

The Grace Series

Total Depravity & Inability, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible (Efficacious) Grace, Perseverance & Preservation of the Saints, Craig A. Thurman

Introduction:

This five point acronym, T-U-L-I-P, presents the easiest way to lay out the distinctions that lay between two major schools of thought among Bible believers. This acronym represents these five points: Total Depravity or Inability, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible or Efficacious Grace, and Preservation and Perseverance of the Saints. In the study of soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) taught in the early 1600's five points in the universities of Europe, against which a council convened in Dordt, or Dordrecht, Holland in 1618. Their rebuttal, following the acronym, sums up both positions very well. Those two views are briefly stated here:

The Arminian view is:

The Calvinist View:

<u>I</u>	<u>I</u>
Man was not wholly affected by the fall of Adam; Or, The freewill of man maintained due to only a partial depravity.	Man has completely fallen by the sin of Adam; Or, A total depravity of man resulted from Adam's sin.
<u>U</u>	<u>U</u>
That God based His election on foreseen faith.	God's election is of grace is unconditional.
<u>L</u>	<u>L</u>
Christ's death was for all men without exception making salvation possible if they believe; Or, Universal merits of Christ; Or, Universal atonement.	Jesus' death saved His people from their sins; Or, A limited atonement.
<u>I</u>	<u>I</u>
That the new birth (regeneration) could be resisted by man's free will; Or, The grace of God is resistible.	God's grace is irresistible. The new birth cannot be rejected; Or, irresistible grace in effectual calling; Or, Effectual grace.
<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>
The believer may fall from grace and lose his salvation; Or, The possibility of a lapse from grace; perseverance depends upon one's own actions.	The saints cannot fall from grace; Or, Perseverance and preservation of the saints is absolute.

An all-Important consideration which surrounds this issue need to be made so that we stand as objectively as we can when entertaining this doctrine. Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), John Calvin (1509-1564): these two persons were Protestants. *Crawford-Alexander Debate*, November 1979, p.74.

[R. Lawrence Crawford said,] ‘A Baptist is not a Protestant, we never came out of Rome and never did come out protesting.’

That being said, these views were not original with either Jacobus (James) Arminius or John Calvin. These are views, whether they are right or wrong, that men have posited as having the authority of God’s Word. We may argue the virtues of either of these men and their religious affiliations, but that does nothing to help us prove the truth or to reject error. That kind of Bible study only serves to validate our personal prejudice. Either of these positions should not be forthrightly dismissed simply because one person was of the state church of Switzerland and the other of Holland. Yes, Calvinism and Arminianism are both found in religious systems which are not of the true churches of Jesus Christ. Notice the view that an established religious system takes of any that are not a part of it.

Discussions: Evangelical and Theological, Robert Dabney, First printing 1890, Reprinted by Banner of Truth (1967), vol. 1, p. 169, ‘Attentive observers have not failed to note, that for the last twenty years a modified phase of the “Doctrines of Grace” has been presented in the Calvinistic churches of Great Britain and America; and this movement is easily traced to the sect (if that may be called a sect which has no recognized bond) named at the head of this article. [Theology of the Plymouth Brethren, added] The reader will readily grant that no great uniformity or consistency is to be expected in a company of Christians whose fundamental principles repudiate the divine authority for any catholic visible church, the existence of a regular order of ordained ministers, and the use of all authoritative creeds. Their common traits can amount to no more than a species of

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prevalent complexion. Nobody among them is responsible for anything, unless he has been found doing or saying it himself. Hence there arises an unavoidable difficulty in dealing with their system; and description or conviction can only approximate a correct application to individuals. ‘

Systems cannot tolerate whatever is not a part of it or opposes it. True churches must guard themselves against becoming another cold, formal, legal religious system. Truth held without grace is just a cold, formal, legal religious system. To what purpose is it to have the truth if it truth does not truly affect how we conduct ourselves among our fellow man?

Mt 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby ...

