

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XIII

June 27, 2004

No. 26

Uprooting the T.U.L.I.P. - Total Depravity

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Calvinism’s five basic tenets are embodied in the acronym T.U.L.I.P. The first petal of this fabricated flower is (T)otal Hereditary Depravity. This doctrine affirms that “through the disobedience of Adam original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature and a hereditary disease, wherewith even infants in their mother’s womb are infected, and which produces in man all sorts of sin, being in him a root thereof, and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind” (Belgic Confession, Article XV, Original Sin). In simple terms, this doctrine states that all people have inherited the sins of Adam and are wholly affected by sin; therefore, all deserve to be condemned. This teaching is at odds with the Bible.

Calvinism teaches that man is unholy by nature and sinful from the beginning of his existence, before either obeying or disobeying God’s commands. The Bible teaches that a man becomes a sinner as he consciously chooses to disobey the Lord’s statutes, either by omission or commission (1 Joh 3:4; 5:17; Rom

3:12). One does not become a sinner until he has acted in a sinful manner.

By teaching that men are naturally inclined to evil, Calvinists slight the Lord who made men. Since men are made in the image of God (Gen 9:6), if men are inherently evil, would that not make God inherently evil? Men are the offspring of God (Act 17:28). He has created their soul (Zec 12:1; Ecc 12:7). If men are inherently wicked, would that not make God the author of wickedness?

According to Calvinists, all men inherit the sins of Adam, and consequentially, face judgment because of those inherited transgressions. However, God’s word proclaims that every man will be judged for his own actions, and not for the deeds of someone else (Eze 18:20; 1 Pet 1:17). Spiritual death, a consequence of sin, is faced by all people; however, that death is faced, not because of Adam’s sin, but because “all have sinned” (Rom 5:12).

Calvinists teach that little children, who do not know right from wrong, are sinners. If this is indeed true, why did Jesus say that the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children (Mat 19:13-15)? Did He mean that Heaven belongs

to the totally depraved? Also, why did Jesus command his apostles to become like little children (Mat 18:2-3)? Did the Lord mean that only those who are like totally depraved little children can enter the kingdom of heaven?

Psalm 51:5 is used by the Calvinists to prove their doctrine of inherited sin: “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (NASB). Examination of the context of this verse begs a question: Is David speaking in a literal, historically accurate manner, or is he hyperbolizing and pouring forth his guilt-ridden heart? David wrote this Psalm shortly after Nathan the prophet rebuked him for his sin with Bathsheba. David finally realized the seriousness of his offense and repented. In this context, he is so despondent over his transgression that he says that he has been sinful from birth, yea, even from conception. This statement is not literal, but is spoken out of despair.

Calvinism differs from the Bible. Which will you choose?