

PLUCKING THE TULIP

TOTAL HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY

INTRODUCTION

- A.** The reformer John Calvin first penned his magnum opus Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536 and finalized it in 1559. The doctrines contained therein were consolidated into a five-point list under the T.U.L.I.P. acronym in 1903 by Presbyterian minister Cleland Boyd McAfee.
- 1.** Total Hereditary Depravity
 - 2.** Unconditional Election
 - 3.** Limited Atonement
 - 4.** Irresistible Grace
 - 5.** Perseverance of the Saints
- B.** The first of five core tenets of Calvin's theology is "Total Hereditary Depravity".
- 1.** "All of us, therefore, descending from an impure seed, come into the world tainted with the contagion of sin. Nay, before we behold the light of the sun we are in God's sight defiled and polluted" (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 1, Paragraph 5).
 - 2.** "We thus see that the impurity of parents is transmitted to their children, so that all, without exception, are originally depraved. The commencement of this depravity will not be found until we ascend to the first parent of all as the fountainhead. We must, therefore, hold it for certain, that, in regard to human nature, Adam was not merely a progenitor, but, as it were, a root, and that, accordingly, by his corruption, the whole human race was deservedly vitiated" (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 1, Paragraph 6).

3. “Original sin, then, may be defined a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all the parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh” (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 1, Paragraph 8).
4. “Even infants bringing their condemnation with them from their mother’s womb, suffer not for another’s, but for their own defect” (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 1, Paragraph 8).

I. ACCOUNTABILITY IN JUDGMENT WILL BE PERSONAL

- A. **2nd Corinthians 5:10** *“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*

Romans 14:12 *“Each of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

Each soul is individually accountable in Christ’s court.

- B. **Exodus 32:31-33** *“Moses returned to Jehovah and said, ‘Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin — but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.’ And Jehovah said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.”*

Despite his commendable intercession, Moses was told he could not absorb the blame of his fellow Israelites.

- C. **Deuteronomy 24:16** *“Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.”*

The Old Law held this to be true, as well: those who commit sin will be held responsible for their actions.

II. SINFULNESS IS NOT AN INHERENT QUALITY

- A. **Ezekiel 18:1-20** *"The word of Jehovah came to me again, saying, 'What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? 'As I live,' says the Lord Jehovah, 'you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die. But if a man is just and does what is lawful and right; if he has not eaten on the mountains, nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor defiled his neighbor's wife, nor approached a woman during her impurity; if he has not oppressed anyone, but has restored to the debtor his pledge; has robbed no one by violence, but has given his bread to the hungry and covered the naked with clothing; if he has not exacted usury nor taken any increase, but has withdrawn his hand from iniquity and executed true judgment between man and man; if he has walked in My statutes and kept My judgments faithfully — He is just; He shall surely live!' Says the Lord Jehovah. 'If he begets a son who is a robber or a shedder of blood, who does any of these things and does none of those duties, but has eaten on the mountains or defiled his neighbor's wife; if he has oppressed the poor and needy, robbed by violence, not restored the pledge, lifted his eyes to the idols, or committed abomination; if he has exacted usury or taken increase — Shall he then live? He shall not live! If he has done any of these abominations, he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. If, however, he begets a son who sees all the sins which his father has done, and considers but does not do likewise; who has not eaten on the mountains, nor lifted his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor defiled his neighbor's wife; has not oppressed anyone, nor withheld a pledge, nor robbed by violence, but has given his bread to the hungry and covered the naked with clothing; who has withdrawn his hand from the poor and not received usury or increase, but has executed My*

judgments and walked in My statutes — he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live! As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, robbed his brother by violence, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity. Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?’ Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.’”

Fathers and sons don't swap or share accountability before God.

- B.** **Psalm 51:5** *“I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”*

Acts 2:8 *“How is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?”*

One can be born in sin in the same way he could be born into a language.

III. SIN HAS A DIFFERENT SOURCE

- A.** **James 1:13-15** *“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”*

Sin comes from indulging one's own desires, not from inheritance.

- B.** **1st Peter 1:18** *“You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers”*

The extent to which parents are responsible for our sins is the extent to which their traditions influence us.

- C.** **Romans 5:12** *“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned”*

Ecclesiastes 7:29 *"God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."*

God makes people innocent and pure, but people choose to sin.

IV. SIN IS CLEARLY DEFINED

- A. **1st John 3:4** *"Sin is lawlessness."*

Sin is law-breaking. That's not inheritance.

- B. **James 4:17** *"To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."*

Sin is neglecting duty. That's not inheritance either.

V. THE SOUL OF A NEWBORN DOES NOT BELONG TO SATAN

- A. **Ezekiel 18:4** *"Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine."*

God claims all souls, at least initially. That means they cannot be in Satan's grasp at conception and birth.

- B. **Hebrews 12:9** *"Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?"*

God is the Father of spirits. The devil is not.

- C. **Ecclesiastes 12:7** *"The dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it."*

Souls return to God at death because He, not the tempter, gave them in the first place.

VI. CHILDREN ARE INNOCENT

- A. **Luke 18:15-16** *"They also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.'"*

Jesus welcomed children because heaven is full of souls such as them.

- B. Matthew 18:1-3** *"The disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.'"*

More than that, He welcomed them to Him for that reason.

- C. John 3:3** *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"*

Why would salvation be likened to birth if souls were guilty at birth?

1st Corinthians 14:20 *"Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature."*

Ephesians 5:1 *"Be imitators of God as dear children"*

What reason would Paul have for telling people to have maturity in understanding but immaturity in evil if babies were evil?

- D. Romans 7:9** *"I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died."*

Romans 9:11 *"Children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil"*

Deuteronomy 1:39 *"Your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it"*

There is a point in life before law is activated against a soul, a point at which one is not accountable before gaining the knowledge of good and evil.

- E. 2nd Samuel 12:22-23** *David "Said, 'While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, "Who can tell whether Jehovah will be gracious to me, that the child may live?" But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.'"*

When babies die in infancy, their parents hope to join them in heaven.

VII. SIN BEGINS IN YOUTH, NOT BIRTH OR EARLIER

- A.** **Genesis 8:21** *"Jehovah said in His heart, 'I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth'"*
Jeremiah 3:25 *"We have sinned against Jehovah our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day"*
Psalms 25:7 *"Do not remember the sins of my youth"*

It is true that youth are guilty of sin.

- B.** **Proverbs 5:18** *"Rejoice with the wife of your youth"*
Psalms 127:4 *"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth."*
1st Timothy 4:12 *"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity"*

It is also true that youth can marry, bear children, and preach the gospel.

Therefore, youth does not refer to childhood, per se.