are telling God, "I want good on my terms not yours. I just want this good because I like it and not because it is really good. I offer you this love but I will not abandon this attachment." That is hardly nice is it? It is mocking God. This type of sin would be more spiritually damaging and deceptive and poisonous than obvious sin like adultery or violence against innocents.

Jesus regarded all people as being totally depraved.

Jesus said that the main commandment was to sacrifice self in love for God and to do it with your whole will and being. Nobody will ever do that. Would you suffer forever if God asked you to do it to benefit others? No matter how good we are, there is always a defect in what we would do for God. The greatest commandment says nothing about loving yourself. Because it is the greatest commandment, better even than the rule not to commit murder, to break the commandment is to commit the greatest sin. So we commit this greatest sin all the time. But you may say if you commit murder you are not loving God so murder must be one of the greatest sins in that sense. True. But the murder is one sin and the lack of love for God it expresses is another. The sinner is not considered deserving of everlasting torment and infinitely long punishment for stealing a pencil so much as for what it says about their attitude to God.

The greatest commandment to love God implies that every sin is a failure to love God and therefore breaks this commandment. So murder breaks it and stealing and adultery and so on for these commandments tell you what failing to love God entails doing.

If God is infinite love, then he hates sin infinitely so all sin no matter how small it seems insults him infinitely and offends him infinitely. This seems to deny that there could be a greatest commandment. It makes all sin equal as far as God is concerned. Sin is equal in what it deserves. But there are different levels of importance of sin. For example, stealing a pencil and committing murder are not on the same level as regards the harm they do to people. But they are on the same level before God for they break the greatest commandment and God hates sin unlimitedly or infinitely. That is the solution.

The second greatest commandment is to love your neighbour as yourself which is very difficult and demands heroic sacrifice. Only by sacrifice can you know if you really love others. The commandment takes it for granted that we love ourselves but it doesn't say it approves of this self-love. We do good for ourselves because of the way we feel about ourselves. Jesus means that we should have feelings of love for others too as we do for ourselves. If we don't feel that way about them then we are in danger of putting ourselves before them.

A man came up to Jesus calling him good teacher. Jesus said that nobody was good only God. Christians say that the man thought Jesus was a good man and Jesus was telling him that he could only be good if he was God. If right their interpretation would mean that all are sinners and cannot stay out of it. And the same interpretation holds true if Jesus was just telling him that his idea of good was wrong and that only God knows what good is and lives that goodness. The story says that the man knew what good was and said he kept all the commandments so Jesus was saying the man knew what God's goodness was. Nobody can say then that Jesus just had a problem with the man using the word good and not knowing what it meant.

The third chapter of Romans declares that there is not even a single righteous person, that nobody understands that they should love God alone and that nobody is truthful or honest. Even the good they do is dishonest and a lie for it is a mask. They are full of cursing and bitterness. Their kind words are bitter curses. For example, to praise one person while denigrating another in your heart is to really insult the one you praise for it is unjust discrimination and is asking her or him to approve. A person can claim to fear God and not do it right. A person who lives well out of fear of retribution is one who wants to sin and wills sin but who avoids it because of selfish fear. The chapter emphasises that all means literally all. No one can argue that the alls are not literal on the grounds that all do not curse or lie or whatever for it is done internally when

it is not obvious. The passage certainly teaches the total depravity of humanity because it mentions no exceptions and plainly says it means all.

Paul said that none of the Jews were able to be put right with God by keeping God's Law because they could not observe it fully (Romans 3). If they were not totally depraved they would have been able to fulfil it at least for short periods. But when Paul said that God had to give another way of salvation, the way of faith, to do what Law keeping could not we know that according to him they were never holy.

The Jews were the one true religion according to the Bible and the Gentiles were all non-Jews.

Paul said that there was no distinction or difference between the two groups for they were "all sinful" – he then said that not one person was good showing he meant all individuals. The heathens who murdered and raped and left babies exposed on hillsides to die of cold were not more evil than the Jews who did not. He listed the sins. He said that their mouths were full of curses. If we adhere to sin then our sweet words are really bitter curses for they are not said out of goodness but out of a spiteful desire to gain human adulation at the expense of God.

Paul examined his heart and inside it he claimed that he found was nothing good in it. "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. [I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out]" (Romans 7:18). He knew what sin was and tried to refrain from it but always ended up doing that which he detested. "I find it to be a Law (a rule of action of my being) that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands" (Romans 7:21). This is not just saying that his evil urges are always with him because he makes a distinction between evil and its demands or urges. Evil here is sin. Sin cannot be always with you unless you are giving in to it all the time. This is a clear statement of the doctrine of total depravity. He may have acquired this pessimistic doctrine of human badness from Genesis where God complains that human beings were continually evil and their imaginations full of evil at the time of the flood (Genesis 6:5; 8:21).

Christians may be happy to think they were evil and sinful and useless before they became Christian. That puts the bad in the past and they can say they are good now. It does not matter how offensive that is to anybody who is not Christian. It is argued that Paul was using the past tense in Romans 7 but this does not mean anything. We all talk about the present like it was a past event. "I go to the church to get married. And there is a horse crossing the road. It just stops and stands there. I panic. I ask if I will get to the Church on time." This is you talking about a past event like it is happening now. This is clearly not what is happening in the chapter. It is interesting how Christians want to be told they are not stuck in the habit of sinning but it is okay to say they were stuck in it before becoming Christian.

Total depravity means that the only way God can save us is by doing all the work for us. We are made right by faith alone but faith itself is only showing that God has saved us so it is not a good work that earns salvation or a human work at all that saves. The reason some are not saved is because they are not predestined to salvation. Because we have nothing to offer God, if he saves us it is because he has chosen us not because of any good in us but because of his mercy, this is called unconditional election.

The doctrine implies that human beings are so good at religious deception and seeming saintly that we should only trust those who are born-again Christians. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Roman Catholics would be examples of excluded people.