

Systematic Theology from a Kingdom Perspective

Part 1

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Systematic Theology from a Kingdom Perspective - I

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LESSON ONE

Introduction to Theology

Overview

What is theology?

The word theology: *theos* and *logos*— The study of God.

Definition: The contents of the Christian faith as set forth in orderly exposition by the Christian community.

What is systematic theology?

Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, “What does the whole Bible teach us today?” about any given topic. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem

- 1) The Doctrine of the Word of God
- 2) The Doctrine of God
- 3) The Doctrine of Man
- 4) The Doctrines of Christ and the Holy Spirit
- 5) The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption
- 6) The Doctrine of the Church
- 7) The Doctrine of the Future

Theology is a study in the Christian faith.

- 1) God and His relationship to the world.
- 2) The nature of man and the tragedy of sin and evil.
- 3) The person and work of Jesus Christ.
- 4) The way of salvation.
- 5) The coming of the Holy Spirit.
- 6) The gifts of the Spirit.
- 7) The Christian walk.

THE NATURE OF THEOLOGY

Definition: The contents of the Christian faith as set forth in orderly exposition by the Christian community.

1) The Contents of the Christian Faith.

- a) Theology sets forth what the Christian faith teaches, affirms, holds to be true: its doctrines.
- b) Christian faith has definite tenets, and the range is wide: the Triune God; creation; providence; sin; salvation; sanctification; the church; sacraments; “last things.”
- c) Theology is concerned with what is true in its totality.
- d) The Christian Church has been concerned about teaching and doctrine.
 - i) The first thing said about the early Christians was that “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching.

Acts 2:42 (KJV) 42And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

- ii) Throughout the New Testament there are many references to the importance of doctrine—sound doctrine.

Acts 20:27 (KJV) 27For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

- e) Theology is concerned with truth.
 - i) To be true to the substance of the faith.
 - ii) Concerned with truth as conformity to ultimate reality.
- f) The focus of theology is God: His relationship to the universe and man.
 - i) About God's being and His attributes.
 - ii) Third person: Speaking about God; not speaking to God or God speaking to man.

2) In Orderly Exposition

- a) Theology is not just doctrine but the articulation of relationships and connections among various doctrines.
- b) Each doctrine, as a part of the whole, must be set forth as clearly and coherently as possible.
 - i) Its content, background, basic thrust, relevance.
 - ii) To be made as comprehensible as possible.
- c) Theology is an intellectual discipline.
 - i) “Faith seeking understanding.”
 - ii) Systematic theology points up the interlocking and interdependent character of all the doctrines that make up theology
- d) Comparison to other theologies.
 - i) **Biblical theology** is the orderly arrangement and explication of teachings in the Bible.
 - (1) Old Testament theology and New Testament theology.
 - (2) Pauline and Johannine theology.
 - ii) **Historical theology** sets forth in orderly fashion the way the church over the centuries

has received and articulated the Christian faith in creeds, confessions, and other formulations.

- iii) **Practical theology** is an orderly study of the way Christian faith is practiced: through preaching, teaching, counseling.
- iv) **Dogmatic theology** refers to theology as set forth in the dogmas, creeds, and pronouncements of the church.
 - (1) Dogmas have to do with the accepted tenets of the church or a particular church, what is accepted and believed.
 - (2) Dogmatic theology bears a close relationship to historical theology in that it focuses on historical formulations of faith.
 - (3) While all dogmatic theology is systematic, not all systematic theology is dogmatic.

e) **Apologetics.**

- i) The theological discipline that presents argumentation and evidences for the validity of the Christian faith.

Titus 1:9 (KJV) 9Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

1 Peter 3:15 (KJV) 15But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

2 Corinthians 10:5 (KJV) 5Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

- ii) The apologist seeks to provide a rational defense of the Christian faith.
- iii) Apologetics is directed to the world of unbelief and attempts to establish certain aspects of Christian faith.
- iv) Appeal is made to what a rational and open mind can comprehend.

f) **Ethics.**

- i) Ethics is the discipline concerned with moral conduct
- ii) Whenever the relation to the neighbor is concerned, one is in the realm of ethics.
- iii) Christianity has to do with both faith and morals.
- iv) Like apologetics, ethics presupposes the substance of theology and serves as a concrete application of it.

g) **Systematic theology.**

- i) Systematic theology is usually placed after biblical and historical theology; the

Christian faith is rooted in the Bible and has come down through the centuries.

ii) Placed before practical theology because it provides the content of what is to be put into practice.

3) **By the Christian community**

a) Functions of the Christian community.

i) Worship, proclamation, teaching, fellowship, and service.

ii) When the Christian community seeks to set forth its basic understanding in orderly fashion, this is theology.

b) While theology is a function of the Christian community, it often carries forward its theological work through special assemblies, councils, and commissions that are particularly devoted to the elaboration of the tenets of the Christian faith.

THE FUNCTION OF THEOLOGY

1) Clarification. It is important to set forth as clearly as possible what it is that the Christian community affirms.

2) Integration.

a) Demonstration how individual doctrines fit into a total pattern.

i) Old and new testaments.

ii) Individual books to each other.

b) Need for Christians to integrate the truth they have received with various aspects of their own experiences.

3) Correction.

a) Correctives to departure from truth.

b) Addresses imbalances and errors.

c) Heresy arises, not from without, but from misunderstandings from within.

i) Overemphasis on a particular doctrine.

ii) Distortion over time.

Ephesians 4:13 - 14 (KJV) 13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

4) Declaration.

a) World-oriented function of declaration: To make known publicly what it is that the Christian community stands for.

Ephesians 3:10 (KJV) 10To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

b) Serves indirectly as an invitation to further investigation.

5) Challenge.

- a) To deal with confusing, even divisive, teachings.
- b) To explore areas of Christian truth not yet sufficiently charted out.

THE METHOD OF DOING THEOLOGY

- 1) Seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Reliance of the Scriptures.
- 3) Familiarity with church history.
- 4) Awareness of the contemporary scene.
- 5) Growth in Christian experience.

LESSON TWO

The Knowledge of God

Introduction

- 1) In theology, we talk about God continually.
 - a) Christian faith claims to have knowledge of God—not fantasy, imagination, or guesswork, but knowledge.
 - b) How is God known?
- 2) Epistemology.
 - a) The study of the grounds, method, and limits of knowledge.
 - b) Epistemology is “discourse about knowledge.”

The Importance of This Knowledge

- 1) Human Reflection. Human reflection ultimately turns upon the matter of knowledge of God as the ultimate concern.
- 2) The Scriptures.
 - a) Job 23:3 (KJV) 3Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!
 - b) Jeremiah 9:23 - 24 (KJV) 23Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.
 - c) Isaiah 11:9 (KJV) 9They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
 - d) Hosea 4:1 - 2 (KJV) 1Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. 2By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.
 - e) Hosea 6:6 (KJV) 6For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.
 - f) Jeremiah 31:34 (KJV) 34And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity,

and I will remember their sin no more.

The Way of Knowledge

- The Mystery of God
- Revelation

- 1) The Mystery of God.
 - a) The mystery of his will. Eph. 1:9.
 - b) The mystery of Christ. Eph. 3:4.
 - c) The mystery of the gospel. Eph 6:19.

Two problems in the knowledge of God

- a) God is infinite; man is finite.
 - b) God is holy; man is sinful.
- 2) Revelation.
 - a) General Revelation
 - b) Special Revelation.
 - c) Subordinate Revelation

Overview

- 1) The knowledge of God is revealed knowledge.
- 2) The word *revelation* means a "removing of the veil."
- 3) The Greek word is *apokalypsis*, and "uncovering."
- 4) Peter: "Thou art the Christ"
- 5) Revelation in its ultimate meaning is that which comes from God.

❖ GENERAL REVELATION

- Not limited to any people or time in history
- Nature declares His glory

- 1) Locus.
 - a) The medium of the heavens and the earth.
 - i) Psalms 19:1 - 2 (KJV) 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.
 - ii) Romans 1:20 (KJV) 20For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

- iii) Acts 14:17 (KJV) 17Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.
- b) In man himself God is revealed.
 - i) Made in likeness of God.
 - ii) Gen. 1:26.
- c) God manifests Himself in the workings of history.
 - i) Through the rise and fall of nations.
 - ii) The history of all nations represents some disclosure of God at work.
- 2) Content.
 - a) God's eternal power and deity are made manifest.
 - b) God's benevolence and concern are shown in His provision of all that man needs for life on earth.
 - c) God's righteousness is manifest in the history of peoples and nations and also in the moral conscience of mankind.
- 3) Reception.
 - a) Blinded by man's sinful nature.
 - b) Suppression. Rom 1:19.
 - c) Dishonor and thanklessness. Rom. 1:21.