Bible truth is called the doctrine of Christ. (cf. 2Jn.1.9) Bible truth is not the words of men. (Tit.1.14-16; 2Co.4.2) So, beyond question, the doctrine of Christ should have the preeminence over all the opinions of men. Every child of God who will come within the sphere of a local New Testament church will be granted the capacity to learn His doctrine, but we must also within that sphere cultivate the *spiritual, hearing ear*. If we close our ears to a willingness to consider all that the Scriptures communicate we close off growth in those areas.

*Jas 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man **be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath** ...*

*Pr 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.*

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Pr 9:9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Finally, in the realm of *hearing* is discernment. Much confusion, not to be limited to this topic, is a result of a loose regard for context. But in the realm of the doctrine of grace, especial care should be used when citing Old Testament passages. For example, we should remember that:

Israel is by and large *an unregenerate nation*; (Read Is.59.1-9, 20, 21)

In this nation are both an elect physical people and an elect remnant; And finally,

There are the Gentiles who should be given some consideration.

Keeping these in mind will help to preserve a harmony throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. My use of the word *harmony* is not to be interpreted to mean *balance*. Balance is an euphemism for compromise. We aren't thirsting after balance. By the grace of God, let us believe every Word as it is written.

Total Depravity

The Arminian view is:

The Calvinist View:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>I</u></p> <p>Man was not wholly affected by the fall of Adam; Or, The freewill of man maintained due to only a partial depravity of man's nature.</p> <p>Or, '[M]an's lost condition, though severe, is nevertheless only partial, leaving him with some hope of self-redemption. This self-help may take the form of active good works, or it may take the form merely of an earnest desire to be helped, or it may take the form only of a spirit of non-resistance towards the help that is provided. But always there is some supposed faint glow in the embers of man's heart which God uses to fan into a new flame.' Arthur Custance, <i>The Sovereignty of Grace</i>, Pt. 2, p.7.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>I</u></p> <p>Man has completely fallen in every faculty by the sin of Adam; Or, A total depravity of man resulted from Adam's sin.</p> <p>Or, '[I]t is [a] Total Depravity because in every individual naturally born the <i>motivation</i> of all behavior has been poisoned at the source.' Arthur Custance, <i>The Sovereignty of Grace</i>, Pt. 2, p.30 (His every faculty, his understanding, his will, his affections, and even his physical body is affected by sin.)</p>
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Before we begin, let me state that I believe in the universality of sin in the human race. All men are sinners without exception:

Ro 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ...

Ro 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 ...

Ps 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, Pt. 2, p. 28, 'No child needs to be taught to sin.' (We sin because we are sinners from the moment of conception.)

Man can progress in sin.

Ge 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.

Or man can be restrained from sinning.

Ps 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

But there is no question, that man is a sinner.

My approach to the topics under consideration is not in the least unbiased. Most men are born again as Arminians. I was once as fully a Baptist Arminian as any. But I am now unapologetically a Baptist grace man. I do not subscribe to the teachings of John Calvin, any more than most Baptists did not used to subscribe to all of the teachings of Jacobus Arminius. In light of this study, there are two points,

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‘... which Scripture abundantly supports. The first ... is the complete impotence of man, and the second is the absolute sovereignty of the grace of God. ... The Meeting place of these two foundation truths is the heart of the gospel, for it follows that if man is totally depraved, the grace of God in saving him must of necessity be sovereign. Otherwise, man will inevitably refuse it in his depravity, and will remain unredeemed.’ Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, Pt. 2, p.3.

First, we need to define *depravity*. By that term is meant that man, as a result of sin, has been passively deprived of his natural goodness to God, and has become positively highly animated to all that opposes God. He has become evilly affected in every function of the faculties of soul and spirit.

Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, Pt. 2, p.2 says, ‘In so far as nature determines the moral character and spiritual significance of an act every deed has something of sinfulness about it because man’s will is fatally corrupted by his fallen nature.’

