

FALSE TEACHERS ... LOST IN THE DARK PLACE AND NO LAMP SHINING



- Put the question in another form: Is man now in such a condition that he cannot be saved without the special and direct intervention of the Triune God on his behalf? In other words, is there any hope for him apart from his personal election by the Father, his particular redemption by the Son, and the supernatural operations of the Spirit within him? Or, putting it in still another way: If man be a totally depraved being, can he possibly take the first step in the matter of his return unto God (*Arthur Pink*)?

- It is our deep conviction that the vital question most requiring to be raised today is this: Is man a totally and thoroughly depraved creature by nature? Does he now enter the world completely ruined and helpless, spiritually blind and dead in trespasses and sins? According as is our answer to that question, so will be our views on many others. It is upon the basis of this dark background that the whole Bible proceeds. Any attempt to modify or abate, repudiate or tone down the teaching of Scripture thereon is fatal (*Arthur Pink*).

OUTLINE: FALSE TEACHERS—LOST IN THE DARK PLACE AND NO LAMP SHINING

1) False teachers are lost in the darkness—their end is worse than their beginning, 2 Peter 2:15-22.

A) False teachers abandon the right way and go astray, 2:15-16.

- (2 Peter 2:15a ESV) Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray.

B) When false teachers abandon the right way, they become susceptible to the empty, boastful thinking of the darkness, 2:17-19.

- (2 Peter 2:17–19 ESV) These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. 18 For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.

C) False teachers fall prey to the empty, boastful thinking of the darkness, 2:20-22.

They misinterpret an outward measure of success (e.g. in religion or morality) for genuine salvation and end up worse than when they began

- (2 Peter 2:20–22 ESV) For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

- i) False teachers do not understand that nothing they can do can result in their escape from the corruption of this world.
- ii) This devastating flaw in their thinking does not allow them to

accept salvation by grace alone.

- (Ephesians 2:8–9 ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- iii) False teachers not only think that they should do something but that they are required to do something, so they reject the holy commandment—the word of the truth of the gospel.
 - (1 John 3:23 ESV) And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.
 - iv) False teachers believe that combining self-effort (works) with the knowledge of our Lord Jesus brings salvation.
 - v) Now their “last state” is now worse than the first.

2) False teachers end up worse than when they begin because they never come to understand and accept the depth of the darkness.

A) The false teacher does not “do well” concerning the word of God.

- (2 Peter 1:19a ESV) And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.

B) The false teacher does not tremble at God’s words.

He may give some attention to God’s word but he neither trembles before the words nor pays attention to the words as to a lamp shining in a dark place.

- (Isaiah 66:1–2 NLT) This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Could you build me a temple as good as that? Could you build me such a resting place? 2 My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are mine. I, the LORD, have spoken! “I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.

- C) The false teacher does not understand or accept the depth of the darkness in our fallen world.
- D) Because the false teacher does not understand the depth of the darkness in his life—his depravity—so he does not rely entirely on the word of God to know good and evil.

TRANSITION ... Why is this? What is the basis for the false teacher's self-reliance?

3) *But ... false teachers do not know what happened to our planet—they never fully grasp the scope of the darkness.*

- A) In one fateful moment the entire creation went from being "good" as declared by our Creator himself to being under the curse of God.
 - And God saw that the light was good. And God saw that it was good ... And God saw that it was good ... And God saw that it was good ... [1:31] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good ... (Genesis 1:4a, 1:10b, 1:12, 1:18, 1:21, 1:31)
- B) A conflict that began in heaven came to Earth.
 - (2 Peter 2:4 ESV) For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.
 - (Genesis 3:1 ESV) Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"
 - (2 Corinthians 11:3 ESV) But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.
 - Cross-reference also ... Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.
- C) The last time everything was good and true

on Earth was in Genesis 3:6 when Eve observed that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was good for food.

- (Genesis 3:6 ESV) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

D) Adam and Eve then ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the war shifted to Earth and continues to this day.

- (Genesis 3:13 ESV) Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
- (Genesis 3:15 ESV) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

4) False teachers do not understand our post-Eden world ... the dark place in which we now live.

A) The ground is now cursed.

- (Genesis 3:17 ESV) And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life."

B) Sin and death would now influence every aspect of life on the planet.

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

C) The wrath of God is now on the planet.

- (Romans 1:18 ESV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
- (John 3:36 ESV) Whoever believes in

the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

D) The behavioral and philosophical foundation for living on Earth shifted from goodness and truth to evil and lies to such an extent that now the creature is worshiped rather than the Creator.

- (Romans 1:25 ESV) Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

E) The "new" god of this world is the arch enemy of the Creator.

- (2 Corinthians 4:4 ESV) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

F) When we are born into this world, we are born into the ways of Adam, and we follow the god of this world in disobedience.

- (Ephesians 2:1–3 ESV) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

G) When we are born into this world, we are dead spiritually in every way and completely.

The doctrine of total depravity: We are totally separated from God and the ways of God with absolutely no ability to close what is an infinite gap between us and God. We are totally incapable of anything to bring about our salvation.

- (1 Corinthians 2:14 ESV) The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand

them because they are spiritually discerned.

- (Genesis 6:5 ESV) The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
- (Jeremiah 17:9 NLT) The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?
- (Romans 3:10–12 NIV) As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

In the Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms we find this very excellent definition of depravity: 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. The term suggests as well that the effects of the Fall extend to every dimension of human existence, so that we dare not trust any ability (such as reason) that we remain capable of exercising in our fallen state. [Grenz, S., Guretzki, D., & Nordling, C. F. (1999). *In Pocket dictionary of theological terms* (p. 37). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.]