❖ SPECIAL REVELATION

- 1) Its character.
 - a) It is particular. God reveals himself to a particular, special, chosen people.
 - i) Children of Abraham.
 - ii) 1 Peter 2:9. "A chosen people..."
 - iii) Ps. 103:7. "God made known His ways to Moses..."
 - b) It is progressive.
 - i) An unfolding revelation of God in the witness of biblical history.
 - ii) Not from untruth to truth; but from a lesser to a fuller disclosure of truth.
 - iii) An ever deepening and enlarging declaration of what God's holiness and love means.
 - c) It is saving.
 - i) God's saving knowledge not manifest in general revelation (through nature).
 - ii) Only as a person is radically altered can he "know" God.
 - d) It is verbal.
 - i) God communicates through the voice of living persons.
 - ii) The general becomes specific; the indirect, direct; the inaudible, audible.
 - e) It is personal.
 - i) Moses in burning bush. Ex. 3:1-14.
 - ii) Talked with Moses as friend to friend. Ex. 33:11.
 - iii) The climax of His personal revelation is through Jesus Christ.
 - (1) The Word became flesh. Joh. 1:14.
 - (2) Speaks through the Son. Heb. 1.

- 2) The medium.
 - a) The Old Testament prophets.
 - b) Jesus Christ.
 - i) OT: “Thus says the Lord...”
 - ii) NY: “But I say unto you...”
 - iii) God addresses people fully in Jesus Christ—through His speech, His deeds, His presence.
 - iv) He is the way, the truth, and the light.
 - c) The apostles.
 - i) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii) Revelation of the Church.
 - iii) Mystery of the gentiles.
 - iv) “The whole counsel of God.”
- 3) The content.
 - a) Primarily God himself; God’s own self-manifestation.
 - b) The disclosure of divine truth—His nature and ways, His dealings with the world and people.
 - c) The gospel is the ultimate self-revelation of God’s grace in Jesus Christ.
 - d) Revelation of God’s ultimate purposes.

❖ SUBORDINATE REVELATION

- 1) God gives revelation to an individual for the upbuilding of the Christian community, but it is always subordinate to God’s special revelation.
- 2) This revelation is the background of prophetic utterance.
 - a) What occurs in revelation within the Christian community is not new truth that goes beyond the special revelation.
 - b) It is only a deeper appreciation of what has already been revealed, or a disclosure of some message for the contemporary situation that adds nothing essentially to what He has before made known.
- 3) God makes Himself known to those who receive His revelation in faith.
 - a. If there is no recipient, knowledge is nonexistent.
 - b. When faith is present, the things of God become manifest.
 - c. Faith is responding in total affirmation to God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ.
 - d. It is by faith and faith alone that God is known as both Creator and Redeemer.
 - e. Any revelation of God, whether in creation, redemption, or in the life of the Christian community, is made know to those who have faith.

LESSON THREE

The Nature of God

The Reality of God

God is.

- 1) The Biblical Record.
 - a) Not a question about God's existence; but of who He is and what He does.
 - b) The Bible is the account of God's mighty acts: creation, redemption, glorification.
 - c) Biblical record a testimony to the reality of God.
- 2) The Conviction of Faith
 - a) The things of God—His deeds, His purpose—are not seen unless He illumines them and thereby brings about faith.
 - b) Faith is a response to God's prior action.
- 3) The Testimony of the Holy Spirit.

The Identity of God

- 1) God is living.

Matthew 16:16 (KJV) 16And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

2 Corinthians 6:16 (KJV) 16And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Hebrews 12:22 (KJV) 22But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

- a) God is living—in opposition to all idolatry and graven images.
 - b) As one living, He gives life and breath to all things, brings life back to that which is dead, and constantly renews with life what has been restored.
 - c) He is identical with life.
 - i) Because God lives, man may live also.
 - ii) Life is in Himself.
 - d) He is a possessor of abundance.
 - e) The living God is to be honored in living worship and obedience.
- 2) God Is Personal.
 - a) Desires to be known by personal names.
 - i) Yahweh.

- ii) Jehovah.
- b) Enters into personal relationships with man.
 - i) Has communion with human beings.
 - ii) God shows Himself to be personal uniquely by His self-revelation in Jesus Christ.
- c) His character is deeply personal.
 - i) God is personal in that the central aspect of His character is love.
 - ii) He who loves completely is completely personal.

God Is Spirit

John 4:24.

- 1) God as Spirit is incorporeal.
 - a) Not flesh and blood.
 - b) He is nonmaterial.
 - c) He is invisible.
 - d) His being is simple, undivided, uncompounded; not composed of parts.
- 2) God as Spirit is the acting God.
 - a) Totally dynamic.
 - b) He is the Word in Action.
- 3) God as Spirit is free.
 - a) Unbound, uncoerced.
 - b) God knows no limits of any kind.
 - c) Free in His dealings with mankind.

The Transcendence of God

- 1) God Is Infinite.
 - a) Is. 6:1. "The Lord high and lifted up..."
 - b) 1 Kings 8:27. "Heaven and earth cannot contain thee."
 - c) Job 11:7-9. "Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?"
- 2) God Is Eternal.
 - a) The everlasting God.
 - b) Exod. 3:14. "I am..."
 - c) God does not dwell in the temporal.
- 3) God Is Unchanging.
 - a) Mal. 3:6. "For I the Lord do not change."
 - b) God the Rock; does not fluctuate.
 - c) Dependability and constancy in His being, acts, and purposes.
 - d) God's "repentance" is not really a change; it bears upon some other aspect of His being and nature.
 - e) God's unchangeability does not reflect upon His hardness or inflexibility.

➤ THE CHARACTER OF GOD

- 1) God Is Holy.
 - a) Holiness is the foundation of God's nature.
 - b) God is a personal God, but He is not to be treated casually; he is awesome and holy.
 - c) In close conjunction with the holiness of God, is His righteousness.
 - i) Refers to what God is in Himself; a God of total integrity and uprightness.
 - ii) Righteousness applies to the way in which God relates to man.
 - d) Closely associated with righteousness is justice. Concerned about the abused and downtrodden of earth.
- 2) God Is Love.
 - a) Love is the very essence of the divine nature.
 - i) In OT, the love of God is manifested in relationship to Israel and her deliverances.
 - ii) In NT, the love of God not based on merit, but in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - iii) God's love in Christ expands from a particular love to love for the whole world.
 - b) The love of God is spontaneous.
 - c) The love of God is never self-seeking but always self-giving.
 - d) The content of the divine love can be apprehended only in God's action.
 - e) The love of God is unfathomable. Eph. 3:17-19.
 - f) Expressions of the love of God:
 - i) Grace.
 - ii) Mercy.
 - iii) Loving-kindness.
 - iv) Goodness.
- 3) God is a God of Truth
 - a) God is the only true God.
 - b) The true God has been fully revealed in Jesus Christ and nowhere else.
 - c) The God of complete dependability.
 - d) The God of faithfulness.

➤ THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD

- 1) God Is Omnipotent.
 - a) All-powerful.
 - i) God Almighty. Gen. 17:1-2.
 - ii) Nothing is too difficult.
 - (1) Gen. 18:14.
 - (2) Jer. 32:17.
 - (3) Luke 1:37.
 - (4) Matt. 19:26.
 - b) Will do only that which is in harmony with who He is.
 - i) Omnipotence not to be confused with omnicausality. Because God *can* do all things does not mean that He *does* do all things.
 - ii) Able to do what He says and desires to do.
 - c) God of miracles

- 2) God is Omniscience.
 - a) His knowledge is universal: “he knows everything.” (1 Joh 3:20).
 - b) His knowledge is perfect. Job 37:16.
 - c) God’s knowledge is that of immediacy. Prov. 15:3.
 - d) God is not a learner. Is. 40:14.
 - e) God foreknows the future.
 - i) Is. 42:9.
 - ii) Ps. 139:4, 16.
 - f) God the all-knowing is God the all-wise.
- 3) God Is Omnipresent.
 - a) God is everywhere present.
 - i) Present in the whole of the created universe.
 - (1) Is. 66:1.
 - (2) Is. 6:1.
 - (3) Jer. 23:24.
 - ii) God is totally present everywhere in creation.
 - (1) God is totally and equally present everywhere.
 - (2) There is no place where God is not; He is everywhere.
 - iii) God is immediately present to every human.
 - (1) In Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Through the body by the Holy Spirit.

➤ THE GLORY OF GOD

- 1) What is the glory of God?
 - a) The divine glory is the radiant splendor and awesome majesty of God Himself.
 - i) Ezek. 1:27-28.
 - ii) Rev. 4:3.
 - b) God is glorious in His action so that in all that He does, His glory is made manifest.
 - i) Exod. 15:6-7.
 - ii) Exod. 15:11.
- 2) The glory of God is the focus of highest praise.

LESSON FOUR

Creation

- 1) Basis.
- 2) Approach.
- 3) Definition.
- 4) Source.
- 5) Method.
- 6) Quality.
- 7) Purpose.

➤ BASIS

- 1) Basis of the doctrine of creation is divine revelation. Because God is absolute Lord, He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth.
- 2) The truth of creation belongs in the arena of faith.
 - a) Heb. 11:3. “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God.”
 - b) Gen. 1 & 2 must be read from the perspective of faith.
- 3) A final basis for the doctrine of creation is the Scripture.
 - a) Without an appreciation of revelation and faith, the Scriptures are a closed book.
 - b) We have an authoritative and normative record of creation that will give direction and guidance.

➤ APPROACH

- 1) The primary approach to the doctrine of creation is one of blessing and praise; rejoicing at what God has made and giving Him blessing and thanksgiving for it all.
- 2) Another approach is that of marvel and wonder.
- 3) Another approach is one of deep humility.
 - a) In the presence of the mighty deed of creation, we can grasp very little of the mystery of it all.
 - b) We need to humbly allow God to teach us through His own revelation what He would have us know.