The term, *depravity*, is not found in the KJV Bible, although it is found in other versions of the Bible. Because of the way that the term *depravity* is used in the other versions of the Bible the clarity that once surrounded the teaching on depravity has become somewhat confounded. The NIV lead the way for its use in the New Testament. In this version it is used with reference to *corruption* as it relates to antichrists (2 times; 2Ti.3.8; 2Pe.3.19), and *perverse* generation (Phl.2.15), and of those whom the Lord has delivered over to a *reprobate* mind (2 times; Ro.1.28, 29; a mind incapable of making natural discernments between good, social morals.) The NASB follows the NIV with *antichrists* (1), *perverse* (1) and for *reprobate* minds(1). The ESV, Holman Christian Standard Bible, NLT only once for *perverse*. To this let me add the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition.

Depravity: O.E.D,

Deprave: ‘Latin, ...to distort, pervert, corrupt ... crooked, wrong, perverse: perh. immediately from F. *depraver* ...

1. To make bad; to pervert in character or quality; to deteriorate, impair, spoil, vitiate ... *rare*, exc. as in 2. [vitate: to make faulty or defected, added]
2. *spec.* To make morally bad; to pervert, debase, or corrupt morally. (The current sense)

Depravity:

b. Perversion of the moral faculties; corruption, viciousness, abandoned wickedness.

c. *Theol.* The innate corruption of human nature due to original sin. Often *total depravity*.

So, what do we mean when we say that man is depraved?

Systematic Theology, Louis Berkoff, p.246, ‘Negatively, it [total depravity, added] does not imply: (1) that every man is as thoroughly depraved as he can possibly become; (2) that the sinner has no innate knowledge of the will of God, nor a conscience that discriminates between good and evil; (3) that sinful man does not often admire virtuous character and actions in others, or is incapable of disinterested affections and actions in his relations with his fellow-men; nor (4) that every unregenerate man will, in virtue of his inherent sinfulness, indulge in every form of sin; it often happens that one form excludes the other.’

The heart of the question concerning man’s depravity is not how much depravity one might reveal before his fellow man, but how depraved is man before God. Is mankind fully affected in every faculty by sin or is he only partially affected? And if partially, can we discover what part has been spared?

Systematic Theology, Louis Berkoff, p.247, 'Positively, it [total depravity, added] does indicate: (1) that the inherent corruption extends to every part of man's nature, to all the faculties and powers of both soul and body [he only holds to the dichotomous view of man, added]; and (2) that there is no spiritual good, that is, **good in relation to God**, in the sinner at all, but only perversion.' (bolding added)

Is man really all that vicious, corrupt, and in wicked abandonment before God? In answer to that I affirm that, 'the sinner cannot do any act, however insignificant, which *fundamentally* meets with God's approval and answers to the demands of God's holy law ... he cannot change his fundamental preference for sin and self to love for God, nor even make an approach to such a change. In a word, he is unable to do any spiritual good.' Berkof, p.247. **The argument is not whether man still has his faculties of reason, affections or senses.** Of course he does. There is nothing sinful about being a tripartite human being. Adam had the same faculties after his fall as he had before his fall, except that since then they are all corrupted by a fallen principle of life subject to the *power of darkness*. (Eph.2.2) The natural or moral ability '... has as its ground, not in the want of any faculty, but in the corrupt moral state of the faculties, and of the disposition of the heart.' Berkof, p.248. Consider Romans chapter 3, verses 10-18.

To lead into the meat of our text under consideration let me pose this interpretation of Ro.3.1-9

God committed His Word to the Jews. (v.1, 2) Of them were those who were in unbelief. (v.3) Their use by God to preserve His Word did not negate the necessity of personal faith in Him. (v.4) While it may be said that their unrighteousness (in unbelief) commended the righteousness of God, it cannot be said that God commended their unrighteousness (in unbelief). (v.5-8) So, the conclusion is, that all men, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, in unbelief are guilty of sin and condemned for sin before God.

(v.9, 19) Verses 10-18 describe, as a whole, humanity before God without Christ.

