

# Native Depravity and the Law

by Daniel Steele

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*The sermon explores the relationship between native depravity and the law, highlighting the need for atonement and the role of the second Adam in purifying the nature inherited from the first Adam.*

**Scripture:** Romans 5:12, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Ephesians 2:3, 1 John 1:9, Revelation 7:14

**Topics:** "Original Sin", "Divine Grace"

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## Description

Daniel Steele discusses the views of Arminian theologians on native depravity and its relation to the law of God, emphasizing the need for both the first Adam's tainted nature and the second Adam's grace for every child born into the world. He explains that while native depravity does not carry native demerit, the atonement is necessary for purification from this taint, required for both justification and sanctification from the beginning of responsibility. Steele highlights the importance of penitent faith for pardon and the believer's purification through faith in Christ, stating that the heritage of grace is unconditionally applied to infants who die before moral accountability, removing the evil unconditionally inherited. He rejects the legal fiction of condemnation through the first Adam and justification through the second for newborns but acknowledges the provisional repair of moral damage by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

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## Transcript

THE opinions of Arminian theologians respecting the relation of native depravity to the law of God are in a state of solution. In what form they will crystallize does not yet appear. But it is enough for me to know that every child born into the world has two fathers: the first Adam, from whom he inherits a nature morally tainted and prone to sin; and the second Adam, from whom he has a heritage of grace sufficient to purify this taint. This grace comes from the atonement and is necessary, not for the justification of the infant -- for native depravity is without native demerit -- but for his purification.

Properly speaking, law takes cognizance of actions and the resulting character, and not of the nature with which we were born. From the beginning of responsibility the atonement is needed for both justification and sanctification. This is true of all actual sinners. Their first pressing need is pardon through penitent faith; their second need is the entire purification which comes to the believer through faith in Christ. In the case of those who die in infancy before moral accountability, the heritage of grace is unconditionally applied to remove from their natures the evil unconditionally inherited -- "Washed in the blood of the Lamb."

While we cannot accept the legal fiction of condemnation through the first Adam, and justification through the second, as true of the newborn babe, at one and the same time, we can accept the truth of a moral damage entailed by the first Adam provisionally repaired by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

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