➤ DEFINITION

- 1) Creation may be defined as the bringing of the universe into existence by God.
 - a) It is a calling into being that which did not exist before.
 - b) Absolute origination. Creation out of nothing (*creation ex nihilo*).
 - c) Foreign to ancient philosophers.
 - i) Plato: the world was viewed as having been formed out of some kind of primal

matter.

- ii) In Babylonian mythology, the god Marduk struggled against Tiamat, the monster of chaos, and slew her, and the world was composed out of fragments of her carcass.
- 2) Creation is not only absolute origination; it is also a completed work of God.

➤ SOURCE

- 1) The Source of Creation Is God.
 - a) The majestic, all-powerful God, namely *Elohim*, is the creator of the universe.
 - b) Called *El Elyon*, maker of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19, 22).
 - c) The one who creates is also *Yahweh*, the Lord, the peculiarly personal, covenantal name for God (later to be revealed in its full meaning to Moses, Exod. 3:15).
- 2) The Source of Creation is the Triune God.
 - a) God the Father.
 - i) From whom all things come; the fountainhead of creation.
 - ii) The title “Father” suggests one who cares, one who is intimately concerned about His creation and all His creatures.
 - b) God the Son.
 - i) God the Son is the instrument of creation.
 - (1) It was through the Son, the eternal Word of God, that the universe came to be.
 - (2) John 1:1, 3.
 - (3) 1 Cor. 8:6.
 - ii) The Word of God is what makes it all a universe.
 - c) God the Holy Spirit.
 - i) God the Spirit is the energizer of creation
 - ii) The Holy Spirit is also the energizer of everything on earth.
 - iii) The Holy Spirit is the life-giver in creation.
 - d) Summary: Creation is *from* the Father, *through* the Son, and *by* the Holy Spirit.

➤ METHOD

- 1) Series of Creative Actions.
 - a) The Universe—“the heavens and the earth.”
 - i) The first creative action of God relates to the totality of the physical universe.
 - ii) The one area where the overwhelming evidence of science agrees with the biblical affirmation of a beginning.
 - iii) There was a beginning of the universe.
 - iv) God brought forth the universe *ex nihilo*.
 - b) The Living Creatures.
 - i) The second creative act of God relates to the living creatures. (Gen. 1:21).
 - ii) Represented the dawn of conscious existence—living, moving creatures.
 - c) Man.
 - i) The third and final creative act of God is man.
 - ii) Gen. 1:27. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created

- him...”
- iii) Man in his high position is to have dominion over all the animal world that preceded him.
- 2) Stages in Creation (The Process of Creation).
- a) The Six Days of Creation.
- i) Length of time.
- (1) The word “day” used several different ways.
- (a) Refers to the light that was separated from darkness (Gen. 1:5).
- (b) Refers to light and darkness together (Gen. 1:5).
- (c) Refers to all the days together. (Gen. 2:4)
- (2) Day likely just refers to a period of time, however short or long in which God was accomplishing something.
- ii) Content of the days.
- (1) What happened in each of six days?
- (a) Light.
- (b) Firmament, separating sea and sky.
- (c) Earth, putting forth vegetation.
- (d) Lights (sun, moon and stars).
- (e) Fish of sea and birds of sky.
- (f) Beasts of earth, then man.
- (2) Sequence of the third, fifth, and sixth days generally confirmed today by research in biology (vegetable life, followed by aquatic and aerial life, and thereafter mammalian and human life.
- (3) The other days (first, second, and fourth) pose more difficulty.
- (a) Was there light before the sun?
- (b) Light could have been “cosmic” light, not coming from the *sun* but from the *Son*.
- b) Fixity and Progression.
- i) Everything in the world of plants and animals was made “according to its kind.”
- ii) There is a fixity in each species God created.
- (1) Each is free to multiply and to develop within its own “kind,” but it cannot go beyond what the Word of God has fixed.
- (2) The biblical truth is in total opposition to the theory of evolution that holds to the development of one species into another by a process of “natural selection: and through the “survival of the fittest.”
- (a) There is no evidence to support this claim.
- (b) There is the absence of intergrading forms in plants and animals and no proven evidence of species transformation.
- iii) There is also a beautiful progression throughout the whole saga of creation.
- (1) Although there is a fixity in species, it is marvelous to behold how things God has created or made are related to one another.
- (2) Man is composed of the same elements physically as all the rest of the world

➤ **QUALITY**

- 1) The creation of God was very good.
 - a) It follows that the world and all it contains is basically a good world.
 - b) The basic goodness of all that God made is important to emphasize.
 - c) Nothing in the world is intrinsically bad (in contrast to the view that depicts matter as evil, the created world as a sphere of darkness, and man's body as corrupt because of its earthly composition.
 - d) The fact that evil—with all its dire effects—will soon emerge on the scene—should by no means be allowed to distort the fact that the world God made is essentially good.
 - e) The world is God's good creation
- 2) The goodness of God in creation should again and again awaken us to joy and celebration.

➤ **PURPOSE**

- 1) God willed creation so. Rev. 4:11.
 - a) Since God is love, love demands an object; otherwise, love is frustrated. Creation was necessary.
 - b) God is in every way complete without creation.
- 2) The creation, as the expression of God's will, was the manifestation of His glory.
 - a) In showing forth His glory God willed to have a creation to which that glory would be manifest.
 - b) It was to be a manifestation of His holiness, His love, His truth, His power, His wisdom, His goodness—all that God is in Himself.
- 3) All of creation is most blessed when its response is to glorify God.
 - a) God does not need to receive glory any more than He needs to receive love—or anything else from His creatures.
 - b) But it is through the offering up of praise and thanksgiving that the circle is complete. The creation that has received the riches of God's glory now fulfills its highest purpose in the glorifying of God.

LESSON FIVE

The Providence of God

The God who creates is also the God who provides for His creation.

➤ DEFINITION

- 1) Providence may be defined as the overseeing care and guardianship of God for all His creation.
 - a) “the Lord will provide...”
 - b) God’s constant care and guardianship in a multiplicity of ways stands at the heart of the doctrine of providence.
- 2) God is understood in providence as One who is intimately concerned with His creation.
 - a) He did not create a world and then leave it on its own.
 - b) God sustains what He has made; he is involved in the affairs of people and nations, and who is guiding all things to their final fulfillment.
- 3) Providence is much more than general care.
 - a) God has a benevolent concern for all His creatures,
 - b) Of deeper significance is His particular care for each and every one of them.

➤ ASPECTS OF PROVIDENCE

- 1) Preservation.
 - a) The whole world stands in threat of dissolution.
 - i) The revolution of the earth around the sun.
 - ii) The turning of the earth on its axis.
 - iii) The oxygen level in the atmosphere.
 - b) “He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3).
 - c) We need to pause a moment to reflect on the marvel of our continuing physical existence.
 - i) The regular beating of our heart.
 - ii) The circulation of blood through the body.
 - d) The continuing preservation of life through God’s regular provision for their needs.
 - e) Should make for a life of freedom from anxiety, especially for those who know Him as Father.
 - i) Matt. 6:25-34.
 - ii) Phil. 4:19.
 - f) God’s preservation of our being in the midst of the perils and dangers of life.
 - i) God’s assured protection for those who dwell in His presence. (Ps. 91).
 - (1) Deliverance from pestilence.
 - (2) Give angels charge over us.
 - ii) Divine protection of those who belong to Christ, keeping them from all evil.

- (1) John 17.
- (2) Mat. 6:13.
- 2) Accompaniment.
 - a) God is present and involved with His creation.
 - b) God placed Himself in a garden, walking with man.
 - c) Tragically, through man's sin, he walked away from God's presence.
 - d) God's call to Abraham was for the whole human race.
 - i) Esther.
 - ii) Gideon.
 - e) The divine presence of God was known by:
 - i) Moses.
 - ii) David.
 - f) Emmanuel—God with us.
 - g) Jesus.
 - i) "Lo, I am with you always."
 - ii) The presence of the Holy Spirit.
 - h) He is not far from any of us (Acts 17:27).
- 3) Direction.
 - a) God in His providence directs His creation.
 - i) He guides and governs all things.
 - ii) This relates particularly to the purpose the creation is to fulfill.
 - b) God is the Lord of history (God providentially directs the history of people and nations).
 - i) Increasing evil of mankind to the Flood.
 - ii) A new beginning with Noah.
 - iii) The dispersion of mankind after the tower of Babel.
 - iv) The call of Abraham.
 - v) The serfdom in Egypt.
 - vi) The formation of Israel to be God's special people.
 - vii) The giving of the law and the commandments.
 - viii) The rule of judges and kings.
 - ix) The exile in Assyria and Babylon.
 - x) The coming of the Messiah.
 - xi) The death, burial, and resurrection.
 - xii) The victory over Satan.
 - xiii) The establishment of the church.
 - xiv) The proclamation of the gospel.
 - xv) The final consummation of all things.
 - c) The paradox of "election" and "human response."
 - i) God had a purpose before the foundation of the world.
 - ii) Yet there is the element of faith and choice.

➤ SUFFERING

Questions:

Why is there suffering and pain in the world?

