

Depraved or Saved?

PSALM 14

A Shocking Commentary on Humanity

Verse 1: The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

- The fool
 - “the mark of a fool is not intellectual deficiency but aggressive ungodliness”
- Corruption
- None who does good
- Total Depravity
 - **Definition:** Depravity refers both to the damaged relationship between God and humans and to the corruption of human nature such that there is within every human an ongoing tendency toward sin. Total depravity refers to the extent and comprehensiveness of the effects of sin on all humans such that all are unable to do anything to obtain salvation. Total depravity, therefore, does not mean that humans are thoroughly sinful but rather that they are totally incapable of saving themselves.
 - **Grudem:** Rather, every part of our being is affected by sin — our intellects, our emotions and desires, our hearts (the center of our desires and decision-making processes), our goals and motives, and even our physical bodies.
Scripture is not denying that unbelievers can do good in human society in some senses. But it is denying that they can do any spiritual good or be good in terms of a relationship with God. Not only do we as sinners lack any spiritual good in ourselves, but we also lack the ability to do anything that will in itself please God and the ability to come to God in our own strength.
 - **Piper:** In summary, total depravity means that our rebellion against God is total, everything we do in this rebellion is sinful, our inability to submit to God or reform ourselves is total, and we are therefore totally deserving of eternal punishment.

Verse 2 and 3: The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

- The Lord looks
- None who understand
- None who seek
- None who do good
- Not even one

Seekers

Jonathan Edwards: “God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the ... promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. ... So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men’s earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.”

How is this view of the total depravity of humanity a help to those of you who believe?

Edwards: “God makes men sensible that they are in a forlorn condition, that they are wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked” and by “this means the redeeming mercy and love of God are more highly prized and rejoiced in.”

A Surprising Remedy for Humanity

Verse 4: Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the Lord?

- God’s astonishment
- Abominable deeds (“evildoers”):

Verse 5 and 6: There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous. You would shame the plans of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge.

Judgment:

- Terrible terror
- Shamers shamed
- **Psalm 53:5 ESV**

Our astonishment: grace

Romans 5:7 ESV For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Valley of Vision – “Continual Repentance”

A Saving Hope for Humanity

Verse 7: Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

Hope for:

- Salvation: it is assured because of God’s gracious work through Christ
- Restored fortunes: “
- Joy and gladness