

# Corruption

Our misery is that the whole of creation is held captive by a destructive, pervasive, and inexorable power. This power is the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:21). Corruption is any degenerative process that mars, ruins, destroys, or renders something unfit or useless. And there are many kinds. The moth corrupts garments by eating (James 5:2). Rust corrupts riches by corrosion (Matt. 6:19). A corrupt tree corrupts its fruit by rot (Matt. 7:17). Disease corrupts the body (Ps. 38:5). Pride corrupts wisdom (Ezek. 28:17). Evil companions corrupt good behavior (I Cor. 15:33). Evil words corrupt good conversation (Eph. 4:29). Evil doctrines corrupt the Word, and evil teachers corrupt the church (II Cor. 2:17). But all corruption is one, for it proceeds according to a single fundamental law of nature, the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2).

Although a law of nature, corruption is not natural but an alien force unleashed from the underworld by Satan and his two thugs, sin and death. Corruption was introduced into this good creation when Satan fell, corrupted the angels, and then employed a wicked stratagem to corrupt the whole world (B.C., Art. 12). As for man, the original sin was his original corruption. By guile, the serpent corrupted Eve (II Cor. 11:3). Eve then corrupted her husband, who by sin separated himself from God, his true life, and, corrupting his whole nature, became liable to corporal and spiritual death (B.C., Art. 14). And by propagation of this vicious nature, the original hereditary disease, the whole of mankind is now corrupted; a corrupt stock producing a corrupt offspring (Canons, 3-4.2). Thus, God looked upon the earth and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth (Gen. 6:12).

This corruption of the whole nature theologians call depravity. Scripture calls it the old man of sin, corrupt by deceitful lusts (Eph. 4:22). This corruption makes the heart deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9), makes man

destitute of the truth (I Tim. 6:5), renders him wicked, perverse, inclined to all evil, and incapable of doing any good (L.D. 3). And his essential sin is that he changes the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and beasts (Rom 1:23). Being corrupted, man is become a fountain of corruption (Prov. 25:26), a slave of corruption (II Pet. 2:19), and one who shall utterly perish in corruption (II Pet. 2:12).

From all corruption Jesus has delivered us. Assuming our sin and entering our death, He subjected Himself to the full power of hell's corruption. But His life from heaven was incorruptible. Sin could tempt, but not defile Him. Death could kill, but not destroy Him. The grave could receive, but not decompose Him. Indeed, the bars of the earth imprisoned Him, but His soul could not be left in hell, nor His flesh see corruption (John 2:6; Acts 2:31). He is raised up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption (Acts 13:34).

The benefit for us is complete deliverance from corruption. First, we are made a new creature in Christ. Born again of His incorruptible seed by the Word of God, we are made partakers of the divine nature whereby we escape the corruption in the world (I Pet. 1:23; II Pet. 1:4). Secondly, our old man is crucified, dead, and buried with Him so that the corrupt inclinations of the flesh no more reign in us (L.D. 16). They remain powerful as ever, but cannot corrupt that hidden seed of the new man living by the Spirit through faith, hope, and love unto life everlasting (I Pet. 3:4; Gal. 6:8). Thirdly, our bodies sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption. This mortal, dishonorable, weak, and natural body will put on incorruption, immortality, power, and spirit; death will be swallowed up in victory (I Cor. 15:42; 53-54). Lastly, the whole creation will also be delivered from this bondage of corruption to share in our glorious liberty (Rom. 9:21).

Blessed be the Father of our Lord, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to this glorious inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you (I Pet. 1:3).




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