Why do the righteous suffer?

Why do some people, seemingly no more sinful than others, go through so much pain?

Why does God cause or permit such things to happen?

If earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods are the “acts of God,” why does God act in this manner?

What of the suffering and pain endured by many in personal catastrophe and debilitating illness?

Why is this so frequent?

If God in His providence cares for and guards His creatures, why is there suffering and pain on every hand?

- 1) Suffering is due, in part, to the kind of world God has made.
 - a) God placed people in a world over which they are to rule.
 - i) The occurrence of pain may be a beneficent sign of limit of capabilities; a kind of boundary marker to go so far and no farther.
 - ii) The pain felt is by no means a punishment of God for wrong activity but a positive signal of human limitations.
 - b) This is a world established in law—law of gravity, for example.
 - i) If you step off a high place that disregards this law will invariably result in pain.
 - ii) There are laws related to health.
 - c) The possibility of suffering belongs to the very world God has made.
 - d) Functioning in relationships may lead to pain and suffering.
 - i) Sensitivity and learning cannot occur without the boundary markers of pain.
 - ii) Pain and suffering in this regard are not necessarily evil, they can be a positive inducement and incentive to deeper levels of understanding and thereby of responsible living.
 - e) The capacity for suffering is inseparable from the reality of love and compassion.
 - i) To love much may make one susceptible to suffering.
 - ii) “Better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all.”
 - iii) Don’t be afraid to take another risk of being hurt; the alternative is a life of loneliness and emptiness.
- 2) Suffering is also the grim result of sin and evil.
 - a) Such suffering not necessarily due to the kind of world God has made, rather the consequence of sin.
 - b) There is a universal context of suffering that is the result of mankind’s fallen and sinful condition.
 - c) What one sows, one reaps. (Gal. 6:7).
 - d) Suffering could be result of unforgiving spirit.
 - e) Submitting to the desires of the flesh and self-indulgence.
- 3) Suffering is an accompaniment of the life of faith.
 - a) Suffering as a means of the believer’s growth.
 - i) 1 Peter 1:6-7.
 - ii) When suffering of whatever kind comes along, will the believer waver in his faith?
 - iii) Suffering can be a means of growth in character (Rom. 5:3-4).
 - iv) Suffering may be the means of deepening obedience.

- (1) Heb. 5:8.
- (2) 1 Peter 4:1-2.
- b) Suffering as an expected aspect of the walk in faith (persecution).
 - i) 2 Tim. 3:12.
 - ii) John 15:20.
 - iii) 2 Tim. 1:11-12.
 - iv) 2 Cor. 1:6.
 - v) Mat. 5:10-11.
 - vi) 1 Peter 4:13-14.
- c) Suffering as a deepening experience.
 - i) Of knowing Christ
 - ii) Of being a blessing to others.
 - iii) Of preparation.

LESSON SIX

Miracles

➤ DEFINITION

- 1) A miracle may be defined as an event manifesting divine activity that is other than the ordinary processes of nature.
- 2) A miracle is an act of God's extraordinary providence.
- 3) Miracles are events that cannot be explained in terms of the usual workings of nature.
- 4) Events which are foreign to "natural law."
- 5) A truly scientific view of the universe calls for the recognition that there is no place for miracles.
 - a) The universe is self-contained and man is self-subsistent.
 - b) All things have natural causes, and natural law is all-inclusive.

➤ BASIS

- 1) The basis of miracles rest in God: His freedom, His love, His power. To believe in the God of the Bible is to believe that miracles are possible.
 - a) His freedom.
 - i) God is the sovereignly free Lord.
 - ii) He is not subject to its structures; they are subject to Him.
 - b) His love.
 - i) God performs miracles as a demonstration of His love.
 - ii) In the book of Acts, the word "grace" is used in relation to the miracles done by Stephen.
 - iii) "For God so loved the world..."
 - c) His power.
 - i) Every miracle is in some way also a demonstration of divine power.
 - ii) "...might make known his mighty power." (Ps. 106:7-8).
 - iii) "Thy right hand is glorious in power..." (Ex. 15:6).
 - iv) Whether by "right hand" or "outstretched arm," it is a matter of God's great power that wrought Israel's miraculous deliverance.
 - v) God's great power was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

➤ DESCRIPTION

- 1) The English word *miracle* in its etymology suggests something that causes wonder.
 - a) A happening or an event that seems to have no adequate explanation is an object of wonder.

- b) Miracles in the scriptures are matters of wonderment, astonishment, amazement, and even perplexity.
 - c) In the New Testament “wonders” is always used in connection with “signs.”
 - i) Wonders are signs which point to something else; to supernatural activity.
 - ii) Acts 15:12.
- 2) Miracles as signs.
- a) “This is the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he has promised.” (2 Kings 20:9).
 - b) In the gospels the word “sign” is frequently used to signify miracles.
 - c) Signs will accompany believers (Mark 16:17-18).
 - d) In the book of Acts, the word “signs” frequently occurs.
 - i) Acts 2:22.
 - ii) Acts 2:43.
 - iii) Acts 4:22.
 - iv) Acts 4:30.
 - v) Acts 6:8.
 - e) In the book of Revelation, signs are depicted as occurring only through evil forces.
 - i) Rev. 13:13.
 - ii) Rev. 16:14.
 - f) Reflections on signs as miracles.
 - i) Miracles point beyond themselves to the supernatural activity of God.
 - ii) Jesus was concerned to not produce miracles “on demand.”
 - iii) Jesus performed miracles which pointed to his hidden glory.
 - iv) In the early church, miracles provided the backdrop for proclaiming Christ.
 - v) It is clear that miraculous events were not limited to Christ and His apostles; after Pentecost the whole Christian community prayed both for boldness to witness and for miracles to be performed.
 - vi) Miracles are inseparable from gospel proclamation.
 - vii) In the missionary outreach of early apostles (Paul and Barnabas), God bore witness to the gospel by working miracles at their hands.
 - viii) The marks of a true apostle include miracles.
 - ix) There is the continuing New Testament promise that miracles will accompany believers.
 - g) A further designation of a miracle is that it is a *power*, or that miracles are *powers*
- 3) Jesus is shown in the Gospels to be a worker of miracles.
- a) Recognized by His home-town people, affirmed by a king, and rejoiced in by the multitude of His disciples.
 - b) Though recognized, not accepted.
- 4) In the Book of Acts:
- a) Jesus was a man “attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs.” (Acts 2:22).
 - b) Philip performed miracles (Acts 8:13).
 - c) Miracles through handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11-12).
- 5) In the Epistles:

- a) Miracles referred to in 1 Cor.
 - i) Gifts of the Holy Spirit to various believers.
 - ii) “God has appointed first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles (1 Cor. 12:28).
- b) Galatians. “Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?” (Gal. 3:5).
- c) Book of Hebrews. “manifold” miracles (Heb. 2:3-4).
- 6) In the Gospel of John, “works” most likely associated with miracles.
 - a) John 5:20.
 - b) John 9:3.
 - c) John 10:38.
 - d) John 14:11-12.
- 7) “The Greater Works.”

LESSON SEVEN

Angels

Angels by definition are messengers and serve as superhuman beings in various ways to fulfill God's providential concerns in relation to the world and man.

➤ THE EXISTENCE OF ANGELS

- 1) Angels mentioned many times in Old and New Testaments.
- 2) "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit." Acts 23:8.
- 3) If angelic visits are still possible, there is all the more need for such study to be done.

➤ THE NATURE OF ANGELS

Often appear at highly important moments in biblical history.

- a) Birth of Jesus.
- b) His resurrection.
- c) His ascension.

Angels never call attention to themselves but invariably point to something else.

- 1) Angels are moral beings.
 - a) Evil angels (fallen angels).
 - i) Mat. 25:41.
 - ii) 2 Peter 2:4.
 - iii) Jude 6. Did not keep their own position
 - iv) Rev. 12:7-9.
 - b) Good angels.
 - i) Have retained their holiness and goodness by a free moral choice.
 - ii) Confirmed in holiness by moral decision and serve as God's messengers in a freedom of total commitment.
- 2) Angels are spirits.
 - a) Angels are pure spiritual beings.
 - b) Heb. 1:14. "Ministering spirits..."
 - c) Angels are incorporeal: they have no bodies. Spirit does not have flesh and bones.
- 3) Angels are finite creatures.
 - a) Although angels are spirit as God is spirit, they are finite compared to God's infiniteness.
 - b) They are not omnipresent.
 - c) As finite, angels are limited in knowledge.
 - d) Angels are not divine; they are not to be worshipped.
 - e) Though powerful, they are not all-powerful.

- 4) Angels are personal.
 - a) Gabriel.
 - i) Dan. 9:21.
 - ii) Luke 1:26. (Daniel)
 - iii) Luke 1:13-20. (Zechariah)
 - iv) Luke 1:28-38. (Mary)
 - b) Michael.
 - i) Dan. 12:1.
 - ii) Jude 9.
 - iii) Rev. 12:7
 - c) Depicted as creatures of joy.
 - i) Job 38:7. Sons of God shouted for joy.
 - ii) Joy over sinner. Luke 15:10.
- 5) Angels are nonsexual.
 - a) Angels are neither male nor female.
 - b) “When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven.” (Mark 12:25).
 - c) Angels do not form a race that continues to multiply by birthing but a company that has totally existed since their original creation.
- 6) Angels are powerful beings.
 - a) Depicted in scriptures as powerful, mighty, and of great strength.
 - b) “Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word.” (Ps. 103:20).
 - c) In New Testament, angels are spoken of as “thrones,” “dominions,” “rulers,” “authorities.”
- 7) Angels are immortal.
 - a) Once angels have been made by God, they will never cease to exist.
 - b) “...neither can they die any more, for they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” (Luke 20:36).
 - c) Angels may face judgment, but not death.

