

# John Calvin and Calvinism – No. 4

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The third foundation principle of Calvinistic theology relates to the nature of man. The statement resolved by the Synod of Dort states: “All men are conceived in sin, and born the children of wrath, indisposed to all saving good, propense to evil...” The doctrine is sometimes called “Total Hereditary Depravity” and is stated as follows in the Presbyterian Confession:

They (Adam and Eve - DM) being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions (Ch. VI, Sec. 3–4).

The doctrine simply argues that the “original” sin of Adam and Eve has been inherited by every human being, causing us to be sinners from birth and incapable of doing any good things.

One fair test of any doctrine is its consequences. If the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin and hereditary depravity is true, then:

1. Every innocent little baby that dies will go to hell. But Jesus said, “Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come to me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of Heaven” (Mat. 19:14). To avoid this consequence (infant damnation because of inherited sin), infant “baptism” was devised, another example of a false doctrine requiring another false doctrine.
2. The good thoughts and inclinations of unsaved persons cannot be explained (Luke 8:15)
3. Righteousness can as well be inherited as sin, thus breaking the mythical inherited sin “chain” when parents become Christians and produce children.

Sin and its guilt are always personal in the Bible (1 John 3:4; Eze. 18:20). The consequence of Adam’s sin is shared by all (1 Cor. 15:22), but not the guilt.

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