

"The Two Natures of the Believer"

There are some fine points which theologians and psychologists like to debate, however, a very simple explanation of man's make-up from a Scriptural view-point will be sufficiently accurate for this lesson.

Remember, God "*formed*" man out of the dust of the ground, and "*breathed*" into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a "*living soul*" (Genesis 2:7. The forming (Hebrew: "*molded*" from the dust has reference to Adam's **body**. It is the part of man that is composed of earthly elements. Then, Scripture teaches, "*God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.*" "*Breath*" and "*spirit*" are one and the same word in the Hebrew language. Scriptures here refers to the "*spirit of man*" being breathed into him (2 Corinthians 2:11). Note there is a third dimension noted in this passage of Scripture, as well, "*and man became a **living soul**.*"

You will note, as we say in the last lesson, that man was **not** a body, he **HAD** a body (he also had a "*spirit*"), however, he himself was a "*living soul*." Paul makes this same distinction in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, when he mentions man's **spirit, soul** and **body**. The writer to the Hebrews adds his testimony to this truth when he tells us the Word of God is able to divide asunder man's "*soul and spirit*" (Hebrews 4:12). Man was a **soul**, who possessed a **body** and **spirit**.

Adam was a soul, fresh from the hand of God. He was pure! He had no sin! *However*, he was **NOT** the finished product of maturity of God's ultimate intention! He was not perfect or righteousness, he was only "*innocent*" because he was not guilty of any transgression of God's revealed will.

Moral perfection must be attained; it cannot be created! God can create a being capable of moral action, but He can not create a being will all of the "*fruits of moral action*" garnered within him.

God made Adam capable of doing righteously, but, He did not make him incapable of doing wrong. Adam had to be made capable of both right and wrong. God did not want man to be an animal, who would obey out of instinct, nor did God want him to be a machine, or robot, who had no choice. God had a world of creatures that worshipped and praised Him. God desired man, created in His own image, with the ability of choice, to love and worship Him. God desired one with whom He could have fellowship and communion.

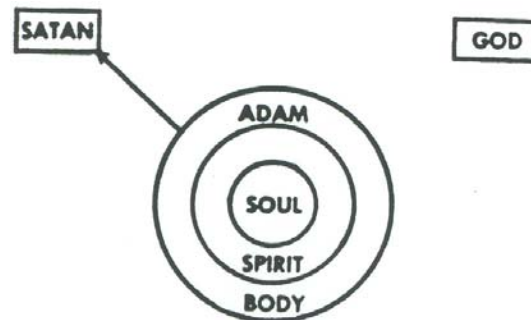
There is no way to guarantee what any "*free-will creature*" will do. We do, however, know that Adam did, he disobeyed God's commandment to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). This test of obeying, or disobeying, God's commandment was more than just a simple question of whether or not to eat some fruit. It was, rather, a question of whether man would now obey God or Satan.

Adam knew full well what he was doing. We are told by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:14, "*Adam was **NOT** deceived,*" that is, he knew full well what was going on, he debated his

decision with collected calm and decided to disobey God's clear commandment. Adam was well aware of the consequences, because God had fully instructed him on these consequences. The question was to whom would Adam surrender, God or Satan. That was the real question posed to him.

Whichever way Adam decided to go *would determine his nature, or his personality*. If he chose to obey God, then he would acquire a nature that wanted only to please the Lord. If, instead, he chose to obey Satan, he would acquire a nature that would be opposed to God. Adam's future, *and humanity's nature*, stood in the balance awaiting his decision. Adam and Eve, the whole of humanity, was in the valley of decision. They were free to choose between God and Satan and whichever choice they made would determine their nature. As yet, their nature was neither righteous nor unrighteous, but, rather, it was innocent. Their choice to please Satan gave them a "Satan-pleasing" (self-centered) nature, which means that now they would be controlled by an anti-God, pro-Satan, nature.

When Adam elected to please Satan, rather than God, he spoiled his opportunity to be perfect and to acquire a godly character. In that instant of election, his nature assumed its set. Which meant he now had a God-opposed nature. His spirit became subject to Satan and he entered into a bondage (Romans 8:15) from which he would have to be redeemed because if he was not redeemed, God could never enjoy his fellowship again.