➤ NUMBER AND VARIETY

- 1) A large number.
 - a) “Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.” (Dan. 7:9-10).
 - b) “You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels.” (Heb. 12:22).
- 2) Variety of angels.
 - a) “The angel of the Lord.”
 - i) Often almost identical with the Lord Himself.
 - ii) Speak as God Himself.
 - iii) The angel of the theophany.
 - iv) The Lord appearing in angel form.

- b) Archangels.
 - i) A chief angel.
 - ii) 1 Thes. 4:16. "...the voice of the archangel."
 - iii) Inference that Gabriel was archangel. An angel of communications and enlightenment.
 - iv) Michael is only specifically designated archangel in the Bible.
 - (1) "...when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses." Jude 9.
 - (2) "...the great prince who has charge of (Daniel's) people. (Dan. 12:1).
- c) Cherubims.
 - i) Mentioned 90 times in OT; one time in NT.
 - ii) Usually represented as creatures with wings.
 - iii) They guard the holiness of God.
 - (1) Garden of Eden.
 - (2) Above the mercy seat.
 - iv) Act as throne-bearers of the Lord.
 - (1) Served as a visible pedestal for God's invisible throne.
 - (2) God is many times spoken of as "enthroned upon (or above) the cherubim.
- d) Seraphims.
 - i) Only one sure reference in Scripture (Isaiah 6).
 - ii) Seraphim above the throne of God (Cherubim beneath)
 - iii) Seraphim show as beings who before the throne of God constantly worship Him and declare His holiness.
 - iv) Emissaries of God's forgiveness.
- e) Miscellaneous classes of angels.
 - i) Col. 1:16. Invisible realm or order of thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities.
 - ii) Rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (Eph. 3:10).
 - iii) Legions of angels (Mat. 26:53).

➤ THE ACTIVITIES OF ANGELS

- 1) Praise and Worship.
 - a) The primary activity of angels is the praise and worship of Almighty God (Rev. 5:11-12).
 - b) Rev. 7:11.
 - c) "Bless the Lord, O you his angels." (Ps. 103:20).
- 2) Communication.
 - a) Communication of God's word—His truth, His message.
 - b) The angels were involved at Mount Sinai in the communication of the Law (Gal. 3:19).
 - c) Communication may be interpretation. Gabriel interpreted the meaning of visions (Dan. 9:23).
 - d) Communication may be an announcement.
 - i) Angel appeared to Abraham.
 - ii) Angel appeared to Zechariah concerning birth of John.
 - iii) At Jesus' ascension (Acts 1:11).

- e) Communication in form of direction.
 - i) Angel to Elijah: “Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria.” (2 Kings 1:3).
 - ii) To Joseph: “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt.” (Mat. 2:13).
 - iii) Angel to apostles: “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.” (Acts 5:20).
 - iv) To Philip: “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza” (Acts 8:26).
- 3) Ministry.
 - a) A central role of angels is that of ministering to the needs of God’s people.
 - b) Ministry of consoling and strengthening.
 - i) Hagar and her young son, Ishmael.
 - ii) Angels came to minister to Jesus in wilderness (Mat. 4:11).
 - iii) Jesus in the garden: “And there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him.” (Luke 22:42-43).
 - c) Ministry of protection and deliverance.
 - i) “Behold I send an angel before you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared” (Exod. 23:20).
 - ii) Daniel. “My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths” (Dan. 6:22).
 - iii) Apostles when arrested: “At night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out” (Acts 5:19).
 - iv) “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them” (Ps 34:7).
 - v) Guardian angels. “See that you do not despise one of these little ones: for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10).
 - vi) He gives his angels charge over us (Ps. 91).
- 4) Execution of Divine Judgment.
 - a) “And that night the angel of the Lord went forth, and slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians” (2 Kings 19:35).
 - b) King Herod. “an angel of the Lord smote him.” (Acts 12:23).
 - c) Angels are undoubtedly powerful beings and fierce in their execution of the judgments of God.
- 5) The Doing of God’s Will.
 - a) The whole purpose of angels is to accomplish the will of God.
 - b) The angels do God’s word; they obey His command; without question or hesitation.

➤ HUMAN EXPERIENCE OF ANGELS

- 1) With the Scripture as our guide, we can say that there is undoubtedly the presence and activity of angels today.
 - a) “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.”
 - b) “He gives his angels charge over us...”
- 2) “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels

unawares.”

- 3) Must not pray to nor worship angels.
- 4) Be aware of scriptural warnings against satanically inspired counterfeits.
 - a) “...even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” (2 Cor. 11:14).
 - b) Satan could use a brilliantly subtle counterfeit to bring a message if we seek for one.
 - c) “Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).
- 5) Probably should concentrate more on the “presence” of angels rather than their “visitation.”

LESSON EIGHT

“Man”

Transition from God and His works in creation and providence to the doctrine of man.

1. The term *man* is generic and includes both men and women.
2. “What is man?” (Ps. 8)

Views of man

1. **A materialistic view.** Man is a portion of matter composed of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, calcium, and other elements.
2. **A biological view.** Man is an animal with a highly developed nervous system.
3. **A psychological view.** Man is a creature wholly formed by his heredity and environment, and all that he does is determined by that.
4. **An economic view.** Man is a unit in an economic system, and society must function accordingly.
5. **A sociological view.** Everything about man is determined by group mores, customs, prejudices.
6. **A philosophical view.** Man is the animal that thinks.
7. **An existential view.** Man is what he makes himself to be.

Man is that Entity Created in the Image of God

Gen. 1:27: “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

A Man’s Place in the Universe

1. Man is above the animal world.
 - a. There is a qualitative difference between man and the highest subhuman creature.
 - b. There is no gradual evolution of animal into man by a series of steps over a lengthy period of time.
 - c. No missing link.
2. Man is under God.
 - a. Man has a unique position in the universe, but is not to be compared to God; nor is he to seek to be God or play God.
 - b. Being under God is not just a position; it is also a statement that man is to function under God’s direction and command.

Man's Function (Basic function is to reflect God).

1. Man is to reflect God's dominion.
 - a. "Let them have dominion..." (Gen. 1:26).
 - b. "Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Ps. 8:6).
 - c. All the world has been put under man.
 - d. The domain of man's authority.
 - i. The sphere of the inorganic world.
 - ii. The sphere of the organic world.
 - iii. The sphere of the animal world.
 - e. "Man" is meant "man and woman."
 - i. Together they share dominion over all God has made.
 - ii. "Let us make *man* in our image...and let *them* have dominion."
 - iii. "So God created man in his own image...male and female he created them."
2. Man is to reflect God's being.
 - a. Creation of man is dual. Man is man and woman; man is male and female.
 - b. Man and woman in unity reflect God's being.
 - i. The fact that God created man as man and woman means that only in the differentiation and functioning of the two is God fully imaged on earth.
 - ii. Maleness and femaleness in their distinctiveness, with all that it means to be man and woman, is the divine reflection.
 - iii. Any blurring of the difference between man and woman—biological, psychological, social, even spiritual—is a blurring of the divine image.
 - iv. Man and woman are made to complement each other, and neither is complete without the other.
 - c. The creation of man in the duality of man and woman is the paradigm of relationship for human life in general.
 - i. Man is only truly man as man and woman, or more broadly, as man with his fellowman.
 - ii. Man's relationship to his fellowman is sacred, for it images the triune God; anything that destroys relationship blurs the image of God.
 - iii. Murder is a terrible act because it destroys the human relationship that images the divine.
 - iv. Christ with the church is the full reflection of God in the earth.
 - v. It is the love of Christ for the church that becomes the archetype for the husband and wife relationship.
 - vi. Though man is created in duality, the third element, God Himself, makes man a holy trinity, which is a true reflection of the triune God.
 - vii. Man under God and beside his neighbor also represents a true reflection of the triune God.
3. Man is to reflect God's character.
 - a. God, who is a God of holiness, love, and truth, desires to have this character reflected in man.

- b. “Be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:23-24)
- c. God is a God of love, and desire man in His image to reflect that love.
 - i. Since God is good and loving, man created in His image is to show forth the same.
 - ii. That man created in God’s image is to reflect the love of God is demonstrated vividly in Jesus Christ, who is the expressed image of his person (Heb. 1:3).
 - iii. God made man to love Him, to love his wife, to love his neighbor, and to love all people.
- d. God is also the God of truth.
 - i. “Do not lie to one another...(Col. 3:9-10).
 - ii. To walk in truth is to walk in the full integrity of what God has declared.