Verses 10-18

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Specifically, there is not among the Jews or the Gentiles, in all of humanity, all of mankind descended from Adam, not one righteous person. Every human being is born bankrupt in Adam of a righteous standing, and therefore is rejected by virtue of his identification with Adam. **This is the standing of humanity before God.**

*Isa 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses** are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

Speaking to an elect nation of unregenerate men and women, boys and girls. The prophet describes the state of the nation who has by and large rejected the LORD their God their whole history. The LORD had, in their beginning, imposed Himself upon this people whether they were of faith or not. The truth is that the overall unregenerate state of the nation manifested continual rebellion and hatred to Him their entire history. From the time that the LORD called out Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the day that they crucified the Messiah, that had been the conduct of Israel to God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. No Jew had any righteousness before God.

Ec 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth ... and no Gentile as well.

Man's righteous standing is corrupted before God, without exception.

11 *There is none that understandeth,*

Humanity without Christ has no comprehension of the will of God. God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in their spirit and in truth. (Jn.4.24) Man has a spirit, but it is directed by a fallen principle and is subject to the dominion of the *spirit of this world*. (1Co.2.12, *spirit of this world*; Ro.8.15, *a spirit of bondage*; Ro. 11.8, *spirit of slumber*)

1Co 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. (At what point does the natural, unregenerate man receive and know the things of God while in this state? By the Word of God we must conclude that it is an utter impossibility for all mankind to receive and know the things God spiritually.)

Of his own volition man cannot receive or take the things of the Spirit of God and apply them to himself.

Is.55.8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Joh 8:43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

Joh 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. (Judicial blindness for sin.)

*Eph.4.18 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 ...*

Man's understanding is darkened. It isn't that there is a little light. It is darkened completely to the Lord. The understanding of the natural mind concerning God is limited to the scope of this world. God has left a general revelation of Himself in the creation. The natural mind may understand that God exists, that He is the Creator, and that He is eternally existing and omnipotent.

Ro 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse ...

But the natural mind cannot tell Who He is, what He is doing, and what He shall do. The personal revelation of God is withheld from all men in unbelief.

*there is none that seeketh **after God**.*

The will of mankind is not toward the Lord, it is froward.

*Ps.10.4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, **will not seek after God**: God is not in all his thoughts.*

*Is. 64.7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that **stirreth up himself** to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.*

*Joh 5:40 And **ye will not come to me**, that ye might have life.*

*Joh 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.*

12 *They are all gone out of the way,
bowed down, turned out, [from God]
avoiding, eschewing [God], turned to flight [from God]
worn away [from God]*

*they are ... gone out of the way, root, ἐκκλίνω, ἐκ of, out + κλίνω KJV, to **lay** his head; when day began **to wear away**; Lk.24.5 as they were afraid, and **bowed down** their faces; the day **is far spent**; he **bowed** his head and gave up the ghost; **turned to flight** the armies of the aliens; ἐκκλίνω, KJV, Ro.3.12, gone out of the way; Ro.16.17, avoid; 1Pe.3.11, eschew.*

Ps.10.5 His ways [that is, the LORD's ways to the wicked] are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

Rather than seeking the Lord they are avoiding, eschewing, or are naturally repulsed. (Eschewing; dictionary: to avoid habitually esp. on moral or practical grounds: SHUN **syn** see ESCAPE. Man will not come to God, but rather run from Him.

Seen in the response of Adam and Eve Immediately after their fall:

*Ge.3.8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife **hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God** amongst the trees of the garden.*

9 ¶ And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

*10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and **I was afraid**, because I was naked; and **I hid myself**.*

Seen in men in the coming of the Son of Man. No desire whatsoever to repent:

*Re.6.15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, **hid themselves** in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;*

*16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and **hide us** from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

Unregenerate men are repulsed and cower from the presence of God and all that truly witness of Him.

*they are together become unprofitable;
useless*

root ἀχρείος, ἀ negative particle + χρεία, use, need; meaning *useless*.