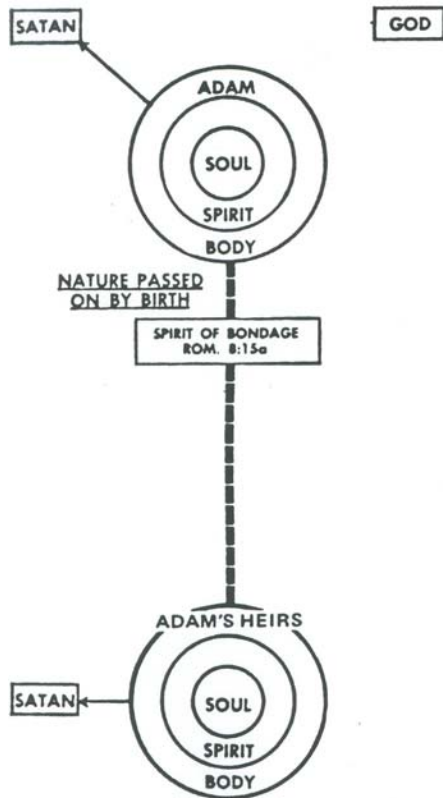


Adam's soul now possessed a fallen spirit, which was opposed to God and was separated from spiritual, divine life! All of Adam's choices and acts would now be directed by self-centered thinking. Adam, by an act of his own will, was now bound to Satan, by nature.

The soul that God had created for Himself had willingly given himself over to Satan. Now the "Prince and power of the air" directed God's creation. Adam was the devil's bond slave; captive to him because of his own unrighteous nature. As a result, Adam was no longer the servant of God.

Romans 5:19 teaches us that - *All men became sinners by virtue of one man's disobedience*, that is, because of Adam's disobedience all Adam's heirs received from him only what he had to pass on, which was an unrighteous nature. The only nature that Adam had to pass on to all his heirs was an ungodly, rebellious, one. Therefore, all mankind fell into bondage. The creature that God had desired to develop into Godlikeness became a "spirit of bondage" (Romans 8:15).

Everyone descended from Adam receives this nature that is opposed to God. Every person born in the line of Adam is dominated by this fallen nature.



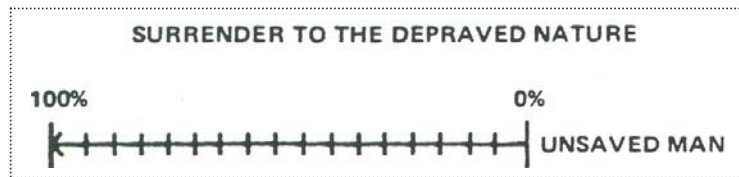
All men became sinners by
Virtue of one man's disobedience
(Romans 5:19a)

Romans 5:12 tells us that, *it was through one man [Adam] that sin entered the world* (but there is a bright side to this awful truth) because Romans 5:19 tells us that, *the obedience of Christ can make righteous all those **born** of Him.*"

Everyone born into this world is dominated by this God-opposed nature, interested in the things of "self" rather than the things of God.

WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE BETTER THAN OTHERS?

The extent to which people are controlled by this depraved nature varies from individual to individual. Some will control this self-centered nature very well, while others will control it considerable less well.



The extent to which one surrenders to his depraved nature is a matter of degree, but no matter what the variance in degree, some surrender is evident in everyone.

A "depraved nature" does not mean that one is 100% wicked, as we think of wickedness. It does not mean that one is a wife-beater, a murderer, etc. it simply means that one has a nature that is opposed to God. To say, theologically, that man has a "depraved nature" does not mean that man is totally bad because he still have a free will and he can resist the ungodly impulses that surge within him which is why some people appear to be good, while others appear to be bad. However, every unsaved person has a "fallen nature" and is somewhere on a scale of zero to 100% depending to the degree to which he is surrendered to that "fallen nature."