Man Inbreathed by the Lord God

1. Dust from the ground.
 - a. Man shares the same elemental composition with God’s other earthly creations.
 - b. “For out of it (dust) you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19).
 - c. “Remember that thou hast made me of clay; and wilt thou turn me to dust again?” (Job 10:9).
 - d. “For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.” (Ps. 103:13-14).
 - e. “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust.” (1 Cor. 15:47-48).
 - f. The word “man” in Hebrew, *adam*, may be derived from the word for ground, *adamah*
 - g. Importance of the body.
2. The Breath of Life.
 - a. Breathing marks the commencement and the continuance of life.
 - b. “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen. 2:7).
 - c. The breath that breathed into man’s nostrils is more than physical breath. It is also spiritual breath because God is spirit.
 - d. Man’s spirit vs. the Spirit of God.
 - i. The human spirit is immortal; the body decays, but the spirit cannot die. “The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Ecc. 12:7).
 - ii. “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46).
3. A Living Being.
 - a. Man a higher living being than other creatures.
 - b. Man is uniquely the combination of breath (spirit) from God and dust (body) from the ground.
 - c. This living being is the resulting expression of spirit functioning through body.
 - d. Distinction between soul and spirit.

Man Is That Entity Made to Be Free

1. A positive freedom.
 - a. Man was created free for fellowship with God.
 - b. Man was created free to work gladly and productively.
 - c. Man was created free to enjoy the beautiful world God had made.
 - d. True freedom is the freedom to function according to God's intention; it is for man to act in harmony with his own created being.
 - e. Man was created to be free from compulsion, unhindered by sin's dominion, and able to do God's will.
2. A freedom of decision.
 - a. Man in his original situation was granted the freedom to decide in relation to God's will.
 - b. Freedom cannot be a coerced thing.

LESSON NINE

“Sin and the Effects of Sin”

Introduction

1. Responses to the question, “What is man’s problem?”
 - a. Man basically has no problem.
 - b. Man is on his way up. He is not yet mature.
 - c. Man is not sufficiently enlightened.; his problem is basically ignorance.
 - d. Man’s problem is basically his suppression of his own individuality and personal needs.
 - e. The only real problem is that of a negative attitude of life.
2. The Christian perspective on the human situation.
 - a. The basic problem within human nature and society is sin.
 - b. It is to this critical situation that Christian faith primarily addresses itself—the heart of salvation.

Definition

1. Sin may be defined as the personal act of turning away from God and His will.
2. It is the transgression of God’s law, yet the act is ultimately not against the law but against His person.
3. Sin is the violation of God’s command; turning away from God’s expressed will.
4. Aspects of deviation and rebellion.
 - a. Deviation. Missing of the mark; going astray; turning aside from the Lord God and His will.
 - b. Rebellion. Act of defiance for the purpose of pursuing one’s own will and way.

Origin

Difficult question.

- a) God created everything good. What possible place could there be in this good creation for the slightest trace of sin or evil?
 - b) The mystery of iniquity.
 - c) Little specifically in the word of God.
 - d) Sin came into the world through one man...” (Rom. 3:12).
1. The temptation by Satan.
 - a. “Did God say...?”
 - b. Satan’s activities continue to be that of temptation, accusation, deception, and constant attack against all that is of God.
 - c. Satan as a fallen creature.

- i. He is not eternal.
 - ii. He is not and was not divine.
 - iii. Rev. 12:7.
 - iv. Jude 6.
 - v. 2 Peter 2:4.
 - d. The sin of pride.
- 2. The freedom of man.
 - a. Excuses.
 - i. Adam: “The woman thou gavest me...”
 - ii. Eve: “The serpent beguiled me...”
 - b. Concerning Eve being deceived:
 - i. She freely entered into dialogue with the serpent.
 - ii. This conversation happened without her husband’s participation.
 - iii. No matter how strong the temptation, God is able and willing to show a way out (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - c. Concerning Adam:
 - i. He was not deceived; he made a conscious choice.
 - ii. No was no obligation to follow his wife’s example or bidding; the man sinned in full responsibility.
 - iii. A decision of the will to be deceived rather than to follow God’s bidding.
- 3. God’s permissive will.
 - a. Sin entered as the result of God’s permission and His will.
 - b. There had to be the possibility of turning from God, else it were a freedom in name only.
 - c. God, in spite of all the evil of mankind’s sin and fall, was working out a good purpose in it.

Nature

- 1. Unbelief.
 - a. The first sin is rooted in the shaking of faith in God and His word, His goodness, and His justice.
 - b. Temptation could have been driven away with the response: “No, God did not say that; He did say this—and I am standing by His word.”
 - c. When anyone allows a forbidden thing to become the object of direct attention, it may soon become so attractive and compelling that all other good things including God Himself are simply bypassed under the growing urgency to have it.
 - d. Sin entered upon the stage of the world when mankind turned from God and His word and was carried away by what God had forbidden.
 - e. The forbidden was not placed here to lure us from God, but to give us an opportunity through spurning it to freely decide for God.
 - f. Sin is attraction to the false claims of the world that offer something better than God: excitement, adventure, pleasure, and the like.
- 2. Pride.

- a. Self-centeredness or ego-centricism.
 - b. Selfish desire.
 - c. Covetousness.
3. Disobedience.
- a. By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners (Rom. 5:19).
 - b. Progression from unbelief to pride to disobedience.
 - c. Sin is the deliberate act of disobedience.

THE EFFECTS OF SIN

1. The Futility of Mind and Action

- a. After Adam and Eve's sin, they began to operate out of a mind that had become vain and futile in its thing—and to this their actions corresponded.
- b. The human race in turning from God through sin is plunged into confusion and darkness
- c. As a result idolatry becomes the prevailing condition of mankind.
 - i. Paganism.
 - ii. Semi-idolatry of "graven images: and "likenesses" in various forms of worship.
 - iii. In the western world, the idols of mammon, pleasure, power, success, knowledge, and fame.
 - iv. In the end, futility about life, for idols serve only to destroy.
 - v. In the nineteenth century, increasing departure from God through the thought of such men as Karl Marx, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud.
- d. Humanism.
 - i. "...humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith."
 - ii. "As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity."
 - iii. "We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species."
 - iv. "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.
 - v. "Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction."
 - vi. "Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that mankind possesses. There is no substitute; neither faith nor passion suffices in itself."

2. Guilt and Punishment.

- a. Guilt follows upon the act of disobedience.
- b. When Adam and Eve sinned, their eyes were open.
 - i. Not opened to beholding their divine status.
 - ii. Eyes were open to behold their nakedness and guilt.
- c. Guilt signifies a deep sense of wrongfulness.

- d. Since sin is ultimately against the love and goodness of a holy God, it is all the more heinous and the guilt all the more profound.
 - e. Guilt from sin arises primarily out of the breach of personal relationship.
 - f. True guilt vs. false guilt.
 - g. Punishment of sin—death; both spiritually and physically.
 - h. For those who are redeemed, all guilt is removed, all punishment done away.
3. Separation, Estrangement, Bondage.
- a. Man became separated from tree of life; a cherubim with a flaming sword kept man out of the garden.
 - b. Man was cut off from God and life; his sin has alienated him from the living God.
 - c. God did not want man to live forever in a fallen condition.
 - d. Man is not only separated from God, he is also estranged from his neighbor.
 - i. Accounts of violence vividly demonstrate man's estrangement from his brother.
 - ii. Institution of human government the result of man needing to control violence.
 - e. Man is totally incapable of restoring himself to a right relationship with God and his neighbor.
 - i. Any attempt of man to restore what has been lost only meets with failure.
 - ii. Human search after God never really achieves success.
 - f. Through sin man's nature has become futile in thought and action, guilty in heart and conscience, and now is utterly incapable of turning back to its pristine condition.
 - g. Man as sinner is no longer a truly free person.
 - i. Illusion that freedom is to be found in breaking way from God and His commands and living as they please.
 - ii. Will not find emancipation and self-fulfillment.

LESSON TEN

“The Incarnation—The Son of God”

Introduction

1. “The Word became flesh.” (John 1:14)
2. The purpose of the Incarnation is the redemption of the human race.

The Son of God

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (Mark 1:1)

1. Factuality.
 - a. Supernatural Declaration.
 - i. Angel to Mary: “...the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1:35)
 - ii. At Jesus baptism: “Thou art my beloved Son...” (Luke 3:22).
 - iii. Satan twice addressed Jesus in the wilderness: “If you are the Son of God...” (Luke 4:3, 9).
 - iv. Questioning of chief priests and scribes, “Are you the Son of God...?” (Luke 22:70). “You say that I am,” meaning “Yes.”
 - b. Personal Revelation.
 - i. John: “I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).
 - ii. Andrew: “We have found the Messiah” (John 1:41).
 - iii. Philip: “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote...” (John 1:45).
 - iv. Nathaniel: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the king of Israel!” (John 1:49).
 - v. When Jesus walked on the water: “truly you are the Son of God” (Matt. 14:33).
 - vi. To Peter: “Who do you say that I am?” “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” “Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven (Matt. 16:15-17).
 - vii. Paul: God “was pleased to reveal his Son to” him (Gal. 1:16)
 - viii. John: “We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true” (1 John 5:20).
 - c. The Perception of Faith.
 - i. The knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God belongs to the perception of faith.