Man is incapable of exalting God. It is not that God doesn't use the unregenerate to perform His will and receive glory through even the worst things that they do, but in their sin they do not acknowledge that God is right, and that they are wrong for sin. This is one of the key feature distinctions between those of the faith of Christ and those who are not. **In themselves, sinful mankind is absolutely useless for giving glory to God!**

there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Before the Lord, the greatest philanthropic acts that men might do; whatever virtuous, valorous acts they might be, is not *good*. Before men, yes, inspiring, wonderful, powerful, appreciable, and affectionous to the society of man as they might be, but certainly those acts are not so before the Lord. All of humanity's efforts fails to arrive to the

level of that fruit which alone the Spirit of God produces in His own. All human-generated fruit is corrupt. There is none that doeth good.

Ec 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

‘By the providence of God, man’s natural capacities can be used for the general welfare of society but only on a horizontal and temporal plane, but in their vertical and moral context the same actions must be viewed as sinful.’ Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, Pt. 2, p.12.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

What do we see? Every member of the faculty used to communicate in speech is affected: the throat, tongue, and lips. The throat is as the *lid* left open that leads to the dark corruptions of the heart. Every utterance before the Lord wafts forth corruption. Surely this utterance, no matter how religious, comes not into the Throne room of God in glory. Dressing it with the best language of men will not avail. The tongues frames nothing but deceit, and the lips poison every word. There is not a particle, not a jot, not a tittle, not a syllable, not a word, no phrase, no statement, not a cry, no matter how impassioned it might be, that is unaffected. This fallen man without Christ is unable to pray, bless, give thanks, or praise God. (Read Job 20.4-15, **esp. 11-15**)

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

The instrument of the mouth is fouled, evil.
Ps.5.8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

17 *And the way of peace have they not known:*

Isa 48:22 There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

Their love is for strife, anger, wrath, and malice.

18 *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

*Ps.36.1 ¶ « To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD. » The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that **there is no fear of God before his eyes.** (The boldness of the wicked to commit sin as if God doesn't consider it.)*

Man does not alter his behavior as he ought before the Lord.
But for the Lord's restraining grace over humanity wickedness
would long have overflowed the earth.

*2 For **he flattereth himself** in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. (Now the shame, yet unrepentance.)*

3 The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.

The statements are clear. There is no man related to Adam who has in himself a righteous standing before the Lord. He has no understanding of God. He has no desire for God. He is repulsed by God. He has no desire to glorify the Lord. He can do no good. His whole communication is corrupt. His mouth and feet are suited only to evil. His way is not the Lord's way. They know not the way of peace, and have no fear of God. That is the picture of every soul without Christ.

Ro 8:7 ... the carnal mind is enmity (root, ἐχθρός) against (εἰς) God: for it is not subject

root ὑποτάσσω, ὑπό beneath + τάσσω KJV *appointed, ordained, determined, the carnal mind is not beneath the ordination, determination, appointment of God's law.*

The mind is now **at enmity** with God. The O.E.D. defines *enmity*:

1. The disposition or the feelings characteristic of an enemy; ill-will, hatred. 2. The condition of being an enemy; a state of mutual hostility; *esp. in phrase at or in enmity.*

to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Col 1:21 And you (Colossian saints), that were sometime [once] alienated

root, ἀπαλλοτριόω; ἀπό from, since, forth + ἀλλοτριόω, stranger, other's, another's; estranged; **Ps. 58.3**)

and enemies

root, ἐχθρός, KJV *enemy (30), foe (2).*

in your mind by wicked works ... What we did showed the animosity toward the Lord in our hearts, he says.

Man is vicious to God. We saw that at the coming of the Son of God among men.

Christ typified in Job:

Job 9.9 He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

10 They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.

11 God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

13 His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

Is.52.13 ¶ Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men ... (This shows to us the vivid animosity of man against God.)

The Gentile Leaders:

Mt.2.7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.(the deceit)

...