Scripture is clear that all mankind is in this "depraved condition," good husbands and fathers, good wives and mothers, the well thought of who hold high offices in our land, respected church-goers, **ALL** are sinners! Even those, whose lives may seem to surpass some professing Christians, are depraved if they have not received Jesus Christ as their Savior.

God will not enter into man's depravity because His holiness would not consent to such a thing. Man's depravity must be dwelt with before man can be restored to the original intent, and purpose, that God had for him.

God loves man, whom He made in His own image, and He longs to bring him back into fellowship with Him, but to do this, man has to be set free from the God-

opposing nature that binds him (Ephesians 2:1-3). Man cannot help himself; help must come from the outside.

God is ready to minister His great power in behalf of man, but it must be done in a way that is consistent with man's human freedom. To change man's nature *against* his will would be a violation of the sovereignty of man's free will and would nullify the very things that God wants from man. Therefore, the change in man's nature **must** be on the basis of man's *free will* response.

How can a man, who is dominated by a nature which is opposed to God's desires, receive the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior? Obviously, something has to be done for man. Man's bondage to Satan must be dealt with, in some way, so that he can come to Jesus Christ.



There is a working of the Holy Spirit in men *before* salvation, which is called

PRE-SALVATION
ILLUMINATION!

Pre-Salvation Illumination involves:

- (1) Conviction of sin - John 16:8
- (2) Awareness of the need of salvation

The Holy Spirit convicts men of the need to be delivered from sin and the need to come into a right relationship with their God. [Many attempt to placate this conviction with offerings, rituals, or some kind of works] The Holy Spirit works within unbelievers to make them aware that they are responsible for their deeds and their hearts burn with uneasiness.

- (3) Revelation of Christ as the only Savior.

This does not mean that all men have this awareness because most men do not. God will not "*jam truth down men's throats.*" Man is always free to take (or leave) any of God's appeals and, sad to say, more often than not, man has refused any offer by God.

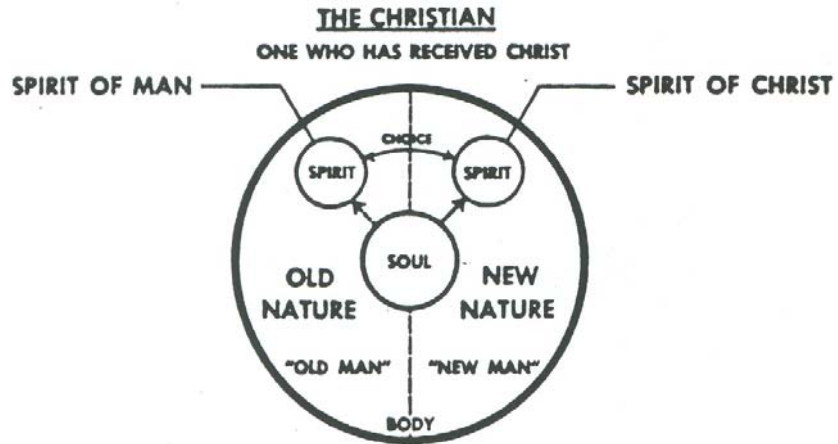
- (4) The granting of power to decide for Christ

For those who accept the first three features of the Spirit's witness, God gives power to make a decision for Christ.

Man, depraved and trapped in his own "*spirit of bondage,*" can do none of these things for himself and he has to receive help from God. However, at no point is man's freedom of choice ever violated because, while God takes the initiative to rescue "*lost men,*" His efforts can be refused. God will not overrule human freedom because He desires man's **FREEWILL** response to His wooing and nothing less than this will give God what He desires. We were created for fellowship with God.

When a man receives the invitation of the Holy Spirit, and receives Jesus Christ as his Savior, something wonderful happens, Jesus comes to live **within** his life and, at that moment, a new nature is established within him. He becomes a "*son of God*"

and he acquires a nature that is holy and seeks to please God. God, in dealing with human depravity, does not take the old nature and make it over, but, rather, He creates an entirely new one within, there is established a new creation.



