"WHAT WE REALLY ARE"

(Totally Depraved)

ROMANS 3:9-20

HRM – 4-22-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***It is imperative that we see ourselves as we really are - we must see the true nature of man - we must realize what man amounts to without God.**

4 proofs that reveal every man to be totally depraved:

I. Man's <u>Character</u> Proves His Depravity (v. 10-12)
(What he <u>is</u> is corrupt)

II. Man's <u>Speech</u> Proves His Depravity (v. 13-14)
(What he <u>says</u> is corrupt)

III. Man's <u>Action</u> Proves His Depravity (v. 15-18)
(What he <u>does</u> is corrupt)

IV. God's <u>Law</u> Proves Man's Depravity (v. 19-20)

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11-24-2019

INTRODUCTION:

A deceitful, fast-growing, and appealing religion is finding roots in America today. It is known as the New Age Movement.

It advocates self-discovery, human potential, self-improvement, all based on the "essential goodness," independent power, and divine nature of man.

It promotes humanism and is preparing the way for the Antichrist.

Is man at all what the New Age Movement elevates him to be?

V. 9

The question is "Are we (Gentiles) better than they (Jews)?" Are the Jews excelled by the Gentiles?

Not at all!

"Pagan" gentiles were shown to be under sin in chap. 1 and the "moral" Jews in chap. 2.

"They are all under sin."

sin is pictured as a victorious conqueror standing over its defeated victim. Unsaved man is under sin's power and penalty.

"The Scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. 3:22).

Note the universality or all-inclusiveness of sin. In these verses: "all" (v. 9); "non" (v. 10); "none...none" (v. 11); "all...together...none...not one" (v. 12).

Total depravity -

Eccl. 9:3 - This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."

Is. 1:5-6 - "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it: but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: and they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

God speaks of unsaved man as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1; cp. Col. 2:13).

Man's heart is blind and he exists in spiritual darkness (Eph. 4:18; 5:8; Col. 1:13).

The question is asked in Job 14:4 - "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" No one.

A sinner from <u>conception</u>: "Behold I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5).

A sinner at <u>birth</u>: "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3; cp. Is. 48:8).

"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21; cp. Gen. 6:5).

God cannot be blamed for man's sin. When He created man "in His own image," His creation was good (Gen. 1:27, 31).

Solomon said: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29).

***It is imperative that we see ourselves as we really are - we must see the true nature of man - we must realize what man amounts to without God.**

"He who doubts total depravity had better study himself" --Spurgeon

4 proofs that reveal every man to be totally depraved:

I. Man's <u>Character</u> Proves His Depravity (v. 10-12)
(What he <u>is</u> is corrupt)

In verses 10-18, Paul strings together a group of O.T. proof texts (primarily from Psalms) to support his point that "all [are] under sin" (v. 9).

NOTE: His authority is the Word of God!

Paul is not saying that everyone has committed all of these sins to the highest degree possible, but that these tendencies are in all of us. Everyone has the potential to commit the most vile sin, although not everyone has. The only thing that separates us from the most abominable sinner is the restraining grace of God.

V. 10a

"None righteous" = no one is just according to God's perfect standards.

The reason why people complain about injustice, unfairness, prejudice, discrimination, etc., is because man by nature is not just.

Law enforcement, taxes, etc., will often be unfair. The reason things are not right is because man is not right.

Bumper sticker read: "The more people I know, the more I like my dog."

V. 11a

"God hath concluded them all in unbelief" (Ro. 11:32).

V. 11

"None that understandeth" = Man lacks spiritual knowledge (cp. Ps. 14:2). He does not comprehend the true perspective of life, values, etc.

Man can understand worldly matters and concepts: You can have a conversation about cars, food, fashion, money, art, sports, etc., and man will identify with what you are saying. However, when the conversation turns to spiritual matters, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God..." (I Cor. 2:14).

"None that seeketh after God" = lit. to "seek out." No person if left to himself would seek out God! We, in our fallen nature, love darkness rather than light.

No one seeks out God; rather, God seeks out man (EX: Adam - Gen. 3:9).

Jesus said that "no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (Jn. 6:44; cp. Jn. 6:65; Jer. 31:3).

Before you sought God, He sought you! Before you wanted Him, He wanted you!

The only reason you turned to Him is because He had drawn you to Himself with cords of love (cp. Hos. 11:4).

