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DEPRAVITY AND SALVATION IN ASCENDED CHRIST

It is useful to distinguish between a broad and a restricted meaning of worship as applied to God. In general He may be honored with prayer and praise and the bringing of sacrificial gifts (I Sam. 1:3).

This cultic worship is especially appropriate in the house of God (Psalm 138:2) and when it is carried on with a desire to be clothed in his holiness (Psalm 29:2). In a still broader sense the service, which issues from worship and derived there from its inspiration may be included (Matthew 4:10).

In the narrower sense worship is pure adoration, the lifting up of the redeemed spirit toward God in contemplation of His holy perfection. Matthew distinguishes between the presentation of gifts by the magi to the Christ child and their worship of Him (Matthew 2:11).

Jesus made an epochal statement on this subject (John 4:24). To worship God in spirit involves a contrast with worship in the letter, in the legalistic encumbrance so characteristic of the Jew; to worship Him in truth contrasts with the Samaritan and all other worship, which is false to a greater or lesser extent.

Our Lord made possible a more intelligent worship of God by revealing the Father in His own Person. As the incarnate Son, He Himself is deserving of the same veneration (John 9:38; 20:28; Hebrew 1:6; Revelation 5:6-14).

TOTAL DEPRAVITY: A proper definition of total depravity should not focus primarily on the questions of sinfulness vs. goodness or ability vs. inability, but on fallen man's relation to a holy God. Because of the effects of the fall, that original relationship of fellowship with God was broken and man's entire nature was polluted. As a result no one can do anything, even good things, that can gain salvation merit in God's sight.

Therefore, we may concisely define total depravity as the unmeritorious of man before God because of the corruption of original sin.

The concept of total depravity does not mean (1) that depraved people cannot or do not perform actions that are good in either man's or God's sight. But no such action can gain favor with God for salvation.

Neither does it mean (2) that fallen man has no conscience which judges between good and evil for him. But that conscience has been affected by the fall so that it cannot be a safe and reliable guide. Neither does it mean

(3) that people indulge in every form of sin or in any sin to the greatest extent possible.

Positively total depravity means that the corruption has extended to all aspects of man's nature, to his entire being; and total depravity means that because of that corruption there is nothing man can do to merit saving grace favor with God.

The Bible teaches this concept of total depravity in many places. The Lord recognized good people (Matthew 22:10), yet He labeled His own disciples as evil men (Matthew 7:11). The mind is affected (Romans 1:28; Ephesians 4:18), the conscience is unclean (Hebrews 9:14), the heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9), and by nature mankind is subject to wrath (Ephesians 2:3). God sent the flood as a judgment on mankind's depravity (Genesis 6:5). Depravity, according to the Lord, is in the inner being and is the root of evil actions (Mark 7:20-23).

Evil in the soul of man is composed of the guilt of original sin, and the loss of freedom of the will, and which affirms involvement in the sin of Adam only to the extent of giving mankind a tendency toward sin and not a sinful nature.

MEDIATORSHIP AND RECAPITULATION OF CHRIST

The implications of depravity are especially crucial in relation to salvation. Man has no ability to save himself. He can do well and make choices, but he cannot regenerate himself (John 1:13). Unless the Holy Spirit enlightens an individual he will remain in darkness (I Cor. 2:14).

RECAPITULATION: From the Greek *ανακεπηλαλοισις*; Christ symbolically retraced the steps of Adam and humanity, Christ comprehended or brought to a head in Himself the whole of humanity, an interpretation which better accords with the meaning of Ephesians 1:10.

The parallels between Adam and Christ: Adam was made of virgin soil, was tempted by Satan, and brought sin and death into the world through disobedience at the tree. Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, resisted temptation by Satan, and overcame sin by obedience to death on the cross. Christ passed through all ages of life, infant, child, youth, and old man, in order to sanctify all who are born again to God through Him.

He became what we are in order to make us what He is. As a result of His life, death, and resurrection all that was lost in Adam is regained in Christ. The human race was given a new start, and saved humanity is gathered together as one in Christ.

Christ also summed up and completed in Himself the revelation of God. The doctrine of recapitulation was important in the context of the Gnostic controversy because it secured the reality of the incarnation, the unity of mankind, and the certainty of redemption.

Christ took the role of a Mediator is to bring reconciliation between two parties. The biblical concept of mediation is to bring sinful man to reconciliation with a holy God, a major concern of the Scriptures.

The word "mediator" (*μεσιτης*) is used only once in the OT Greek version Job 9:33, where it is translated "*δωψμων*," "umpire," or "someone to arbitrate": "He is not man like me that I might answer Him, that we might confront each other in court."

If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that His terror would frighten me no more" (Job 9:32-34).

Mediation in the OT is seen in the function of the offices of prophet and priest. The prophet was a man who spoke for God to man by way of revelation, instruction, and warning (Exodus 4:10-16; Amos 3:8; Jeremiah 1:7, 17). The priest was a man who spoke for man to God by way of intercession and sacrifices (Deuteronomy 33:10; Hebrew 5:1). These offices complemented each other as mediators between God and man.

In the NT "mediator" is used six times. Twice it is used in connection with Moses as being the mediator of the law (Galatians 3:19-20). The word is used three times in Hebrews, where Jesus is shown to be the mediator of a new or better covenant (8:6; 9:15; 12:24).

After discussing the superiority of the new covenant over the old Covenant, the author of Hebrews states that with the inauguration of the new covenant there needed to be a new Mediator, who is identified as Christ (8:6).

Christ as the mediator sacrificed His life in order to inaugurate the new covenant and thereby reconciled man to God. A central verse in the μεδίατοριαλ work of Christ is I Timothy 2:5. Paul states: "This is good and acceptable before God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom in behalf of all men, the testimony borne in these times" (I Timothy 2:3-6).