

THE FALSE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

"Total Hereditary Depravity" is the doctrine that all men and women are born sinners because they inherit the sin of Adam; because Adam sinned, all of humanity are completely unable to do any good deed or even respond to the gospel message of Christ without direct intervention from God.

This doctrine is taught by the Roman Catholic Church and the vast majority of Protestant churches in the world today.

This doctrine is NOT found in the Bible.

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Scripture teaches that the spiritual consequence of sin cannot be transmitted from father to son, but only falls on the one who committed the sin.

"The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself." (Ezekiel 18:20)

(See also Ezekiel 18:1-4, Jeremiah 32:29-30)

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Moses wanted to receive the punishment for someone else's sin and to be blotted from God's book. God answered that the one who sinned will be the one who will be blotted out.

"Then Moses returned to the Lord, and said, 'Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will, forgive their sin - and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!' The Lord said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.'" (Exodus 32:31-33)

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We will be judged by our own thoughts, words, and deeds.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28)

"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:36-37)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

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"But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation." (Romans 2:5-8)

"If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." (1 Peter 1:17)

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Our own sins are what separate us from God, not Adam's sin.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Sin is committed by individuals who break God's law. Infants know and practice nothing.

"Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4)

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Unsaved and unrepentant men are capable of doing good, and have free will. Paul pointed out that even the Gentiles who were ignorant of God's law, could choose to do right.

"For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."
(Romans 2:14-16)

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Cornelius was a Roman soldier, yet he was a devout believer and he prayed to God.

"Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, 'Cornelius!' And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, 'What is it, Lord?' And he said to him, 'Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.'" (Acts 10:1-4)

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The angels called Cornelius "righteous."

"They said, 'Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you'." (Acts 10:22)

Yet, Cornelius was unsaved until he heard and obeyed the gospel.

"And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'" (Acts 11:13-14)

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From the beginning, God gave man free will, the ability to choose to do good or evil.

"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)

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God requires man to act, to do something to be saved. Infants are unable to act or do anything, good or evil.

"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3)

"And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!'" (Acts 2:40)

(See also Acts 2:38, Philippians 2:12)

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The spoken and written gospel message is God's power for salvation.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'" (Romans 1:16-17)

"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

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Words used to describe salvation refute the doctrine of inherited sin. These words imply that we, individually, were once in God's grace at conception and birth, but after choosing to sin, we needed:

Justification (Romans 5:1)

Reconciliation (Romans 5:6-11; Colossians 1:21-22)

Redemption (Colossians 1:13-14)

Regeneration (Titus 3:5)

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Justification: A court term; a legal word which addresses the subject of our guilt before God.

Reconciliation: A word dealing with social intercourse; human relations; to make friendly again, payment of a price to recover from the power of another, a restoration to favor. Addresses the subject of our being estranged from God.

Redemption: To buy back; a slavery term; human commerce; purchasing one's freedom; a ransom; addresses the subject of our slavery to sin.

Regeneration: To generate again, be renewed, be restored.

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The Bible describes children as pure and holy. Jesus used children as a model for all believers to imitate in character.

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.'" (Matthew 18:1-3)

"Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" (Matthew 19:13-14)

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Paul also used infants as a model of purity for Christians to follow.

"Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature." (1 Corinthians 14:20)

Paul states that he was once spiritually alive, but then he sinned and died or was killed.

"I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me." (Romans 7:9-11)

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God through Ezekiel told the king of Tyre that he was blameless from his creation until he became unrighteous.

"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you." (Ezekiel 28:15)

Solomon wisely wrote that men are created righteous, but later choose to do evil.

"Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices." (Ecclesiastes 7:29)

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Newborns do not know the difference between good and evil. God allowed the children to enter Canaan but not the parents.

"Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it." (Deuteronomy 1:39)

Before they were born, Jacob and Esau are said to have done nothing good or evil.

"... for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad ..." (Romans 9:11)

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Isaiah prophesied of Jesus that following His miraculous birth, there would be a time before He knew enough to refuse evil and choose good.

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken" (Isaiah 7:14-16)

Jesus grew up and had the ability to choose between good and evil, and always chose good. (Hebrews 4:15)

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Human sacrifices of children to Baal is called the "blood of the innocent."

"Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind ..." (Jeremiah 19:4-5)

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One of the abominations of God is the shedding of innocent blood. If all men were born sinners, there would be no such thing as innocent blood.

"There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood ..." (Proverbs 6:16-17)

Since newborns do not know "good or evil," (Romans 9:11), and the Bible says, "Your sins have separated you from your God," (Isaiah 59:1-2), we can conclude that before we choose to sin, we are all united with God.

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Sin separates us from God and we die spiritually while in sin. "Spiritual death" implies we were once "spiritually alive" ... from birth until (knowing the difference between good and evil) we choose to sin.

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." (Ephesians 2:1-2)

"... having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions ..." (Colossians 2:12-13)

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When we obey the gospel, we are born again to a new life in Christ.

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

"...for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." (1 Peter 1:23)

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What we inherit from Adam is not sin, but physical death.

When we choose to sin, we suffer spiritual death.

What we inherit in Christ is eternal life.

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned ..." (Romans 5:12)

"For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

"... so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:21)

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Whoever chooses to remain in sin and does not obey the gospel of Christ will suffer the second death.

"Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."
(Revelation 20:14)

"For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power ..."
(2 Thessalonians 1:6-9)

HOW TO OBEY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Hear the word (2 Thessalonians 2:14-15; James 1:21)

Believe the gospel (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24)

Repent of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31)

Confess Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32-33)

Be Baptized (Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)

Remain Obedient (Matthew 7:21; Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 3:12)