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. (the enmity)

Lk.23.11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

The Gentiles treatment of the Son of God:

Mt.27.27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

29 *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!*

30 *And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.*

31 *And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.*

...

36 *And sitting down [the soldiers in their callousness] they watched him there ...*

The Leaders of the nation of Israel:

Mt.26.66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

Mt.27.41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 10, p.127, 'There is not only an *impotency* (a deficiency in us) but an *enmity* (a positive, highly active hatred) in corrupted nature to any thing spiritually good ...' (parenthetical remarks added)

By the testimony of God's Word we conclude that man in unbelief is fully an enemy of God. He is wholly depraved, vicious, and abandoned to wickedness. There is no redeemable quality to be found in man. There is nothing in man that

warrants God bestowing His grace upon a single human being among humanity:
NOTHING.

*Is.1.2 ¶ Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.
3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Adam and Eve's fall was thorough:

saw that they were naked (vs. 10) – *I was naked*, the physical – body
knew that they were naked (vs. 7) – the perception the rational – soul
they feared the Lord (vs. 8, 10) – *hid themselves*, the spiritual – spirit
were afraid

Ps 39:5 ... verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

Ps 53:3 ... they are altogether become filthy ...

Isa 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf ...

Man is totally depraved and he is totally incapable of *doing anything* to remedy his problem.

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.

that are accustomed, root 717; adjective (Jer. 2.24, used); sin is a habit or principle of life.

Ro 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

*without strength, ἀσθενῶν, gen, pl of ἀσθενής; ἀ negative particle + σθένος found once, verb σθενόω, 1Pe.5.10 *strengthen*; meaning *impotent*: Ro.5.6 tells us how that the sinner came to the place where he was justified by faith (Ro.5.1).*

There is no middle ground in this. It is an either or.

*Tit 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.***

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Since there is nothing in me, how then came I to Christ? At what point did the counsel of the Lord and the gospel of Jesus Christ cease to be foolishness to me? (1Co.1.18) At what point did my mind's enmity cease to hate God and the Savior? At what point did my eyes go from blindness to seeing? At what point was I changed from death to life?

I know that there are some who are perhaps reading this, or listening to the audio that are saying, 'Yea but ...' 'If just a little faith. Just a sinner's prayer. Just a moment of ...' Yet, in all of Scripture, there is no such a faith, or sinner's prayer, or a moment of a *little light*, or a *little taste of life*, where if he will *grab* ahold of this he will be changed from darkness and into light. The gap between total depravity and inability of man to come to Christ is unbridgeable from the human side. It is as if the Cherubs have been stationed at the Tree of Life with swords which turn every which way to keep any and all from living forever! (cf. Ge.3.24) Nothing except an answer from the Word of God should settle this matter.

Has the fall of man removed man's mind? No. Man remains capable of a great intellect that does man great things in the earth ... but not before the Lord. Has it removed man's will? No. He is willing in what he chooses to do, but not toward God. Has it made man incapable of showing love, kindness, charity, or any of the other affections? No. That a man and a woman can love one another, marry and continue together for the rest of their lives, bear children, raise them up to become productive citizens, give sacrificially to good causes, is the natural function of a healthy society. But none of these requires any more than the use of the natural affections.

For a man to do other than his nature directs him he would have to possess the power to change the ruling principle of his life. It is as likely that a wolf act like a lamb and a lamb a wolf as for a natural man to become a Christian. To become a Christian is far more than breaking a few bad habits. Becoming a Christian is not a reformation. It is the imposition of a new life; the life of God within. This is nothing less than a sudden, unknown, unsought for, unexpected, undeserved, miraculous, instantaneous change where we become *alive to God*. The answer:

Joh 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, Pt. 2, ch.6b, p.11, 'Man is purely the recipient, making no more contribution towards his spiritual birth than he did towards his natural birth, or than inanimate Adam did towards his own animation when God turned him into a living soul. '

The Spirit of the Lord works within the sinner by implanting a new principle of life (leaving the old in place for this time). This is called by James the *engrafted* or literally *implanted* Word; Peter, the *incorruptible seed*; and John, the *seed of God*.