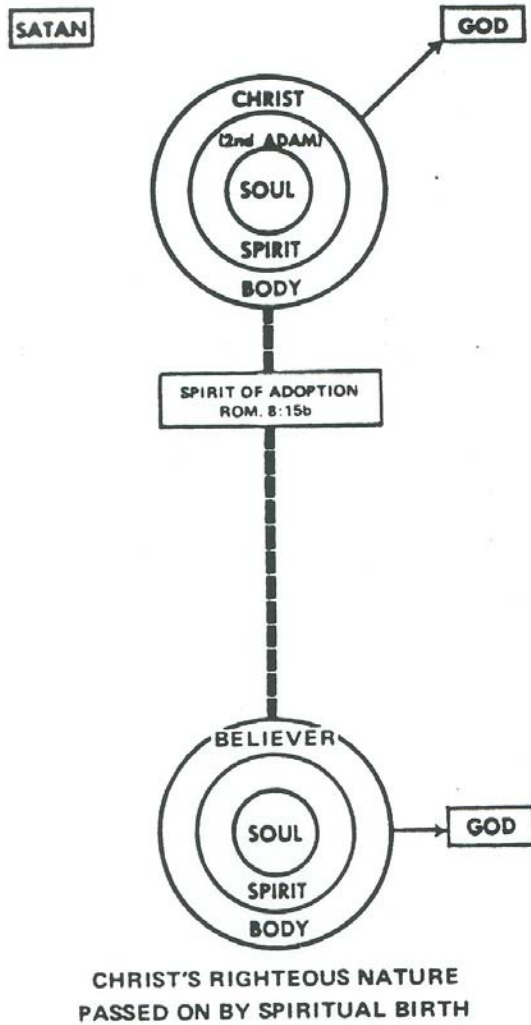
The believer has **TWO NATURES** - the spirit of man and the Spirit of Christ. He has the "*old man*," which is also called the flesh, or the carnal nature, **AND** he has the "*new man in Christ Jesus*."

Remember, that which is born of the Spirit is "*man's spirit*" (John 3:6). Man's spirit is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Our Lord Jesus is the "*Second Adam*," Who was tested just like the first Adam. However, unlike Adam, His testing ended in victory instead of failure. His victorious life produced a holy and righteous nature which is passed on to His heirs, those born of Him, just as Adam's nature was passed on to those born of him. One is born of the flesh; the other is born of the Spirit.

Once a man becomes a "*son of God*" through this new creation, he is **FREE** from the bondage of the old nature, however, he is not **RID OF IT!** Having the new nature makes it possible for him to live a God-pleasing life, but it is no guarantee that he will live a God-pleasing life. Having the new nature simply means that he does not have to submit to the unrighteous demands of the old man any longer if he does not want to. He is loosed from sin's continual domination of his life and he is free to please God by submitting to the new nature - ***if he wants to!*** God never forces anything on anyone - *ever!*

When a man is born of Christ, he becomes a partaker of Christ own nature - Christ's sinless nature (2 Peter 1:4). He has a nature which is righteous and which "*cannot sin*" (1 John 3:9), and, if allowed to *fully* control him, will cause him to please God continually!

Man's *nature* was something that had to be determined by man himself. For this to be accomplished, Adam the first man was created innocent and capable of either righteous or unrighteous acts. By his own free choice to please Satan rather than God, Adam acquired a depraved nature. His God-opposing nature, and the tendency to sin, was passed on to all of his heirs so that each man born into the world enters equipped



with an unrighteous nature of his own.

The choices of all men after Adam are evil. Thus they become sinners in their own right, their sin being a "by-product" of their own depraved natures. Though the tragedy of the fall, the control of mankind passed into the hands of Satan. All men are identified with him as slaves born into his dark kingdom. Ephesians tells us that they are "by nature the children of wrath." So depraved are men that they cannot please God; they cannot come to God; they cannot believe or receive the truth; and neither can they cease from sin. They are in a bondage from which there is no escape unless help comes from the outside. Something has to be done about man's fallen nature.

It is hoped that these truths, visually set forth, will serve to crystallize Bible truths for the student and help to fix them in his mind!