1. Stems from the activity of the Spirit and the Word.
2. By faith we know for a certainty that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- ii. Thomas: “My Lord and my God!” “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (John 20:29).
- iii. “...these words are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31)
- iv. Faith is awakened only when the Holy Spirit comes on the scene. “No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3).

2. Meaning.

a. *The Son of God*

- i. Christ is the Son of God, first of all, in the sense that He is God the Father’s Chosen One.
- ii. Jesus does not become God’s Son at a particular point in His life and ministry.
 1. At baptism, a public declaration that Jesus was God’s Son.
 2. John: “I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).
 3. Mount of Transfiguration: “This is my Son...hear him.”

b. *The Son of God.*

- i. Christ is the Son of God in that He is God the Father’s unique Son.
 1. “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son...” (John 3:16).
 2. There is a transcendence about Him that goes beyond the highest of earthly designations.
- ii. Christ is the Son of God far above and beyond His life on earth.
 1. Christ is the preexistent Son of God.
 - a. “All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.”
 - b. “In him all things were created, in heaven and on earth...all things were created through him and for him” (Col. 1:16).
 - c. “...one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor. 8:6).
 2. Christ, the Son of God, is equal to God the Father.
 - a. Sonship does not imply subordination.
 - b. “...who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Phi. 2:6)
 - c. “For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will” (John 5:21)
 3. Christ is distinct from God the Father.
 - a. He is the Son of God, unique and equal to the Father, but is not to be identified with Him.
 - b. “The Word became flesh and ...we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14).
 - c. “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46).

- d. “He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”
 - c. *The Son of God.*
 - i. Christ is the Son of God in that He is God.
 - ii. He is God the Father’s personal embodiment.
 - iii. The deity of Christ.
 - 1. Words and actions. “...but I say unto you.”
 - 2. Jesus spoke as one with authority.
 - 3. Various titles of Jesus are evidence of His being divine.
 - a. “Lord.”
 - b. “Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - c. “Savior.” *For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord*” (Luke 2:11).
 - d. “The God of Glory.” “And now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made’ (John 17:5).
 - e. “The Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8; James 2:1).
 - f. “His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father” (Is. 9:6).
 - g. “Alpha and Omega.” “Behold, I am coming soon...I am the Alpha and the Omega” (Rev. 22:12-13).
- 3. Significance.
 - a. Jesus is the revelation of the nature of God.
 - i. Christ as Son “reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature.”
 - ii. What is God like? He is like Christ.
 - iii. “Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied.” “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:8-9).
 - iv. Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). The invisible God has His visible manifestation in the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ.
 - v. Whatever Jesus said was the completely faithful declaration of the mind of God.
 - vi. What does God will? The answer is centrally given in the words and deeds of Jesus Christ.
 - vii. God has commanded light to shine out of darkness to give us the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).
 - viii. The more Christ is formed in us, the more we will know of the very nature of God.
 - b. Makes redemption a possibility.
 - i. Only one who is equal to God, indeed identical with God, can enter into the human plight and bear the imponderable weight of all the sins of the world.
 - ii. If the Son of God as God Himself did not actually come from heaven and take upon Himself our flesh, then we are still in our sins.

- c. By faith in the Son of God there is salvation.
 - i. Unless one recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God and not merely a human being, there can be no salvation for him.
 - 1. These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.”
 - 2. By believing that Christ is the Son of God, there is entrance into eternal life.
 - 3. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).
 - 4. “To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” (John 1:12).
 - 5. Confession.
 - a. “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15).
 - b. “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9).

LESSON ELEVEN

“The Incarnation—The Son of Man”

The Son of Man

1. Jesus’ Self-Designation
 - a. Occurrence.
 - i. Eighty-two times the phrase occurs on more than forty occasions; beyond the four Gospels, the expression is found only three times.
 1. It is used invariably as Jesus’ own self-designation.
 2. No one else ever addresses him by that title.
 - ii. Simply represents another way of saying “I” or “me.”
 - b. The Basic Meaning.
 - i. Means basically “the man” or “man.”
 - ii. All men are “sons of men,” that is, mankind.
 - iii. In the book of Ezekiel God frequently addresses the prophet as “son of man.”
 - c. Mystery.
 - i. In the gospel of John, Jesus’ use of the phrase “the Son of man” takes on additional significance; it refers also to Jesus’ preexistence.
 1. “No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven” (John 3:13).
 2. “Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?” (John 6:62).
 - d. Identification with others.
 - i. He is verily one who has voluntarily taken upon Himself human existence.
 - ii. He did not come simply to minister to mankind, but He came as a human being giving Himself wholly to His fellow human beings.
 - iii. “He himself likewise partook of the same nature” (Heb. 2:14).
 - iv. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).
 - v. As the expression “the Son of God” underscores Jesus’ deity, so the expression “the Son of man” underscores His humanity.
2. The Humanity of Jesus—the Man Christ Jesus.
 - a. Representative Man.
 - i. Son of Abraham; son of David; son of Adam.
 - ii. Even as Adam represented the human race, so Jesus as “the last Adam,” “the second man” (1 Cor 15:45, 47) represents all mankind.
 - iii. Jesus Christ is archetypal man; in him is the pattern or model of genuine humanity.

- iv. He is the prototype of true manhood.
 - v. Though Jesus was a first-century Jew, growing up in a particular culture, and ministering in a limited area, it is apparent that He totally transcended His own time and age.
 - vi. He seems to belong to all people, the whole human race, so that people throughout the ages have again and again identified Him as one of their own.
 - vii. Jesus is the universal man with no limits in His outreach to the whole human race.
 - viii. Jesus Christ “took upon Himself man’s nature.”
- b. Real man.
- i. “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life...”
 - ii. This is another way of saying that “the Word became flesh.”
 - iii. Paul spoke of Jesus as “Descended from David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3).
 - iv. “Great is the mystery of godliness. He was manifested in the flesh...” (1 Tim. 3:16).
 - v. If Christ had not become truly a man, He could not have known death on the cross.
 - vi. In Jesus Christ true manhood has once and for all been realized on earth.
- c. Total man.
- i. “...since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature.”
 - ii. In every way Jesus lived a fully human life.
 - 1. He came into the world by human birth.
 - 2. He was “born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4).
 - 3. There was human growth from childhood to manhood. “Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).
 - 4. There were human activities.
 - a. He was hungry (Luke 4:2) and ate.
 - b. He became thirsty (John 19:28) and drank.
 - c. He became tired (John 4:6) and slept.
 - d. He worked as a carpenter.
 - e. He cared for his mother.
 - f. He paid taxes.
 - g. He experienced human emotions.
 - i. Joy (Luke 10:21).
 - ii. Grief (John 11:35).
 - iii. Indignation (Mark 3:5).
 - iv. Great pain and anguish (Mat. 27:46).

5. He was subject to temptation.
 - a. Mark 1:13.
 - b. Jesus was “one who in every respect has been tempted as we are” (Heb. 4:15).
 - c. If Jesus were only God or the Son of God, He could not possibly have known temptation, because God cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13).
 6. Jesus was man in every dimension of His human nature: body, soul, and spirit.
- d. Perfect man.
- i. Jesus was perfect man as a person in proper relation to God and fellow human beings.
 - ii. His whole life was that of unwavering devotion to His Father and of limitless concern for all persons.
 1. “I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29).
 2. “The Son of man came to serve, and to give his life a ransom” (Mark 10:45).
 3. Love of God and love of neighbor demonstrated in Jesus.
 - iii. Though he was in the form of God...he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”
 - iv. The perfection of Christ was a matter of continuous development as He went through many sufferings.
 1. “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10).
 2. Though he were a son, he learned obedience through the things he suffered (Heb. 5:8).
 - v. A mark of his perfect manhood was His total obedience to the will of God. He was “obedient unto death.”
 - vi. He was sinless.
 1. He who knew no sin became sin that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).
 2. “He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips” (1 Peter 2:22).
 3. “In him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5).
 4. Tempted yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).
- e. Anointed man.
- i. Jesus was the anointed one, the Christ.
 - ii. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news” (Luke 4:18).
 - iii. “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power...he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil” (Acts 10:38).

- iv. The ministry of Jesus, in terms of His preaching the Good News, healings, deliverances, and many miraculous deeds, flowed out of His anointing by the Holy Spirit.
3. Significance.
- a. Jesus reveals the nature of man. As the son of man Jesus is the revelation of the nature of man.
 - b. Jesus prepares the way for salvation.
 - i. If he is to be truly the mediator, he must be human as well as divine.
 - ii. “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.”
 - iii. He cannot be a mediator if He does not become one of us.
 - iv. Only one who shares in humanity is able to offer sufficient sacrifice.
 - v. “He had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people.
 - vi. Only one who is a man in all respects can totally identify Himself with our humanity and offer the appropriate sacrifice.
 - vii. “As one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:18-19).
 - viii. It was necessary that Jesus Christ be a man in order to bear man’s punishment and receive the judgment of God upon Himself.
 - c. Jesus affords an example for Christian living.
 - i. A true disciple is one who follows Jesus’ example.
 - ii. “I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).
 - iii. “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

The Son of God and the Son of Man

- 1. Two natures.
 - a. Jesus Christ is both God and man, divine and human.
 - b. Jesus is both fully God and fully man.
 - c. One person. In everything that he did there was a unity of will and purpose.
- 2. The Marvel of the Incarnation.
 - a. Conceived of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Jesus is not the Son of God by adoption, but by birth.
 - ii. Since the human race is sinful, it took the Holy Spirit to bring forth a holy Child.
 - iii. Man can bring forth only sinful, rebellious man who needs salvation.
 - b. Born of the Virgin Mary.

- i. Isaiah 7:14. “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.”
 - ii. Jesus was a real son of a real mother.
 - iii. No other person has ever been born without parentage by both male and female.
 - iv. The Virgin Birth is the affirmation of miracle and wonder but, most of all, of the mystery of God’s coming in human flesh.
 - v. The Apostles’ Creed: “He was “conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.”
- 3. The significance of Jesus Christ being both the Son of God and the Son of man.
 - a. The revelation of the nature of the relationship between God and man.
 - i. Reveals the beauty of a life totally committed to the will of God.
 - ii. Reveals a life wholly devoted to the service of others. “The Son of man came not to be served but to serve” (Matt. 20:28).
 - b. The accomplishing of reconciliation between God and man.
 - i. Through union of God and man, reconciliation is accomplished.
 - ii. The Incarnation was basically for only one purpose, namely, to effect reconciliation.
 - iii. Christ came for the central purpose of reuniting God and man.
 - iv. The wonder is that He came as God and man in one person, and in that one person He restores the harmony of a broken and divided creation.
- 4. The establishment of God’s kingdom.
 - a. The kingdom of God, which means primarily God’s rule in the hearts and affairs of men, could be established only through One who was both God and man.
 - b. God who rules over all things through His eternal Son is capable of subjecting men and nations to Himself.
 - 1.
 - 2.** Now exalted at the right hand of the Father, as Son of God and Son of man, He exercises kingdom rule until all His enemies are subdued and God’s reign is forever established.

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

LESSON TWELVE

“Covenant”

Introduction

- 1) Scripture divided into two covenants—old and new.
- 2) The word “covenant” is found 286 times in the Old Testament; 33 times in the New Testament.

Meaning

- 1) The word “covenant” may be defined as a formal, solemn, and binding contract between two parties.
- 2) The essential elements are those of two parties, a promise solemnly given, and an obligation in the covenant’s maintenance and fulfillment.
- 3) Because of the solemnity and binding character of the promise, a seal or ratification of the covenant is often attached.
- 4) Bilateral or unilateral.
 - a) Bilateral is when each party is mutually responsible.
 - b) Unilateral is when only one party is responsible.

Kinds of Covenants

- 1) Human covenants.
 - a) Human covenants are mutual, voluntary promises or agreements, usually between two persons.
 - b) Illustrations.
 - i) Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 21:31).
 - ii) Jacob and Laban (Gen 31:44).
 - iii) David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:8).
 - c) Between one man and a people.
 - i) Joshua with the Israelites (Josh. 24:25).
 - ii) Both parties obligate themselves to fulfill all the terms of the contract faithfully.
- 2) Divine covenants.
 - a) A divine covenant is a binding contract sovereignly established by God.
 - b) There is no mutual agreement; a divine covenant is a one-way matter.
 - i) God Himself totally makes the promise and sets the terms.
 - ii) It is essentially God’s covenant with man, not God and man covenanting with each other.
 - c) Divine covenants differ from human covenants in that they may or may not carry a human obligation.
 - i) God may obligate Himself to fulfill all the terms of the contract, with man obliged to

- do nothing.
- ii) In that situation there is no way man can break the covenant.
- d) Divine covenants always contain some blessing of God.
 - i) They declare His goodness and benevolence to His creation.
 - ii) God is always for man, never against him, and seeks only his well-being.

Covenants of God

- 1) Adamic Covenant.
 - a) “You man freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...”
 - b) Included the tree of life.
 - c) Components of the covenant.
 - i) Two parties: God and man.
 - ii) A promise: The covenant promises continuing life (the tree of life).
 - iii) Obligation: The covenant calls for obedience.
 - d) The covenant is universal; affects all of mankind.
 - e) Man may forget that life by his disobedience, but his obedience does not earn it or merit it.
- 2) Noahic Covenant.
 - a) “Behold I will establish my covenant with you, and your descendants after you, and with every living creature...that never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth” (Gen. 9:9-11)
 - b) Components of the covenant.
 - i) Parties: god with Noah and his descendants.
 - ii) Promise: Never again will the earth be destroyed by a flood.
 - iii) Ratification: The rainbow.
 - iv) Obligation: None on man’s part.
 - v) Fulfillment: The covenant is constantly being fulfilled as rains come and go but never to the extent of destroying the earth.
 - c) The Noahic Covenant shows forth God’s goodness and proclaims a blessing.
- 3) Abrahamic Covenant.
 - a) “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your seed I give this land...’”
 - b) Components.
 - i) Parties:
 - (1) God and Abraham, extended to Isaac and Jacob.
 - (2) Spiritual seed through Christ.
 - ii) Promises:
 - (1) The multiplicity of descendants.
 - (2) The land of Canaan as an inheritance.
 - (3) Spiritual blessings.
 - iii) Ratification: God’s personal presence.
 - iv) Obligation: Circumcision.

- v) Fulfillment: Inheritance through Christ.
- 4) Israeli Covenant.
 - a) Could also be termed the Mosaic Covenant.
 - b) Components.
 - i) Parties: God and the people of Israel.
 - ii) Promises.
 - (1) Israel was to be a special possession unto God, a people peculiarly His own, having a place occupied by no other nation or people.
 - (2) Israel was to be to God a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”
 - iii) Obligation.
 - (1) “If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant.”
 - (2) The Ten Commandments are peculiarly the words of the covenant that had to be performed if the people of Israel were to maintain their part in the covenantal obligation.
 - (3) The love of God is the primary fact in God’s relation to Israel.
 - (4) The covenant with Israel is truly a covenant of law unless Israel were obedient to God’s commandments, there would be no possibility of receiving what God has promised.
 - iv) Ratification.
 - (1) The covenant was ratified by blood.
 - (2) In God’s covenant with Israel there was the sacrifice of animals and the sprinkling of their blood.
 - v) Fulfillment.
 - c) From God’s side of the covenant He made with Israel would never be broken. “Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God; but I will for their sake remember the covenant with their forefathers, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord” (Lev. 26:44-45).
 - d) Conclusion.
 - i) Regardless of Israel’s failure, even to breaking God’s covenant, they could not annul the covenant.
 - ii) Since God’s covenant remains firm and the problem rests basically in the heart, God will provide a way for the changing of the heart.
 - iii) Since Israel as a nation finally proved intractably disobedient, God did not hesitate to move beyond national Israel to claim a people out of all races and nations.
- 5) Davidic Covenant.
 - a) “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you...and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever...And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever” (2 Sam 7:12, 13, 16).
 - b) Components.
 - i) Parties: Between God and David.
 - ii) Promises:

- (1) Everlasting kingship.
- (2) The establishment of a perpetual dynasty, a throne, a kingdom.
- (3) “David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel...If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne” (Jer. 33:17, 20-21).
- iii) Obligation:
 - (1) The covenant obligation was wholly of God.
 - (2) The covenant was entirely God’s doing; he asked nothing from David by way of response.
- iv) Ratification: The ratification of the covenant was by God Himself.
- v) Fulfillment.
 - (1) The fulfillment of the promise is to be found in Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Gabriel to Mary: “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end” (Luke 1:32-33)
 - (3) The fulfillment of this promise occurred climactically with the resurrection and exaltation of Christ when Jesus entered fully into His kingship.
- 6) New Covenant.
 - a) This covenant is mediated by Jesus Christ Himself.
 - b) “He is “the mediator of a new covenant” (Heb. 9:15; 12:24).
 - c) It is the covenant in His blood: “the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25).
 - d) Components.
 - i) Parties.
 - (1) With Israel, but extends far beyond national or ethnic Israel.
 - (2) The called include both Jews and Gentiles.
 - (3) Not with Israel according to the flesh, but with Israel according to the Spirit.
 - ii) Promises.
 - (1) Law in the heart (A new mind, a new heart, a new spirit).
 - (2) Promise of a unique relationship between God and a people.
 - (3) The promise of the knowledge of the Lord.
 - (4) The promise of the forgiveness of sin.
 - (5) The promise of an eternal inheritance.
 - iii) Obligation.
 - (1) The one obligation for the fulfillment of the new covenant is faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (2) The Book of Hebrews speaks of “those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:12)
 - iv) Ratification.
 - (1) The ratification of the new covenant is in the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - (2) “For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood”

(Heb. 9:17-18).

v) Fulfillment.

- (1) The promise concerning the law within the heart is fulfilled through the Spirit of God.
- (2) A unique relationship between God and people.
 - (a) “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘my beloved’” (Rom 9:25).
 - (b) “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people...Once you were no people but now you are God’s people” (1 Peter 2:9-10)
- (3) The promise concerning the knowledge of God.
 - (a) “Henceforth you know him and have seen him...He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:7, 9).
 - (b) “God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).
- (4) Promise of forgiveness of sins.
 - (a) “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28).
 - (b) “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses” (Eph. 1:7).
- (5) The promise of an eternal inheritance.
 - (a) Future.
 - (b) But we have the earnest of our inheritance, which is the Holy Spirit.