V. 11b

We must take the Gospel to men, because men will not come to the Gospel. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14; cp. Titus 1:3).

I don't have people banging down the doors of the church, seeking salvation.

They will not come unless the seed gets planted and God begins to draw men to His truth [EX: Eunich (Acts 8); Cornelius (Acts 10) - they wanted to know God's truth because seeds had been planted; yet they still needed someone to explain it].

V. 12a

"Gone out of the way" = lit. "turned away from (Him)."

Man is not heading toward God, but away from Him. Not getting closer to God, but moving further away.

All roads do not lead to God.

"We hid as it were our faces from Him . . . All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way" (Is. 53:3, 6).

In the coming Tribulation, rather than repenting and turning to God, the world will "hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains" and say, "Hide us from the face of Him" (Rev. 6:15, 16).

V. 12b

"Unprofitable" - worthless, useless. The Hebrew means to go bad or sour like milk or to rot as food.

Without God, man's life is vain. It is futile.

When the sum of an unbeliever's years are added up and evaluated, the true value as God sees it is zero (Is. 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.").

Man's works are like a pile of stinking, rotting garbage that must be hauled off and burned.

ILLUS: of rotten grass after landlord mowed and bagged it up only to sit for two months.

V. 12c

"Doeth good" = to practice goodness or kindness (as God sees it)

Unregenerate man may from time to time do something commendable by human standards ("Even a broken clock has the right time 2 times a day). But God knows his motive.

Prov. 21:4 - "An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin."

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

II. Man's Speech Proves His Depravity (v. 13-14)

(What he says is corrupt)

V. 13

"Sepulchre" - a grave. A cave where corpses would rot and decay.

"Their mouth (words) is like the odor of a newly opened grave" (Robertson, p. 345).

Nothing stinks as bad as a rotting human body (cp. Jn. 11:39 - Lazarus).

When man opens his mouth, putrifying things come out (Mt. 15:11, 18 - "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. . . But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man."

"Deceit" = to speak with an intention to trick or deceive.

They speak nicely to or about a person, while at the same time they are "sticking a knife in his back."

"Asps" = cobra snakes. A reference to the Egyptian cobra. The word "aspidon" referred to that which was round (such as a bowl or shield) and was used to describe the cobra snake because of its round hood around its neck that expanded when it was excited.

The cobra has a bag of poison under its lips that it ejects through its hollow teeth into its victim to kill it before swallowing it. Some cobras are capable of ejecting the poison for several feet into the eyes of their prey to temporary blind it before attacking.

V. 13b
The poison of the tongue - SEE James 3:5-8.

"But the tongue can no man tame (only God can); it is an unruly evil; full of deadly poison." Words not only hurt; they are deadly!

V. 14
"Cursing and bitterness" = Man's dirty, profane, vulgar mouth is proof enough of a real internal problem!

ILLUS: Without thinking, men continually take God's name in vain.

III. Man's <u>Action</u> Proves His Depravity (v. 15-18)

(What he <u>does</u> is corrupt)

V. 15
"Feet are swift to shed (pour out) blood"

Ever since Cain killed Abel, innocent blood has been crying out for God's vengeance. EX: abortion; rape/murder

Not all men have committed murder; but all are capable of it.

Man's unrighteous anger toward man reveals the potential for murder (Mt. 5:21=22).

V. 16
Self-destruction and the destruction of others is innate.

We don't have to teach our children how to hit each other. This comes naturally. What we do have to teach them is how to be kind to each other.

Violent tendencies are in the heart of the unsaved.

Left to ourselves, we would make a mess out of our lives.

"Misery" = no brightness, no hope.

Wherever unregenerate man goes, he leaves behind him a trail of ruin and misery.

Vandalism and molestations are practiced for mere entertainment.

The world is heading like a herd of cattle down the "broad way" that "leadeth to destruction" (Mt. 7:13).

V. 17

The world does not know the way (road) that leads to peace.

Man tries various avenues and paths in his pursuit of peace but travels in vain, until he tries the way named "Christ." --"I am the way..." (Jn. 14:6).

Peace is found via (by means of) Jesus. SEE Rom. 5:1-2

Peace with <u>others</u> and peace with <u>self</u> is impossible for one to experience if they do not know the "prince of peace" (Is. 9:6).

Only then can we know "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

"Before" = in front of.

One who fears God is one who lives, makes decisions and plans based upon a reverential awe of God.