Ja.1.21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted (ἐμφυτον, KJV, on the root ,φύω is to spring) word, which is able to save your souls.

ἐμφυτον, is found once in the LXX, Wisdom 12.10 and translated *bred ... their malice was bred in them*. The root, *φυτον*, is

translated: *Ge. 22.13, plant; 3Ki. (1Ki.) 19.5, tree; Job 24.18; Ez.31.4, plants; Ez.17.5, planted (verb).*

James speaks of that which you have in you, which has brought about continued growth through the application of the Word of God preached; He speaks of the subjective and the objective Word at work in the child of God.

*1Pe 1:23 **Being born again,***

ἀναγεγεννημένοι, nom., pl., masc., part., perf., pass of ἀναγεννάω, new + birth; having been born again)

*not of corruptible seed, but of **incorruptible**, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

*1Jo 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for **his seed** remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

Undeniably, being *born of God* is to receive His seed, which is incorruptible, which lives and continues forever. At the moment of the implantation of this seed, the sinner is affected in his faculties by a whole new and living principle of life. Now he has a new mind, a new heart, a new spirit, a new will to the things of God. His mind is now *capable* of perceiving spiritual things. (Same mind, same heart, same spirit, same will, but all affected by the new rule.)

Jn.3.3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot [is not able] see the kingdom of God.

In other words, to state the positive of this, When a man is born again he can [is able to] see [aor., infin. to perceive] the kingdom of God. He has received *spiritual discernment*.

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*1Co 2:12 Now we have received, not the **spirit** of the world (that is, in order to understand the things of the Spirit of God.), but the **spirit** which is of God (notice that the lower cases, spirit, refers to natures); that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

...

16 ... we have the mind of Christ. (We have the mind of the making of the Spirit of God.)

Next, he can enter the kingdom of God.

Jn.3.5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot (οὐ δύναται, is unable, pres., ind.) enter (to enter, εἰσελθεῖν, aor., infin.) into the kingdom of God.

In other words, to state the positive of this, When a man is born again he can [is able] enter [aor., infin. to enter, access] into the kingdom of God. He has received a *will* to do so.

The new birth precedes the spiritual fruit of faith. (Gal. 5.22, 23) Sinners cannot, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, produce the fruits of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, etc. If that is not true, Christ died for nothing. What need we of the Holy Spirit, since man can perform even in the least way acceptably before the Lord? Furthermore, if that is the case, the Scriptures are only exaggerating man's plight. (Blasphemy!) No, rather, had it not been for Jesus Christ's coming and dying in our place we would have been hopelessly and eternally lost. And because Christ died for us He sent His Holy Spirit to effect that life in us. Life always precedes faith.

*Joh 11:26 And whosoever **liveth** and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (Note the order, *liveth* and *believeth*.)*

2Ti 1: 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

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*10 **But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel ...***

*Joh 1:12 But **as many as received him**, to them gave he power (the right) 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**.*

*Joh 3:27 John answered and said, **A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.***

Faith is not of human derivation. It is of Divine origin. It is Spirit produced in us:

*1Ti 1:14 And **the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love** which is in Christ Jesus.*

*Php 1:29 For unto you **it is given** in the behalf of Christ, not only **to believe** on him, but also to suffer for his sake ...*

*1Pe 1:21 Who **by him do believe in God**, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

*Joh 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, **This is the work of God, that ye believe** on him whom he hath sent.*

That fallen sinner must be raised from his dead estate by the power of the Sovereign Lord.

*Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
(Verse 24 is conversion; Verse 28 is the resurrection)*

Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, Pt. 2, ch.6, p.3, “Man is not converted because he wills: he wills because he is converted.” The turning of the will

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necessarily precedes the willing acceptance, and this turning is a work of God, not of man. Man is free to choose salvation *if he wills it*. Whosoever will may come (Revelation 22.17). But by nature he does not so will. It is not that any man is denied salvation *though he wills it*; it is simply that no man wills it unless God turns his will around.' **(Or better, brings him to life.)**

Total inability on the part of man requires that God, not man, be the sovereign cause of life.

*Joh 8:47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. (Custance, ibid., Pt. 2, ch.6b, p.22, 'He did not say, "You are not God's children because you will not hear his Word.'" Or, He is not saying that if you would hear you could be of God. No. Rather, they were not of God because they did not hear. It is not the *hearing* that is the cause of relationship. It is the result. *Hearing* reveals that we are His children.)*

Joh 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. (Custance, ibid., Pt. 2, ch.6b, p.22, 'He was not saying, "You are not my sheep because you do not believe.'" Belief does not cause us to be sheep, but belief proves that we are sheep.)

The order of God is the same for every child of God. The extent to which we will grow in the knowledge of the truth of God's Word varies. But I will say this: total depravity is taught in the Bible. By the Word of God we are led to conclude that if it weren't for the true grace of God bestowed upon the sinner not a soul would or could be saved. Salvation is of the Lord.

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Jon 2:9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

This doctrine puts man exactly where he belongs in Adam, without standing, hopeless, helpless, without God, out of the way, repulsed from God, without strength, enemies of God, blind, diseased, and dead. That every man is fallen is Adam's or Man's fault. That any man is saved is due to the praise of the glory of the riches of God's grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Eph.1.6; 2.7)

*1Jn.4.10 Herein is love, **not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***

*1Jo 4:19 We love him, **because he first loved us.***

Closing remarks:

Among the true churches of Jesus Christ one view was not introduced into the churches until nearly 250 years ago. It is not found in any confession of faith or doctrinal statement prior to this time. An Arminian preacher stated this truth. *Crawford-Alexander Debate*, November 1979, p.74.

[J. R. Alexander said,] 'Now there was a period of about 300 years, 250-300 years when the doctrines of Calvinism were the predominant doctrines among Baptists.' (An Arminian preacher said this! What he believes, is that the true churches had apostatized from the truth.)

ibid., p.88, '[I]'m aware of the fact that in the early part of the Baptists in this country there was quite a number of years when Calvinistic Baptists and Missionary Baptists were all in the same churches and the same association. That's a matter of history. I don't deny that.'

What does the Bible teach us concerning man's total depravity and total inability before the Lord? Let the Word of God settle that question; not opinions, not commentaries, not peer pressure from friends, family, and brethren. Believe

what the Bible teaches. But every child of God knows this to be true; it is so simple:

Joh 9:25 ... one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

So that we are founded upon good, solid ground I'll close with this thought. Our fallen nature is not removed when we are *born again*. That old nature is not reformed or altered in the least since Christ came to us in salvation. Rather, '[T]his infection of the nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated ...' Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, Pt. 2, ch.6b, p.19, quoting the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England in 1562 (Article IX: "Of Original or Birth-Sin") 'This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated. ... (ibid., *Westminster Confession* of 1647 (Chap. VI: "Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of Punishment")) The friend of our Lord, Lazarus, had been sick and died. He was sealed away in a tomb for four days dead. The Lord raised him by His word. Lazarus was not in expectation of anything and had deserved to remain in that state as any other man. Lazarus had no will, no heart, no mind because he was dead. But the Lord spoke to dead Lazarus, crying out, Joh 11:43 "... Lazarus, come forth." And Lazarus came forth. In a type he was raised to walk anew, yet with the same nature that he had before. All that were ever raised from the dead in the Bible were raised to walk with their old nature still present, showing that same type for us. That is our walk while in this present body of sin. That is, until our Lord Jesus comes from glory in the resurrection. Then we shall all be changed. The old nature forever gone, and we live in a glorified body like our Lord's: immortal, incorruptible for ever and ever

1Co.15.42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

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The truth of man's total depravity gives us the true Biblical view of God's grace.

*Eph.2.4 ¶ But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he
loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,
(by grace ye are saved;)*