V. 18

One who feared God would tremble at the thought of doing evil.

Your attitude toward sin in your life reveals whether or not you fear God.

"The fear of the Lord is to <u>hate</u> evil" (Prov. 8:13).

"By the fear of the Lord men <u>depart</u> from evil" (prov. 16:6).

The proof that men do not fear God is evident in their actions (SEE Ps. 36:1ff).

Man's eyes look out for self-gratification at all costs, regardless of the onlooking and pending wrath of God.

No one who loves sin is anticipating Judgment. Unconverted men push the slighteth thoughts of this out of their minds and in a sense laugh at God.

Remember the response to Noah's preaching? Jeremiah's preaching? Jesus' preaching?

IV. God's Law Proves Man's Depravity (v. 19-20)

V. 19

NOTE: "Every mouth . . . all the world." No one will offer excuses at the Judgment.

No one will boast of a personal righteousness at the Judgment.

ILLUS: of someone who claimed to be innocent in court until all of the evidence was opened up.

V. 20

No one will be justified in God's sight by keeping the Law because no one has ever kept the Law!

Ps. 143:2 - "And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Why can't an unsaved person keep God's commandments? He doesn't have the nature to do so. No inner ability.

ILLUS: of a lemon tree only producing sour lemons. You can pull off all the lemons and stick sweet, juicy oranges in their place; you may fool some into thinking you have an orange tree, but in reality all you have is a lemon tree with dead oranges on it. You have not changed the nature of the tree ("...a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" - Mt. 7:17).

Our human nature is sour. Often we don't like it, but nothing we try (such as getting rid of bad habits) can change our nature. Only Christ can (II Cor. 5:17).

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

The Law was never intended to justify. Rather, God gave man His Law for 2 purposes:

1) To restrain sin - I Tim. 1:9-10

2) To demonstrate depravity

The O.T. Law gives man a "knowledge" (lit. "full knowledge" - direct awareness or deep consciousness) of his sin.

The Law was given to show us our transgressions (Ga. 3:19). The Law wasn't given to show you how good you are, but how bad you are.

It was an instructor or "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith" (Ga. 3:24).

The Law taught man his inability to be self-righteous. Therefore, man must throw himself upon the mercy and grace of God.

CONCLUSION:

A knowledge of the depravity of man should benefit you in several ways:

1. If you are unsaved, you should now <u>see your need</u> for God to give you righteousness (Ro. 3:22).

   Why would the devil deceive man (via humanistic philosophies) into thinking he is independently "good"? Because if so convinced, man would not see his need for help - God's help.

2. If you are saved, you should have a <u>greater understanding and burden</u> for the lost.

   They act the way they do because they are lost! They need you to lead them to the <u>way</u>.

   They are confused! They need you to lead them to the <u>truth</u>.

   They are <u>dead</u>! They need you to lead them to the <u>life.</u>

   Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (jn. 14:6).

   Will you tell them?

3. If you are saved, you should have a greater appreciation for your salvation.

   Never forget what Jesus saved you from!

   Never forget how lost you were!

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD,
WE WERE MADE LONG AGO
WITH THE PURPOSE DIVINE,
HERE HIS GLORY TO SHOW;
BUT WE FAILED HIM ONE DAY
AND LIKE SHEEP WENT ASTRAY
THINKING NOT OF THE COST,
WE HIS LIKENESS HAD LOST.

BUT FROM ETERNITY,
GOD HAD IN MIND
THE WORK OF CALVARY,
THE LOST TO FIND.
FROM HIS HEAVEN SO BROAD,
CHRIST CAME DOWN EARTH TO TROD
SO THAT MAN MIGHT LIVE AGAIN
IN THE IMAGE OF GOD!

NOW THAT I HAVE BELIEVED
AND THE SAVIOR RECEIVED,
NOW THAT I FROM THE CRY
OF MY GUILT AM RELIEVED,
I WILL LIVE FOR MY LORD,
NOT FOR GAIN OR REWARD,
BUT FOR LOVE THINKING OF WHAT
HIS GRACE HAS RESTORED!

I'LL NEVER COMPREHEND
REDEMPTION'S PLAN.
HOW CHRIST COULD CONDESCEND
TO DIE FOR MAN.
SUCH A SAVIOR I'LL PRAISE
TO THE END OF MY DAYS,
AS I UPWARD, ONWARD TROD

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD!