

AUCKLAND PARK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DOGMATICS

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible; New International Version, published by the Bible Society of South Africa in 1995. Other translations occasionally used, are indicated by means of the following abbreviations:

AV = Authorized Version (King James 1611), 1973

MT = James Moffat's Translation, 1954

A.de V.

DOGMATICS

INTRODUCTION AND STUDY SUGGESTIONS

What is Dogmatics?

The word ‘dogmatics’ derives from the Greek word ‘dogma’ meaning law decree or opinion. Christian dogmatics is “a systematic description of Christian belief, usually framed in accordance with the creeds concerned” (Deist).

It systematizes our beliefs about the truths contained in God’s Word. One could simply call it Bible teachings. It usually comprises subjects like the Bible, the Deity or Godhead, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, man, sin, atonement, salvation, the sacraments, the Church, the Second Coming of Christ, hell, Heaven, etc.

Why must we study Dogmatics?

1. Because it is a formulation of our religious convictions. The Bible should be seen as a mine in which precious truths lay hidden, rather than a storeroom filled with finished products. The Lord leaves it to man to delve for those precious truths, to group them together, and to deduct the deeper-lying principles. Only then one can say loudly and clearly: this is what I believe about the Christian faith.
2. Because it is essential for spiritual edification. Some assert that it does not matter what one believes, as long as one seeks to do the good. But this pronouncement is wrong, because faith and practice cannot be separated. Your faith is the basis of what you say and do. And vice versa, the way you express and behave yourself reveals the substance of your faith. Accordingly, no one can develop a truly Christian character, without sound spiritual convictions. He who would aspire to spiritual manhood, must feed upon the true principles of his faith.
3. Because it provides protection against false teachings. There are those who offer false interpretations of God’s Word. Knowledge of the Scripture-based truth is therefore essential if one is to identify the false.
4. Because it assists the Christian worker. Facts arranged in a logical and systematic fashion, can the more easily be remembered and applied in the right way. It is most essential then, for every Christian worker to know his tenets of faith, and this is especially true for him/her who finds themselves in a teaching situation.

Tips on how to tackle this course

1. Pray that God’s Spirit will enlighten you and help you to apply what the course teaches in the upliftment of your own spiritual life and the general enrichment of the Church. In other words, study prayerfully.
2. Seek a private and quiet place where you can give your full attention to the study material, without interruptions. See that you feel rested, spiritually and physically, when you study; for this reason, the early morning usually provides the best possible time.

3. It is important to study **regularly and daily**, for at least half an hour at a time. If you deviate too far from this, you will find the going difficult and eventually lose interest.
4. We suggest that you start off by reading slowly and attentively through the whole study guide, in order to develop a general comprehension of the subject. Your next step should then be to study each lecture thoroughly.
5. Look up the Scripture references supplied and try to memorize the more important texts.
6. Practice the formulation of answers by summarizing each subject in your own words. This help you tremendously when exam time comes!
7. Try to apply your new knowledge as soon as possible in appropriate situations. The more you can utilize your knowledge in life itself, the more valuable it will become to you.

May His blessings be yours, as you proceed with these studies!!

1. What do we understand / include under the concept 'Bible'?

1.1 Name. Derived from the Greek 'biblia', meaning books or collection of books. The Bible is therefore a collection of sacred writings.

1.2 The Bible as revelation. There is a universal desire and need among people to know more about God and about themselves. There are a number of professed atheists, but most people, civilized or otherwise, are desirous of more knowledge about the unseen and conditions beyond the grave. Man is already confronted with the mystery of himself, and without revelation it will remain a mystery. On our own, we are unable to know more about God, or the origin and final destination of man and the things surrounding him. But, by means of the Bible, God reveals to us: Himself, the spiritual world, the origin and final destination of all things, and His will and views about man.

1.3 General and particular revelation. As we study nature and check on historical developments, we do indeed find a revelation of God (Isa. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20), but not very clear and direct. This is known as the general revelation of God. By means of the Bible, however, God speaks directly to man (Heb. 1:1) and His thoughts and will regarding man are clearly revealed. This is known as the particular revelation of God.

1.4 To whom was it given? God chose a nation/people (Israel) and prepared them to receive this revelation for communication to the whole of mankind.

1.5 The message of the Bible. For humanity dying in sin and transgressions, it proclaims: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". The central theme of the Bible is, therefore, Jesus Christ and His gospel of salvation (John 5:24; Rom. 5:10; 8:1). Christ is the Centre and Circumference, the Framework and the Content of the Bible. It has been said that if you read a chapter in the Old Testament and you do not find Christ in it, you should read it again for He is there. As regards the teaching of the Bible, we find that faith principles are never separated from behaviour. Conduct is unacceptable unless it is based on the principles of the Christian faith. On the other hand, mere faith could be worthless if it does not come to fruition in action. We can memorize all Bible teachings but if we do not remain loyal to the love principle (I Cor. 13) every day, the former will be to no avail.

2. The origin and inspiration of the Bible

The Bible itself teaches us : "All Scripture is God-breathed..." (II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21).

The Greek word that is used here is 'theopneustos' which literally means 'inspired by God'.

The Revised English Bible translates the ‘theopneustos’ with ‘inspired’. And regarding the **inspiration** of Scripture, the main viewpoints and theories are the following:

2.1 The dualistic view

According to this school of thought part of *Scripture* is God-inspired and infallible, while the rest represents human additions and is therefore liable to error. Those sections dealing with salvation as well as the main doctrines are from God, while the historical and chronological portions are of human origin. Sure, the Bible writers were inspired, but their inspiration was tainted with human fallibility, with the result that certain parts of Scripture are also fallible. We disagree with this view, for the following reasons:

2.1.1 Who will decide which sections of Scripture are God-inspired and which are not? It is just about impossible to separate the main tenets of faith from the other facts, because the truth of the one is dependent on the veracity of the others. Because the evaluation envisaged would be purely subjective, it is obvious that one person would regard as from God, another would see as human in origin, and vice versa. In this way the authority of Scripture will depend on fluctuating human opinion, and that would mean that Scripture has no real authority.

2.1.2 This view is in conflict with the statements of trustworthy leaders like Paul and Peter: “All Scripture is God-breathed...” (II Tim. 3:16), and “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:21).

2.1.3 The Lord Jesus honoured the Old Testament by quoting it as Holy Scripture. He referred inter alia to historical facts (Mark 2:25) quoted David (Mark 12:36) and Moses

(Matt. 8:4).

2.2 The Mechanical Inspiration theory

According to this view the Biblical authors, when writing the Bible, were mere tools in the hand of God, i.e., were mere instruments without any will of their own - like a pen or a microphone. The writer’s personality did not enter the picture at all, and he was merely a dictating machine. With this view we must also disagree, and the reasons are the following:

2.2.1 It is incompatible with the way God deals with mankind. The Lord regards man as a co-worker (I Cor. 3:9) and He makes use of his human abilities. What we read in the Bible, represents the actual thoughts and convictions of those writers, but because God ordained it thus through the Holy Spirit, their words are indeed Godly and infallible, and therefore it becomes the Word of God.

2.2.2 Bible writers themselves admit that specific portions are, in conjunction with godly inspiration, also influenced by specific persons. For example, Peter refers to the writings of Paul as being characteristic of the extraordinary wisdom with which that apostle was endowed (II Peter 3:15-16). Also the way in which Luke starts his Gospel, testifies to the human element that is involved here (Luke 1:1-4).

2.2.3 When we compare the various books of the Bible, we can discern the mutual differences as determined by the different personalities that entered the picture while God inspired the essence of what they wrote down. We can pick up the

way of thinking, the nature and the spiritual background of the writer, as well as conditions of the time when he lived. By way of example, compare the four Gospels with one another. Although Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all inspired by God, their writing styles clearly differ.

2.3 Organic Inspiration (also referred to as Personal Inspiration)

There is only one view that answers all the above objections, namely that the entire Bible was inspired by God, although He made use of various writers, each with his own particular abilities. There are, in fact, two factors operative here, namely, revelation and inspiration. A revelation occurs when God reveals certain facts to man which would otherwise never be known to him. Inspiration, strictly speaking, is a special prompting by the Holy Spirit in a person's life, that ensures that what the person says or writes, is an infallible reproduction of the revelation. Because of this process Scripture represents God's thoughts, though they are not expressed in His exact words. So the thoughts and the reproduction thereof, are godly and infallible. (This is also known as Verbal Inspiration).

We must, of course, distinguish between inspired words and the inspired rendering or record. So, for example, we find various remarks by Satan in the Bible which we know was not inspired by God when he made them; still, the report on these remarks were godly inspired.

3. The Compilation of the Bible

3.1 Canonical and Apocryphal books

al de kanonieke Some of the older Bible translations have a subtitle on the title page which refers to the canonical aspect, e.g., in the Dutch translation authorized in 1618-19, the title page reads:

“BIJBEL; dat is de gansche Heilige Schrift vervattende al de kanonieke boeken des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments...”

Subtitles to the same effect appear in the Afrikaans translations of 1933 and 1953.

The Canonical books are those that were really inspired by God, in contrast to the Apocryphal books (apocryphal = of questionable authenticity; lit. 'hidden writings', from the Greek adjective 'apokryphos' = 'hidden'). The latter group number about 14 books; some were at first adjudged to be inspired, but later found to be not of that standard. Examples of the Apocrypha are: Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Baruch, Prayer of Manasses, etc.

3.2 Compilation of the Old Testament

At first the Jews had only the five books of Moses - Genesis to Deuteronomy, also known as the Pentateuch - which served as their law (seper hattora). After Moses various other inspired books came into existence. During their Exile the Jews began to worry about their Holy Scriptures, and in Esra's time (457 BC), the various writings were brought together to form one Book. The books by Nehemiah and Malachi were later added. This particular assemblage was the work of the Holy Spirit and He prevented the Apocrypha from sneaking into the Old Testament. The Old Testament of 39 books was more or less stabilized in 90 AD by the Council of Jamnia

3.3 Compilation of the New Testament

At the time of the early Church, the New Testament books circulated as separate books among the assemblies, and during public worship, they were used in conjunction with the Old Testament. See II Peter 3:15-16 in connection with Paul's letters. But, as some Apocryphal books found their way into congregations, and because some members distorted the inspired books, the feeling grew that it was time that the godly Scriptures had to be distinguished and protected from the spurious ones. Constantine, the first 'converted' Roman emperor, ordered the Church Father Eusebius of Caesarea in 332 AD to assemble all the inspired New testament books, into one book. This was not too difficult, because the assemblies led by the Holy Spirit, had already discerned which book was genuinely inspired and which was not.

Doubts were still voiced about the smaller books, like the letters of Peter, John, Jude, etc., but this uncertainty ended soon. With the meeting at Carthage in 393 AD, it was finally confirmed that the 27 books of the New Testament, as we know them today, were all inspired by God. Our experience ever since taught us very clearly that this compilation had indeed been a perfect and Godly development.

4. Copies and translations of the Bible

4.1 Original languages

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, except for a few chapters written in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek. The words of our Lord in Mark 5:41 and 15:34 are in Aramaic, an ancient Semitic language spoken by the Jews.

4.2 Writing materials

The very first parts of the OT were graven in stone (the Ten Commandments); then the writing was done on clay tablets which were then baked; then on sheets of papyrus (prepared from a reed that grew in the Nile valley); then on rolls of parchment (specially prepared hides). But then - the first book from a real printing press - Johann Gutenberg's breakthrough: the Latin Bible in print, 1455 AD

4.3 The Persecutions

The original copies were mainly destroyed or lost during the persecution of the early Christians. This may just have been a Divine providence to prevent the originals, bearing the handwriting of men like Moses or Paul, being worshipped in our day, like the brazen serpent in the time of Hezekiah. God saw to it that copies of the Bible were always preserved. Our oldest copy of the Bible is the Septuagint, the best-known Greek translation of the Old Testament, that was completed in the course of the 3rd century BC.

4.4 Timespan

It has been estimated that more than 1300 years separate Moses, writer of the first book and John, writer of the last book of the Bible. With due respect we may say: it took the Almighty more than 13 centuries to compile the Book of books.

4.5 Accuracy

Extreme care was always taken when the Bible was copied. The words, yes, even the letters were counted, and when there were indications that mistakes had been made, the entire copy was destroyed.

4.6 The more important translations

4.6.1 The Septuagint

Under the liberal rule of Alexander (331-323 BC) and Ptolemy I (305-282 BC), the large Jewish colony in Alexandria enjoyed religious freedom, but came strongly under Greek influence; they all learned the Greek language. As time wore on most Jews became unable to read the Torah in the original Hebrew, and so they decided to have it translated into Greek. This task was apparently completed before the end of the 3rd century, and this is now the oldest copy of the Old Testament.

4.6.2 The Syriac

The peoples of the Middle East were in great need of a translation into another local language and by the middle of the 1st century BC, the Syriac translation became available. This Syriac was an ancient Aramaic dialect spoken in Syria.

4.6.3 The Coptic

Coptic is an Afro-Asiatic language written in the Greek alphabet, but descended from ancient Egyptian. The translation was based on the Septuagint and was probably completed by the beginning of the 3rd century AD. There are two versions: one in Bohairic, the dialect of Lower Egypt; the other and older one was in Sahidic, the dialect of Thebes.

4.6.4 The Vulgate

At the time when Greece was creating the greatest poetry of all time, Latin was still only a dialect spoken by a few tribes in the vicinity of Rome. Then Latin began its world-wide career as a conquering tongue by following the victorious legions over Europe and into Asia and Africa, until at length it became the speech of civilization, from the British Isles to the Persian Gulf. By the first century AD, Latin had developed into a superb literary language, a marvellous instrument for prose and poetry. In 382 AD Pope

Damasus commissioned the famous Christian scholar Jerome to make a complete revision of the Latin versions of the Bible. Jerome's new Latin translation (he worked from the original Hebrew and Greek) became the basis of all Bible studies in the Middle Ages, and in 1546 the Council of Trent declared it to be the authorized Bible for the Catholic Church. Eventually it acquired the name of 'the Vulgate', meaning 'the book of the people'.

4.6.5 The German translation

Martin Luther first had to find a mean (average) German because the German dialects at that time differed considerably from one another. Then he started on the New Testament in December 1521 and completed his translation by April 1522! He continued his mammoth task and completed the Old Testament with his translation of the prophets in 1534.

4.6.6 The Authorized and Revised Versions

At the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 Dr. John Reynolds, a Reformed pastor and president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, proposed that a new translation of the Bible be made. King James I supported the idea and lent his authority to the final product (1611). Over the centuries that followed, this so-called '**King James Version**' has been the most loved and used English translation of the Scriptures. Its majestic style and rich cadence give it an undying quality, and it remains a standard of excellence in Bible translation.

Eventually a revision did become necessary and it was undertaken in 1870 by the Convocation of Canterbury, of the Church of England. On 17 May 1881 the **Revised**

Version of the New Testament was published in England and the whole Bible on 19 May 1885.

4.6.7 The 'Staten Vertaling'

In the Netherlands a national synod held at Dordrecht, decided in 1618 and 1619 that a Dutch translation from the original Bible languages must be carried into effect. This translation was completed in the 1650's and authorized by the 'Staten-Generaal der Vereenigde Nederlanden', giving rise to the name '**Staten Vertaling**'.

4.6.8 The Bible in Afrikaans

The 'Staten Bijbel' was used in South Africa from earliest days, but eventually the Bible was translated into Afrikaans in 1933, with a revision in 1953. An entirely new translation followed in 1983.

4.6.9 World-wide distribution

Completed translations of the Bible have already passed the 800 mark. The British and Foreign Bible Society, established in 1804, have already distributed about 500 million Bibles in more than 650 languages.

5. Divisions of the Bible

5.1 Old and new Testament

The Bible comprises 66 books of which 39 are designated Old Testament and 27 form the New Testament. A testament is a compact or agreement, in this case, between God and His people. The 'testament' idea comes from the Bible itself. In Jer. 31:31-34 we read about a new covenant, and in Heb. 8:6-13 and 10:15-17 we are assured that the new covenant, had been mediated by our Lord Jesus. Jesus Himself used the words 'new testament' in the AV of I Cor. 11:25. Paul also distinguishes between the old and the new in II Cor. 3:6,14 (the AV again uses the word 'testament').

5.2 Subdivisions of the Old Testament

5.2.1 The Pentateuch or five books of Moses

Genesis. The Greek word 'genesis' means lineage or descent; nativity, birth. A fitting name for this book, because it describes the origin or inception of everything.

Exodus. The Greek 'eksodos' means exit or departure. It describes the Israelites' departure from Egypt.

Leviticus. This contained the laws for the spiritual life of Israel.

Numbers. The name is derived from the census figures appearing in the first chapters of the book.

Deuteronomy. The name refers to a second set of legislation because it repeats many statutes already mentioned in the previous books.

5.2.2 The Historical Books

These books relate the experiences of Israel and include all books from Joshua to Esther.

5.2.3 The Poetical Books

Poetry occupies an important place in Hebrew literature. Its proper object is the Highest, the God of heaven and earth; its source and fount, the depths of the God-hungry heart. Its great theme is the personal encounter with the living God. These books are grouped together, from Job to The Song of Songs.

5.2.4 The Major Prophets

We find the books of these outstanding men as a group from Isaiah to Daniel.

5.2.5 The Minor Prophets

Prophecies by the lesser known prophets can be found in the books Hosea to Malachi.

5.3 Subdivisions of the New Testament

5.3.1 The Gospels

In these books we find a description of the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as a record of His teachings. We are referring to the books Matthew to John.

5.3.2 Historical book

This is the book of Acts wherein the experiences of the Early Church are described.

5.3.3 The Epistles of Paul

The books Romans to Philemon (the authorship of Hebrews is still a problem) are the apostle Paul's missives to various congregations, to teach and admonish them.

5.3.4 The general epistles

The books James to Jude are letters by various men of God.

5.3.5 A book of prophecy

This is the Revelation of John, describing the visions that came to him on the island of Patmos.

5.4 Further arrangement

At later stages the Bible text was subdivided in chapters and verses. The man who is usually credited with being the first to divide the Bible into chapters, is Stephen Langton (1150-1228) He completed the work in the year of his demise, 1228. The division into verses first appeared in the Geneva New Testament of 1557, prepared by William Whittingham. He followed the verse divisions which Robert Stephen's had introduced into the fourth edition of his Greek New Testament in 1551.

LECTURE 2 BIBLICAL SCIENCE

PROOF OF THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE

For the Christian the Bible is the infallible Word of God—not by means of intellectual argument, but on the grounds of religious conviction. But there remains an intellectual need;

mere believing is not enough, we want to round matters off in an intellectually satisfying manner. Although faith come first, it must be complemented by rational thought, otherwise man will not rest from his search for truth. For this reason we must embark on some apologetic study. (Apologetics is that branch of Theology concerned with the rational justification of Christianity).

1. Evidence form the Bible itself

- 1.1** In the Bible we read on 2 600 occasions the words “And God said...” or words to that effect. When we read the Bible, God is speaking to us.
- 1.2** The Bible originated from God (II Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1; II Peter 1:21).
- 1.3** The one Testament validates the other. What is prophesied in the Old Testament, is fulfilled in the New Testament. Examples: Micah 5:2 and Matt. 2:6; Zech. 11:12 and Matt. 26:15; Isaiah 53 and our Lord’s suffering and death described in the Gospels; Joel 2:28 and Acts 2, etc.
- 1.4** The Lord Jesus and His apostles regarded the Old Testament as the Word of God and quoted from it, e.g., Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 18:31-33; Acts 1:16; Heb. 1:1, etc.

2. Historical evidence

- 2.1** The Bible comprises 66 separate books, written by about 40 writers over a period of more than 13 centuries, but it still forms a like-minded unity. The same major truths can be traced through all the books, and while they may be vague at the beginning, they glow with brightness towards the end.
- 2.2** No persecution or violence on the human side could destroy the Bible. On the contrary, Bibles have been distributed in ever widening circles. This indestructiveness is proof that the Book is the Word of God (see Luke 16:17).
- 2.3** The Bible is always new and has never become outdated, although it has been written many years ago. No secular book can make the same claim (see Isaiah 40:8 and Matt. 24:35).
- 2.4** The characters of people living according to the precepts of the Bible and those who reject or ignore it, differ to such a degree that we must acknowledge the supernatural factor influencing the former.
- 2.5** The lives of millions have changed for the better through the powerful influence of the Word. All other books, taken together, haven’t had a comparable influence on the lives of nations and individuals.
- 2.6** The Bible is unfathomable in its richness. George Mueller declared that he had read through the Bible a hundred times and with each reading it became even more wonderful and up to date.
- 2.7** The Godly inspiration of the Bible is proved by the many things predicted in the Word that have been fulfilled in times gone by, and even today.

2.8 Among the so-called 'holy books' of other religions, the Bible stands out as the incomparable Word of God. Brahma's advice to poor, wretched man is: "Do what I teach you and when you die, you will return to earth as a better person." Buddha taught that the three great sins are self-indulgence, ill-will and ignorance, and that by freeing oneself of all desire one gained a blissful state of abandonment of self, called 'Nirvana'. Confucius taught nothing at all about any god and Confucianism is merely a system of good conduct.

His most famous rule of conduct is the 'negative golden rule' which says: "What ye would not that others should do unto you, do ye not unto them". Mohammed was the founder of Islam. His followers, the Moslems, claim that their holy book the 'Koran' was recited to Mohammed by the archangel Gabriel, who read from the original copy which is in heaven. The Koran lays down five main duties, which are all mere rituals (praying, fasting, etc.).

Over and against all this comes our Lord, Jesus Christ, stretching out His pierced hands to lost man; saves him from everlasting wretchedness, gives him purity, peace and hope, and prepares him for an eternal holy life with God.

3. Archaeological evidence

Archaeology is the study of man's past by scientific analysis of the material remains of his cultures. Archaeological work started in the 18th century with the excavation of Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy. Then in 1822 followed the breakthrough in Egypt when the Rosetta stone was discovered and deciphered. But for Bible scholars the second half of the 19th century saw the start of an important series of breakthroughs, for example:

- Layard discovered Nimrud, the Biblical city of Calah (Gen. 10:11&12).
- Rawlinson unearthed Nineveh, complete with King Ashurbanipal's palace and library.

Here, on a large clay tablet, he found the Babylonian version of the Flood story, which coincides in almost every detail with the Biblical story of Noah.

- In 1929 Leonard Woolley found a clay deposit of ten feet thick at Ur in Mesopotamia and notified the world: "We have found the Flood!"

To summarize the corroboration of Biblical facts by the evidence exposed by archaeological

excavations, we note the following:

3.1 Clay tablets inscribed with the so-called cuneiform writing (wedge-shaped characters) of Mesopotamia and Persia, contain ancient accounts of

3.1.1 Creation

3.1.2 The tree of knowledge

3.1.3 The temptation and fall of man

3.1.4 The tower of Babel

3.1.5 The Flood;

and these records are markedly similar to the Biblical accounts. They also prove that writing existed as far back as 3 000 BC (compare this date to Abraham's time, circa 1 900 BC).

3.2 In the 1920's, the British archaeologist, Leonard Woolley, excavated a group of mounds at Ur of the Chaldees (now Tell Muqayyar, near the Persian Gulf). Relics of burials going back to 3 000 BC suddenly gave place to a deposit of clay ten feet thick. Below the clay were traces of a New Stone Age (5 000-4 000 BC) settlement. The clay deposit was definitely not from the river Euphrates because the layer was too high above river level, and besides it was too thick. Clearly some mighty event had caused the break in the cultural tradition of the two series of artifacts. Probing shafts into the other mounds gave the same results and shortly afterwards Stephen Langdon found similar layers at ancient Kish, near Babylon. The flood of the Bible was a legend no longer! Woolley and Langdon calculated the date as about 4 000 B.C. All this is scientific support for the Bible record in Genesis chapters 6 to 8.

3.3 Excavations in various places brought many interesting facts to the fore. When the ancients wanted to rebuild a ruined city, they simply flattened the debris and built on top of it. By modern excavations through all these 'layers', cities like the following were discovered:

3.3.1 Ur of the Chaldees

This was wealthy, bustling city in Abraham's time. The inhabitants were moon worshippers. All this fits in with the Bible story in Gen. 11: 28-31.

3.3.2 Nineveh

This was a principal city and the last capital of Assyria. It was excavated on the river Tigris, opposite Mosul in Iraq. The "three days' journey across" - Jona 3:3 (MT) - probably refers to the whole administrative district of Nineveh, which was about 70 km across and would then include Hatra, Khorsabad and Nimrud. Here inscriptions were found in which mention is made of Omri, king of Israel - I Kings 16:23.

3.3.3 Babylon (mentioned repeatedly in the first half of the book Daniel).

Babylon was situated on the river Euphrates, 80 km south of modern Baghdad. In 539 BC Babylon surrendered without a fight to Cyrus, king of the Persians, who ended the Captivity and returned the Jews to their homeland. The victory mentioned was recorded on the 'Cylinder of Cyrus' see II Chron. 36:22-23 and Dan. 5:28, 30. From the debris remaining, it is clear that the once proud city was totally destroyed. This was predicted in Isa. 13:17-22 and Jer. chapters 50 & 51.

3.3.4 Susa (formerly Shusan)

This is where the story of the book Esther is laid. It is now known as Shush, about 30km SW of Dizful in present day Iran. With excavations the following items were unearthed:

- the palace gate (Esther 4:2)
- the inner court, in front of the king's hall (Esther 5:1)
- the outer court of the palace (Esther 6:4)
- the garden of the pavilion (Esther 7:7)
- documents referring to king Darius (Dan 6:1).

3.4 Excavations in Egypt revealed civilizations that strongly resemble the times of Joseph, as recorded in the Bible. Here the discovery of the Rosetta stone in 1799

was crucial. There was an inscription on the stone, carved in three different languages: hieroglyphic, demotic Egyptian and Greek. In 1822 Jean Champollion used this to unravel the mystery of hieroglyphic writing.

3.5 Old Testament cities like Shechem (Gen. 33:18), Bethel (Gen. 12:8), Ai (Jos. 7:2), Gerar (II Chron. 14:13), Dothan (II Kings 6:13), that were also known in the time of the patriarchs, have been uncovered and identified.

3.6 The ruins of the original Jericho have been laid bare and there is evidence that it had been destroyed by fire (Joshua 6:24). Remember Joshua's curse? "Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho..." (Jos. 6:26). Examination of the ruins proves that the city was always inhabited since before Abraham and until Joshua's time. But after its destruction by the Israelites, each and every attempt to rebuild it has failed. The Jericho of the New Testament was laid out nearly two kilometres from the old site.

3.7 The Lord's commandments in Deut. 7:1-10 about the **extermination** of the Canaanite peoples sound very harsh to the modern ear. But archaeological excavations revealed the rotten nature and moral decay of the peoples listed in Deut. 7 - idolatry, immorality, infanticide, etc. - a threat to God's people.

3.8 The **Moabite stone** was discovered in 1868 by F.A. Klein near Dibon, east of the Dead Sea. The ancient Hebrew writing on it turned out to be an account of the victory of the Israelites over King Mesha of Moab - the story told in II Kings chapter 3. This stone must be more than 2 700 years old - one of the oldest 'documents' in existence.

3.9 The oldest complete manuscript of any book of the Bible is a scroll of Isaiah, written in the 1st or 2nd century BC and discovered in 1947 in a cave near the Dead Sea. That put paid to the malicious rumour that a chapter like Isaiah 53 was written only after the death of Christ.

3.10 Excavations in Asia Minor uncovered most of the cities mentioned in the book of Acts, and the cultures discovered there agree with those described in the Bible. All the above goes to prove that the Bible is historically correct..

4. Scientific evidence

The Bible does not purport to be a scientific book, but is meant to be a leading light to direct man to God. Nevertheless, science cannot disprove the Bible, on the contrary, every genuine scientific fact is further proof that the Bible represents eternal truth.

4.1 Scientists have established the fact that man didn't make his first appearance in Europe, Africa, America or Australia, but in Southwest Asia - in the region where the Garden of Eden was situated.

4.2 Even the evolutionists have to start with an 'empty' earth; then came the first plant forms - protozoa, metazoa, etc. - then the animals : reptiles, birds and mammals—and finally, man. So, there is no conflict with Genesis chapter 1.

4.3 In Job 26:7 we read: "...he (God) suspends the earth over nothing" - a concept completely foreign to Job's contemporaries (500 BC ?), and, unthinkable for a further millennium and longer. Even the great Galileo (17th century AD) was twice forced to retract by the Roman Catholic Church, when he proved the traditional idea of a fixed earth wrong! So, here the Bible outflanked science by about 12 centuries!

4.4 The fact that the earth is round was just as long hidden for science - at least they wouldn't accept Pythagoras' theory or Eratosthenes' measurements - and once again the Bible pointed the way:

- Isaiah 40:22 -- "He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth..."
- Luke 17:34-36 (AV) -- "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." What Jesus taught about His Second Coming, is underlined by Paul where he writes in
- I Cor. 15:52 -- "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." With this in mind, the Luke 17 verses must be interpreted in terms of time zones : for some it will be night (sleeping); for some it will be early morning (grinding corn); for others midday or early afternoon (working in the fields) -- and all these situations point to a round earth!

4.5 About 25 centuries ago the following was stated in Job 26:7 -- "He spreads out the northern (skies) over empty space..." It was but fairly recently that astronomers discovered that there is a large empty space in the northern skies, where not a single star can be seen.

4.6 In Heb 1:2 and 11:3 it is stated that God 'made the universe' ('the worlds'- AV). This accounts for the Godly creation of the other stars and planets. The letter to the Hebrews was written in the first century AD, but the creation facts quoted above, were only discovered by astronomers many centuries later. Another indication that the composition of the Bible involved far more than the human brain.

5. Closing Remarks

In conclusion we quote from Henry Halley's Bible Handbook, p. 23 :

"The Bible, composed by many authors, over a period of many centuries, yet **one book**, is in itself, the outstanding Miracle of the Ages, bearing aloft its own evidence of its Superhuman Origin."

. LECTURE 3 THEOLOGY

i.e. the systematic study of Christian revelation concerning

God's nature and purpose

1. The existence of God

Among all the writers of the Old and New Testament there was not one who attempted to prove the existence of God. To them it was obvious and evident. According to the Bible itself only "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (Ps. 14:1). But it is commendable to list the arguments proving His existence, because they strengthen our faith, they help others to believe, and they enrich our knowledge about God.

1.1 Universal belief

We find ideas about a Supreme Being among all human beings, no matter how primitive or uncivilized. How is that possible? God Himself must have made them aware of His existence.

1.2 The wonderful Plan

Creation abounds with wonderful laws and designs, like the growth and development of plants and animals, the seasons, the low and high tides of the sea, the stars and their movements, etc. None of these came about by chance; a Master Mind must have been responsible.

1.3 The Origin of everything

In Psalm 19:1 it is stated: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." In Rom. 1:18-20 the apostle Paul speaks out against people who suppress the truth, by pointing out that "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without any excuse."

Where did it all start? Genesis 1:1 supplies the only sensible answer:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". The primary Origin is God, who was not created, but who exists from all eternity and for ever.

1.4 The Origin of Beauty

Nature, as we know it, must have been created by Someone who loves beauty. Just consider a majestic sunset, countless panoramas of mountains and valleys, with variations of sea and river views, the colour play of flowers, exotic birds - yes, nature in its entirety!

1.5 Man and morality

Man's conscience, mental torment, our inborn discernment between right and wrong, point to an independent law that operates in us. Who placed it there? God, the Lawgiver! It has been reported that a wellknown atheist once got

carried away and blurted out: “Thank God, I’m an atheist”. Was this just a slip of the tongue?!

1.6 The history of individuals and nations

When the detail unfolds, one often notices that Someone above has taken a hand in things, even if the non-Christian only mentions the role of ‘Providence’.

1.7 Denial of God’s existence leads to confusion and anarchy

If we deny God’s existence, then we view things with a sense of unreality. Such a person lives as if no one Above sees him, and so doing he loses a sense of responsibility, and when personal responsibility disappears, communal living becomes impossible. To deny the existence of God, really boils down to committing a crime against society.

1.8 Experiential proof

We know that there is a God on the grounds of our personal experience.

The Lord has written to us—the Bible! Sometimes He speaks in audible tones. He listens to us. He answers us... He who doubts the latter, should read the life of George Mueller. This man of God refused to disclose his needs to anyone but God. His prayers were answered miraculously. There are multitudes who can witness how God helped them out of tight corners or hopeless situations, when no human agency or scientific aid could help them. Each and every saved soul is proof of God’s existence.

Naismith quotes the following incident from Johann Kepler’s life:

“Kepler, the astronomer, was troubled by one of his friends who denied the existence of God and took the view of the universe which prevails in some circles today, namely, that it came into being of itself by mechanical methods. Kepler, in order to convince his friend, constructed a model of the sun with the planets circling round it. When his friend came into the observatory and saw the beautiful model, he exclaimed with delight, ‘How beautiful it is! Who made it?’ And Kepler carelessly answered, ‘No one made it: it made itself.’ His friend looked at him and said, ‘Nonsense, tell who made it.’ Kepler then replied, ‘Friend, you say that this little toy could not make itself. It is but a very weak imitation of this great universe which, I understood, you believe did make itself.’” (Naismith, A. Notes, quotes and anecdotes. London: Pickering, 1971, p. 7).

2. Knowledge about God

2.1 The highest form of all knowledge

No form of knowledge is as important as knowledge concerning God. It is the greatest and most intricate subject for study! Pagan wisdom could not get beyond their dictum that man should know himself. Our Christian faith proceeds much further and implores man to know God, the source of all wisdom and happiness: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”

(John 17:3). By first knowing God, we will better understand ourselves. The Bible teaches:

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9). The Lord also reminds us: “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight...” (Jer. 9:23-24).

We cannot expect to know God exactly as He is. But we can believe in Him and then benefit from that belief. Thank God that John 3:16 does not demand complete or perfect knowledge of the Lord, but only requires: “...whoever **believes** in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” A distinction must be drawn between **knowing** God and comprehending Him completely. Most people are unable to fathom electricity entirely, but they nevertheless know it and make use of it.

2.2 Agnosticism (Greek: a = not; gnostos = known)

The agnostic is a person who holds that knowledge of a Supreme Being, ultimate cause, etc., is impossible. The agnostic ignores the spiritual side of human nature and therefore denies the existence of the soul. He is inclined to call it a bodily function. Here we protest: man is much more than a mere physical being! The basic weakness in agnosticism is the rejection of things they can't explain or fathom. In a sense they then reject themselves as well, because how could they fully comprehend and know themselves?

2.3 How can I know God?

This only becomes possible when God reveals Himself to man. It is only when Almighty God meets the very limited human understanding, that we become conscious of Him. We can't perceive God in nature, but we can observe the effects of His influence there.

We can't localize God in our human lives, but we can note His influence there.

2.3.1 God has appeared in various observable forms to man:

2.3.1.1 Sometimes He appears in the form of an angel (Gen.16:7-14; 18:1-33; 19:1-22).

2.3.1.2 He may appear in an unusual form (Gen. 3:8; 12:7; Exod. 33:18-23).

2.3.1.3 At times He appears in a material form:

(i) As a fire blazing out from a bush (Exod. 3:2-4:17).

(ii) As a pillar of cloud by day and as a pillar of fire by night (Exod. 13:21-22).

(iii) “...in the cloud over the atonement cover” (Lev. 16:2).

(iv) As an audible voice (I Kings 19:12-18).

2.3.1.4 In Jesus Christ He appears in human form (Matt. 1:23 and the rest of the four Gospels).

2.3.2 The Revelation of God

2.3.2.1 Creation reveals Him (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:19-20).

2.3.2.2 He is revealed in Providence—the wonderful ways in which He works in our lives and in the lives of others. He answers prayers and protects us against dangers. All this makes Him real to us. His guidance, His judgments on evil and blessings on the good—it all makes His presence a reality for us (I Sam. 6:7-12; Judges 6:36-40). The cows transporting the ark staying on a fixed course, without their calves and without being led, show clearly the hand of God in this matter. The same applies to the fleece put out by Gideon.

2.3.2.3 He manifests Himself in the history of the world. His hand can be observed in the rise or decline of nations, especially the Jews -- see Jer.18:7-10; 31:27-28.

2.3.3 Personal knowledge of God

The best way for us to know God is to experience Him spiritually in our own lives. This can be done in the following ways:

2.3.3.1 By acknowledging Him.

2.3.3.2 By confessing our sins and forsaking them.

2.3.3.3 By humbling ourselves before God and placing our trust in Him.

2.3.3.4 By obeying His Word and surrendering ourselves to His will.

2.3.3.5 By intensive prayer and study of His Word.

3. The Nature of God revealed in His names God is Spirit, eternal, unchangeable in His character, wisdom, power, holiness, righteousness, goodness and truth. To get a clear idea of the Biblical standpoint about the nature of God, we must study His names as expressed in the original Hebrew. God's character is revealed by His names. In Malachi 3:16-17 we learn that great blessings follow on the honouring of His Name. The Bible attaches great value to names, and if we study the Biblical names of God, we will get to know Him better, because each name reveals a certain aspect of His character.

3.1 The name ELOHIM or 'God'

This is the Hebrew for God. The shortened form is 'El', and we find it in names like Daniel = God's judge, i.e., he who delivers judgment in the name of God

Immanuel = God with us

Samuel = heard of God

Elizabeth = to whom God is the oath (i.e. who swears by God)

The main meaning of **Elohim** is 'gods' or 'deities'. **El** = strong, mighty, a mighty one, a hero. **Eloha** = God (singular) and **Elohim** is the plural of 'majesty'.

Elohim is used throughout Genesis and in the Creation chapter (Gen. 1) it emphasizes His omnipotence. This also covers His maintenance of the universe, therefore David says in Psalm 19:1 -- "The heavens declare the glory of God (**El**, because this singular

form is used in poetic language instead of ‘Elohim’); the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

God’s way is the way of strength as shown in Psalm 46:1 -- “God (**Elohim**) is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

3.2 EL ELYON = Most High God

This form appears in Gen. 14:18,19 where it reads: “Blessed be Abram by God Most High...” The context is often where pagans are enlightened about God, the King of the universe (not the God of Israel only). See also Deut. 32:8 and Dan. 3:26; 4:17,25,32,34;

Dan. 5:18,21.

3.3 EL SHADDAI = Almighty God

This name form first appears in Gen. 17:1 when the aged Abram (99) must be convinced that he and his aged wife Sarai (90) will presently have a son. **El Shaddai** appears about 60 times in the Bible, notably when the battle between God and Satan is at its fiercest, e.g., in the book Job, where the old patriarch overcomes Satan through the generous help of **El Shaddai**. The name translates into Greek as ‘Pantokratowr’; we find it in the New Testament in Rev. 1:8 and 4:8 and the modern rendering is ‘the Lord God Almighty’.

There is great comfort for the suffering believer in this name. When all seems hopeless, **He** can open a way or create a solution.

3.4 EL OLAM = the Everlasting God

See Gen. 21:33. This name reveals the eternal nature of God—no beginning, no end. ‘Olam’ means what is hidden, esp. hidden time, therefore **eternity** and **perpetuity**. so God decided about time and dispensation (Ephes. 1:9-10 AV).

3.5 ADONAY = Lord (in lower case)

This form is used in Gen. 15:2 and means Lord and Master, indicating man’s position as servant of the Almighty. Remember Jesus’ admonishment: “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). When Abraham pleads with God for Sodom, he also uses **Adonay**.

3.6 YAHWEH (Jehovah) = LORD (in capitals)

The original Hebrew text was not vocalised. The name rendered LORD in modern English translations was therefore only represented by means of consonants, i.e., the letters

Y H W H . The later Hebrews, for some centuries before the time of Christ, regarded this name as so very holy, that it might not even be pronounced. Whenever it appeared in the sacred text, they were accustomed to substitute **Adonay** for it. So, when the Masoretic text appeared (with vowel sounds under the consonants) the vowels of **Adonay** were placed under **Y H W H** -- except that the initial ‘a’ was replaced by a short ‘e’. This gave rise to a mixed result: ‘Jehovah,’ a form first attested at the beginning of the 12th century AD

According to Old Testament scholars the real original must have been something like

Yahweh. And **Yahweh** is strictly speaking the only personal name (proper noun) of God. It is this name that should not be misused or taken in vain (AV), according to the Third Commandment (Ex. 20:7). The covenant idea is brought to the fore by the following combinations:

3.6.1 Jehovah - jireh

In Gen. 22, when the angel of the Lord had pointed to a ram as substitute for Isaac, Abraham named the place **Yahweh jireh** -- ‘The LORD Will Provide’ (verse 14). So, God observes our needs, and He will provide.

3.6.2 Jehovah Raphah = ‘The LORD that healeth’ (Ex. 15:26 - AV).

The LORD promised healing, and also that He will keep Israel, His children, free from all sickness (Deut. 7:15), if they keep His commandments. .

3.6.3 Jehovah - nissi

After the defeat of the Amelekites, Moses erected an altar and called it

Yahweh nissi -- ‘the LORD is my banner’ (Ex. 17:15). Israel praised Him as warrior (Ex. 15:3) and Joshua encountered a captain in the LORD’s army (Jos. 5:13-15). There is a promise that He will defeat Israel’s enemies if they obey His commandments (Deut. 28:7).

3.6.4 Jehovah - shalom

erected in Ophrah, namely,

This is the name given by Gideon to the altar he

Yahweh shalom—‘the LORD is Peace’ (Judges 6:24).

3.6.5 Jehovah - tsebaoth

This means ‘The LORD of Hosts’, as beautifully set out in Ps. 24:10 of the Authorized Version : “Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.” It is another aspect of the LORD’s power and majesty. The ‘hosts’ are all the heavenly powers, ready to do the LORD’s command.

3.6.6 Jehovah Ra-ah “ The LORD is my shepherd” (Ps. 23:1). This name combination reveals God as the Good Shepherd tending His sheep.

3.6.7 Jehovah - tsidkenu

“The LORD Our Righteousness” (Jer. 23:6). The Hebrew ‘Yahweh Tsidkenu’ promises God’s people that their righteousness will emanate from Him. See also the wonderful promise in Isaiah 54:17.

3.6.8 Jehovah - shammah

This is the name given to the city of Ezekiel’s vision, ‘Yahweh shamma’— ‘the LORD is there’ (Ezek. 48:35).

3.7 God of the Covenant in Psalm 23

The LORD who is our Shepherd provides, heals and gives peace, yes, so many of the characteristics **implied** by the name combinations (3.6.1 to 3.6.8 above) come to the fore in this Psalm. Let’s read it afresh in James Moffat’s translation:

“The Eternal shepherds me, I lack for nothing; he makes me lie in meadows green, he leads me to refreshing streams, he revives life in me. He guides me by true paths, as he himself is true. My road may run through a glen of gloom, but I fear

no harm, for thou art beside me; thy club, thy staff—they give me courage.
Thou art my host, spreading a feast for me, while my foes have to look on!
Thou hast poured oil upon my head, my cup is brimming over; yes, and all through
my life Goodness and Kindness wait on me, the Eternal's guest within his household
evermore.”

3.8 It is important to know the names of God

Example: Note how striking it is to read the first two verses of Psalm 91 after inserting the Hebrew names:

“He who dwells in the shelter of **Elyon**, will rest in the shadow of **El Shaddai**.
I will say of **Yahweh**, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my **Elohim**, in whom
I trust.”

3.9 Other descriptive names of God in the Bible

3.9.1 The Father who created the lights of heaven (James 1:17). He is the Creator of light, both physical and spiritual; by His light we are enlightened (Ps. 36:9). His adversary the Devil, on the other hand, is the prince of darkness.

3.9.2 The God of heaven (Ezra 5:11; Neh. 1:4; 2:4).

3.9.3 The God of hosts (God of the angel armies - Peterson) -- Psalm 80:7,14,19.

3.9.4 God of all the earth (Isa. 54:5).

3.9.5 The Holy One (Job 6:10; Isa. 10:17).

3.9.6 The Holy One of Israel (II Kings 19:22; Ps. 71:22).

3.9.7 The Jealous God (Ex. 34:14).

3.9.8 Your Redeemer (Isa. 54:5).

3.9.9 The Living God (Deut. 5:26; Jos. 3:10).

3.9.10 Lord of lords (Deut. 10:17).

3.10 His character revealed in the names describing His actions

3.10.1 Lord and Master over all the earth (Genesis; Ps. 22:28; 24:1; Isa. 40:22-23; Jer. 10:10; 18:5-10; Dan. 4:34-35).

3.10.2 Father to the fatherless and widows' Defender (Ps. 68:5).

3.10.3 Judge of all the world (Gen. 18:25; Judges 11:27; Ps. 9:8; Eccles. 11:9; Eccles. 12:14).

3.10.4 A searcher of hearts (I Chron. 28:9; Prov. 17:3; 24:12; Acts 1:24).

3.10.5 A shelter for His people (II Sam. 22:3; Ps. 9:9; 46:1; Ezek. 11:16).

3.10.6 Mighty deliverer (Ps. 43:3; 49:26; 106:21; Hos. 13:4).

LECTURE 4 THEOLOGY (cont.)

The Characteristics of God

God's attributes can be divided into three groups :

I Personal II Absolute III Moral

I Personal Characteristics

1. God is a Person

This does not imply that God is human but that He possesses a personality, a Being that thinks, feels, wills and is conscious of Himself. Pantheism maintains that God is identical with the material universe or the forces of nature, but that would rob Him entirely of His personality. And, praise be to God, the Bible teaches us on every page that God is a Person that can see, feel, hear, love, smell, become angry, jealous, etc. (Ex. 20:5; Lev. 26:11,31; Ps. 7:11; 94:9; Isa. 1:15; 59:1; Jer. 10:1, 10). Yes, in the Hebrew even His **soul** (nephesh) is mentioned (see Isa. 1:14 and Jer. 5:9,29 in the Authorized Version).

2. God is Spirit

'Personality' is not the physical body. Just because man was created in His image, does not mean that God must also have a human body. 'Image' here, has more to do with 'personality'. In John 4:24 we are taught that 'God is spirit' and Jesus also said "...a spirit hath not flesh and bones..." (Luke 24:39 - AV). Therefore God warned His people, in days gone by, not to make an image of Him (Ex. 20:4; Isa. 40:18), because no one has any knowledge of His appearance and there is nothing on earth to compare with Him. But why does the Bible mention God's eyes, feet, hands, etc.? The Bible is obliged to use these terms to bring the actions of the Infinite One within the scope of our understanding. Of course, God may reveal Himself in a visible form like a cloud, a fire, a shadow, an angel, etc.

3. God is Eternal

God is immeasurably great (I Kings 8:27) and He lives for ever and ever (Rev. 4:8-10).

A. Naismith described eternity as follows:

Eternity! Eternity!
How long art thou, Eternity?
A little bird with fretting beak
Might wear to naught the loftiest peak,

Though but each thousand years it came;
Yet thou wert then, as now, the same.
Ponder, O man, eternity!

See also Psalm 90:1-4; 102:24-27.

4. God is Triune

4.1 Description

Although it is customary to refer to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, God is still One. It is one Deity who operates as three Godly Persons; therefore we call Him the Triune God. Although there are three Godly Persons, in thought and will they are One and they always act in agreement with one another. So the Father witnesses about the Son (Matt. 3:17) and the Son about the Father (John 5:19-20); the Son witnesses about the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) and the Spirit about the Son (John 15:26).

This truth requires a delicate balance, so that no Godly Person is overemphasized or that God (singular) is not overstressed. A warning note must also be sounded about underscoring the Godly **unity** to the point where Father, Son and Holy Spirit are seen merely as three aspects or attributes of God—a false doctrine that is still around.

The Father was never made, created or generated. The Son was not made or created, but, as Martin Luther confessed, “...true God born of the Father in eternity...”, or, as the Authorized Version of Ps. 2:7 puts it, “This day have I (God the Father) begotten Thee.” The Holy Spirit was neither made, or created or generated, but He emanated from the Father and the Son. So, there is one Father, one Son, and one Holy Spirit.

4.2 The evidence for this doctrine

4.2.1 In the Old Testament (OT)

The Trinity is not clearly spelt out in the OT, but this is understandable.

Israel was surrounded by polytheistic nations and their influence; the Triune idea would have been a stumbling block to them. Nevertheless, an embryonic element of it is discernible in the OT. Every reference to **Elohim** (God) is to God in the plural. And the following must also be noted:

The **Father** is mentioned in Ps. 63:16 and Mal. 2:10.

For references to the **Son** see Prov. 30:4; Isaiah 53 (the Messiah); Jer. 23:5-6.

The **Holy Spirit** : Gen. 1:2; Isa. 11:2; 61:1; 63:10.

The earliest foreshadowing of the Trinity is contained in the narrative of Creation, where Elohim is seen to create by means of Word and Spirit (Gen. 1:3). Here we are for the first time introduced to the Word put forth as a personal creative power, and to the Spirit as the bringer of life and order to Creation. There is thus early a threefold centre of activity. God as Creator thought the universe, expressed His thoughts in a Word, and made His Spirit its animating principle. The threefold source revealed in Creation became still more evident in the unfolding of redemption. The revelation of redemption was entrusted to the **mal’ak Yahweh**, the Messenger of Yahweh (N.B. Not every appearance of angels in the OT refers to a **divine** being; some were just angels on a special mission—I Sam. 24:16; I Kings 19:5; II Kings 19:35). In passages like Gen. 16:7; 24:7 and 48:16, the Angel of Yahweh not only bears the divine name, but has divine dignity and power, dispenses divine deliverance and accepts homage and adoration proper only to God. The threefold Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:24-26) must also be noted as perhaps the prototype of the New Testament apostolic blessing.

4.2.2 In the New Testament (NT)

The early Christians were adamant that there is only one God, but they still described Christ as God (Rom. 9:5 --AV). Experience taught them that to know Christ is to know God. They regarded the indwelling Holy Spirit as far more than a mere feeling or influence—it was Someone with whom we can have personal communion (Acts 15:28). There are various references to three Persons, e.g., in Matt. 3:16-17 Jesus comes up out of the water, the Spirit of God descends like a dove on Him and from heaven the Father speaks out. In John 14:16-17 Jesus promises to ask His Father to send the Spirit of truth to us—see also John 14:26. While Stephen stood accused before the Jewish Council, he, “...filled with the Holy Spirit, and gazing intently up to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God’s right hand” (Acts 7:55). In II Cor. 13:14 Paul pronounces the well-known blessing: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”

In Heb. 9:14 we read that Christ “...through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God...” According to I John 5:7-9 all three Persons, the Father, the Word (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit bear witness. In Revelation chapters 4 and 5 John sees visions of heaven and the Persons of the Trinity are separately mentioned. And finally, when Jesus Himself gave us the formulary for Baptism He said: “...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” (Matt. 28:19).

4.3 The doctrine illustrated

4.3.1 In nature

Water is a unity but we can still discern three forms of it: water ice and snow. Electricity is one form of energy, but we find it can reveal itself as power, light or heat.

4.3.2 The human personality

Man created in God’s image is a single entity, but we can distinguish soul, spirit and body.

4.3.3 Social life

Husband and wife become one in marriage, but they are clearly still two.

God the Father is the One who loves; the Son is the eternal Love object; the Holy Spirit is the eternal Bond and Outflow of that Unity of love.

II The absolute attributes

1. God is Almighty

There are no limits to God’s power: “...with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). This, of course, excludes sin which would go against His Holy Nature. He reveals His omnipotence in nature (Gen.1 & Heb. 11:12); His control over man (Ps. 33:13-15,

Dan.4:35, Luke 12:16-20, James 4:15); His authority over the angels in Heaven (I Peter 3:22); and over Satan (Rev. 20:10). The present power of Satan versus God’s children, is just as much as God allows him (Job 1:12).

2. God is Omnipresent

This means, He is present in all places at the same time. His influence is visible everywhere—also in Heaven (Isa. 6:1-3). He is present in the forces of nature (Nahum 1:3).

He personally attends to the needs of His people (Ps. 68:7-8). He is aware of the smallest prayer meeting (Matt. 18:19-20). He will no doubt play a role where a guilty conscience is acting up (Gen. 3:8). “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Col. 2:9). Furthermore, we find Him in His Church (Ephes. 2:16-22).

We must note though, that although God is present everywhere, it is not always in the same capacity. Without this proviso, our doctrine would border on Pantheism, God in everything.

His presence on earth, e.g., differs from the situation in Heaven, where His throne is. As Finlayson put it: “It is not so much that God is everywhere; He is Himself the Everywhere.”

In conclusion, please refer to Ps. 139:7-12 and Jer. 23:24.

3. God is all-knowing (omniscient)

3.1 God knows all (I John 3:20). He has perfect knowledge of the workings of nature (Job 37). He numbers the stars and calls each one by its name (Ps. 147:4; Isa. 40:26).

God even knows when a sparrow falls to the ground (Matt. 10:29).

3.2 God has perfect knowledge of the world, past, present and future. He informs His prophets of what is going to happen. In the book of Daniel God gives forewarning about developments and changes in the world / on earth before the advent of the Millennium. The book of Revelation takes this further. See also Acts 15:16-18 and Isa. 48:5-8.

3.3 God has perfect knowledge of man. Even the hairs on our heads have been counted

(Matt. 10:30). He is aware of every word a man speaks (Matt 12:36). He is even cognizant of one's unspoken thoughts (I Chron. 28:9; Ps. 94:11 - AV). The Lord is aware of any form of misery suffered by us (Exod. 3:7; Ps. 110:19-20). He knows our every need (Isa. 65:24; Matt. 6:31-32). God has foreknowledge of what man is going to do or where he is heading (Rom. 8:29-30). He has instantaneous knowledge of past, present and future

(Acts 8:26,27,29; I Peter 1:1-2). What a comforting thought: “...your Father knows what you need before you ask him”! (Matt. 6:8).

4. God is All-wise

“By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew”

(Prov. 3:19-20). “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!”

(Rom. 11:33). His wisdom follows from his omnipotence and omniscience. God has the power to apply his knowledge in such a way that the highest purpose will be

served by the best means. God always does what is right, in the right way and at the right time. “For everything God created is good...” (I Tim. 4:4)

5. God is Immutable

In Mal. 3:6 it says: “I the LORD do not change...” The apostle James writes: “...the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).

On the other hand, we read in Gen. 6:6, “The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.” But this does not indicate a change in God; it was man who had failed. God is always merciful towards the righteous and the godless he will punish. When man deviates from the straight and narrow, God’s attitude towards him is bound to change. When you ride a bicycle with a tailwind and you change direction, your experience of the wind is bound to become different. Did the wind change? No. It was cycling man who changed direction. Thanks be to God. What an anchor and a refuge for a soul to know that HE is Omnipotent and Immutable.!

III MORAL ATTRIBUTES

1. God is Holy

God’s holiness is an outstanding characteristic—His perfect isolation from any sin or impurity. “God is light; in him there is no darkness at all” (I John 1:5). He is morally absolutely pure and He cannot tolerate sin (Ex. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; I Peter 1:15-16; Rev. 4:8).

Whenever a person is described as holy, it means that he/she has detached him/her from sin and the world, and is entirely dedicated to God.

The reason why the world makes light of sin, is because the world is affected by semi-darkness: the contrast between sin and holiness cannot be perceived. But when we look at sin in the light of God’s Holiness, then its ghastly character becomes evident. It is regrettable, that the subject of holiness is not very popular, even amongst Christians. The latter seem to desire just enough Christianity to make it through the Pearly Gates, but not so much that they may stand out in the world. This approach has been likened to unavoidable chicken pox. If they then must contract it, may it please be a mild grade so that it is invisible!

2. God is reliable

He is entirely trustworthy. His Word always remains true. Therefore His children can depend on His promises. “Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?” (Num. 23:19). See also Jos. 21:43-45; I Cor. 1:9; I Thess. 5:24; II Tim. 2:13.

3. God is Merciful

God is merciful, just and long-suffering towards the righteous and the unrighteous. He feels for His creatures and provides for their needs, and, towards unrepentant sinners He reveals an indulgent tolerance. We sometimes here sinful people swearing and blaspheming God, and then we wonder why God does not destroy them there and then. But then the apostle Peter reminds us: “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). The Lord is especially gracious to His own.

He keeps them from slipping or stumbling (Ps. 94:18). He rescues them from their enemies (Ex. 15:9,10,12). He heals them when they are sick (Ex. 15:26; Isa..57:19; Jer. 30:17).

Sometimes He applies disciplinary measures (Heb. 12:6).

Aliens may escape the rod,
Nursed in earthly, vain delight;

But a trueborn child of God

Must not, would not if he might.. (Naismith) See also Rev. 3:19.

4. God is Good

He teaches His creatures the way they should go (Ps. 25:8), leading them by His kindness (Acts 14:17; Rom. 2:4). So much suffering is caused by man's own sinful ways.

5. God is just

The gods of Greek mythology were moody and capricious. Human judges can err in their judgments or be wrongly influenced. But no unjustness can be found with God. "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). Fairness is to treat a person correctly according to his circumstances and means. God is just when He acquits the innocent, condemns the godless, sees that justice prevails (Ezek. 45:9-12), forgives the penitent (II Chron. 7:14; I John 1:9), saves His people (Is. 46:13) and gives victory to His faithful servants (Ps. 98:1-3)

There is a tendency to over-emphasize God's love to the extent that He will refrain from punishing anyone. The Bible, however, teaches us that He is a God of love as well as retribution (John 3:36). He wouldn't be just if He simply allowed sin and wickedness to continue unchecked. Imagine arriving in Heaven and discovering Nero, the notorious Roman Emperor, among the martyrs? Or, see Judas, the betrayer, sitting right next to Jesus? Sin must be punished. There is the assurance for a Christian engaged in a violent struggle against the powers of darkness, that wickedness will be punished (Isa. 26:10; Rom. 2:5; II Peter 3:10).

6. God is Love

Love is that attribute of God that inclines Him to commune with man, especially with the righteous who follow Him (Deut. 7:8; John 3:16; I John 4:16). His love is revealed by His sacrifice: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..."(John 3:16). And in addition to this, He graciously gives us all things (Rom. 8:32).

In His love He bestows Fatherly care on His own (Deut. 1:31; Ps. 103:13-14), and He forgives the penitent (II Chron. 7:14; I John 1:9). Love seeks love in return and the latter must emanate from spontaneous free choice. And that we must prove by following His commandments (II John 6).

LECTURE 5 CHRISTOLOGY

(The doctrine on Christ, the systematic / doctrinal interpretation of the belief in Christ's human and divine nature, of His teachings, of the significance of His life, death, resurrection, etc.)

The Personality of CHRIST

A former President of the Royal College of Physicians, Prof. Simpson, said the following in his final address to the College: "I do not know in what mood of pessimism I might have stood before you today had it not been that, ere the dew of youth had dried from off me, I made friends with the sinless Son of Man Who is the well-Head of the stream that vitalizes all advancing civilization and Who claims to be the First and the Last, and the Living One Who was dead and is alive for evermore." Naismith published the above and various other tributes to our Lord. One of them reads as follows: "He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became the Son of Man that we might become sons of God."

1. The Deity of Christ

The following serves to prove His Deity :

1.1 Evidence from His life and work

1.1.1 His birth had a supernatural origin: "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:34-35).

1.1.2 His morally perfect life proves that He was superhuman. He was the only Being who ever lived on earth and never had to make a confession. No valid accusation could be brought against Him. He can still serve all men and women as the ideal Model.

Although He mixed freely with people at grass roots level, He stood morally and spiritually apart from all His contemporaries.

1.1.3 His teaching was evidence of perfect insight and knowledge (John 6:68-69).

His pronouncements have stood the test of 20 centuries and are still as brilliant as ever. Of no other person can this be said.

1.1.4 The miracles Christ performed shows that He was no earthling, but that He had Divine life and power (John 5:20-26). He could control sickness, death and the forces of nature.

1.1.5 His resurrection from death proves that He is exalted far above the normal laws of nature to which man is subject.

1.1.6 Another proof of His Divine nature is the Ascension of Christ.

1.1.7 By promising the Holy Spirit, that really came over His disciples at Pentecost, Jesus proved that He is really God.

1.2 Proof from His own statements

- 1.2.1** At the tender age of 12, He was already aware of the fact that He was the Son of God. He told Joseph and Mary: “Why were you searching for me?...Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49).
- 1.2.2** He refers to Himself as ‘the Son’ of God in a way that couldn’t apply to anyone else (Matt. 11:27).
- 1.2.3** In John 14:7-10 Christ declares Himself to be a revelation of the Father; He Himself is not the Father, but He points to His intimate relationship with the Father by means of which the Father can be known in Christ. From this it is clear that Christ is one Person of the Deity.
- 1.2.4** He acknowledges that Lord and Teacher (‘Master’ in the AV) are appropriate titles for Him (John 13:13-14).
- 1.2.5** He allowed a man to worship Him (John 9:38). If He was not God, this would have been an abominable sin.
- 1.2.6** Christ’s witness about Himself: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).
- 1.2.7** In Matt. 11:27 He states: “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

1.3 Testimony from other sources

1.3.1 The Old Testament

Isaiah 7:14 -- “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel”. Immanuel means ‘God with us’.

Isaiah 9:6 -- “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.”

He is called Father in the same sense that David was called father of the Israelites. It was a term of reverence for a kind and just ruler (Mark 11:10). Christ is likewise Father to all in His Kingdom (Isa. 22:21-22; Luke 22:29-30).

1.3.2

Under divine inspiration Peter testified as follows of the Lord Jesus: “‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.’” (Matt. 16:16-17). From Paul’s side we hear: “For in Christ all the fulness of the Deity lives in bodily form...” (Col. 2:9).

1.3.3 From our Heavenly Father Himself

After Jesus’ baptism there came a voice from heaven: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

1.3.4 Even from demons

“...I know who you are—The Holy One of God!” (Mark 1:23-24; Luke 4:41).

1.4 The status of Christ as proof

1.4.1 As Creator

“He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:2-3).

1.4.2 As Sustainer of all things

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17).

1.4.3 As Forgiver of sins

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5).

1.4.4 As eternal High Priest

“We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven...” (Heb. 8:1).

1.4.5 As Lord of the Resurrection

“For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (I Cor. 15:22).

1.4.6 As final Judge

“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father” (John 5:22-23).

1.5 Proof from the Divine attributes of Christ

1.5.1 The absolute attributes

He is eternal (John 8:58; 17:5; Col. 1:17; Rev. 1:8).

He is unchangeable: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

He is almighty. Jesus Himself said: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt. 28:18).

He is all-knowing. He knows everything, including man and the future (John 1:48-50; 2:24-25; Col. 2:3; Heb. 4:13).

He is omnipresent. Where believers meet, He is there amongst them (Matt. 18:20). And He also promised His disciples: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

1.5.2 The moral characteristics

He is holy (Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; Acts 3:14-15).

He is just and He will see that justice is done (Matt. 23:33-39).

He is merciful and shows mercy towards the hungry, the sick and the penitent (Matt. 14:14; Mark 6:34-44).

He is full of love (John 11:36; 15:12-13; Rom. 5:6-8).

He is faithful (John 14:13,14,21,23).

2. The Humanity of Christ

Through His incarnation, He, the Second Person of the Deity, assumed a human body. This does not mean that God has changed into a human being, or, that a man had become Godly. By incarnation a unification had taken place between the Godly and the human natures. Therefore Christ is both God and perfect man. He possesses all human characteristics and, at the same time, He is also Godly in all respects. This is what is meant in John 1:14 -- “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We

have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The following proves that Christ was truly human:

2.1 His birth—delivered by a woman

Christ had an ancestry like any other person (Matt. 1:1-17) and He was born like any other human baby (Luke 2:6-7). There were, however, some points of difference:

- (i) Christ did not have a human father, for He was begotten by the Holy Spirit in His mother.
- (ii) His human birth was not the real beginning of His existence and therefore He testified that He was sent to the world by His Father (John 8:29) and that He exists from everlasting to everlasting (Rev. 1:8).
- (iii) His human birth only introduced a change to His nature.

2.2 Christ grew up like a normal human child

“And the child grew up and became strong in spirit...” (Luke 1:80).

2.3 In appearance He was a man of His times and the local culture

The Samaritan woman recognized Him as a Jew, without any difficulty (John 4:9).

The travellers to Emmaus, who did not recognize the Lord, regarded Him as just another road user (Luke 24:13). Mary took Him for the gardener (John 20:15).

2.4 He had a normal human body, except that it was not defiled by sin

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity...” (Heb. 2:14). In Rom. 8:3 we read that God did what the law could not do “...by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man...”

2.5 Jesus refers to His heart and spirit just as any other man would have done

“...when he began to feel distressed and agitated, he said to them, “My heart is sad, sad even to death...” (Matt. 26:37-38 MT). “Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’” (Luke 23:46). Compare this with Acts 7:59.

2.6 His body was subject to the same limitations as that of an ordinary person

Christ experienced hunger (Matt. 4:2), He admitted to thirst (John 19:28), He became tired (John 4:7) and He required sleep like every normal person (Matt. 8:24).

2.7 He was subject to the normal emotions

He wept over Jerusalem and the death of Lazarus (Luke 19:41; John 11:35-36). He felt the need for human sympathy and communion (Matt. 26:36,40). He was tempted in every way but did not sin (Heb. 4:15).

2.8 He is referred to as an ordinary man

In the Gospels Jesus refers about 80 times to the ‘Son of man’ (e.g. Luke 19:10).

Peter witnessed as follows about Christ: “Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know (Acts 2:22). Paul refers to Christ as “...the man he (God) has appointed...” (Acts 17:31). John goes a big step further when he states: “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God...” (I John 4:3 - AV).

2.9 He died like every other person

Christ's suffering and death on the cross was very real. It was only because He was also God that death could not keep Him, for He rose again! "*All the earth with gladness singing, Alleluia! Easter morn!*" (Alfred Walton).

2.10 His great work of atonement demanded that He had to be truly man

For Christ to be the perfect Mediator and High Priest, He had to be God and man at the same time. Of Him it is truly said that He sympathized with our weaknesses, endured all possible human trials, but always without sinning (Heb. 4:15).

2.11 The Risen Christ remained a perfect man

The fact that Mary took Him for the gardener (John 20:15), that the travellers to Emmaus regarded Him as just another stranger (Luke 24:13-16), that the disciples were invited to examine the wounds (Luke 24:39; John 20:27) and that He partook of bread and fish (John 21:12-15), proves that although Christ had a glorified body after His resurrection, He was still truly man.

3. The Names of Christ

3.1 Son of God

Christ is called 'Son of God' on various occasions in the gospels (Luke 1:32; 4:41; 8:28). In keeping with this name, Jesus addresses the Heavenly Father as 'Father' (John 17). The whole of the first chapter of the letter to the Hebrews is devoted to God's Son. Here there is no suggestion of a moment of birth because Christ has always been there, but it is a matter of relationship, the Son and the Father.

3.2 The Word

In John 1:1 Christ is called the Word. John the Apostle, was the most intimate earthly friend of Jesus. He is very positive that Jesus is a Personality existing from Eternity, and that He had a hand in the Creation of the Universe. In John 17:5 Jesus is quoted as referring to "...the glory I had with you before he world began." Jesus is called the Word in John 1:1. That is, Jesus was God's expression of Himself to mankind. Jesus was God. Jesus was like God. Jesus is God's message to mankind (Halley's Bible Handbook, pp.527,528). See also Luke 10:22; John 12:49.

As God's message to mankind, Jesus conveys God's love towards the believer (John 3:16) and the wrath in store for the unrepentant (John 3:36). All that man is destined to know about God, is revealed in Christ. That is why Jesus could say: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

3.3 The Lord

In John 13:13 Jesus says of Himself: "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord', and rightly so, for that is what I am." According to Louw and Nida's Lexicon the Greek for 'Lord' - 'kurios' - is a title for God and for Christ. It indicates one who exercises supernatural authority over mankind, i.e. Lord, Ruler, One who commands. Christ underlined this Lordship in a special way through His death of atonement. That's what Peter pointed out to the Jerusalem crowd on the Day of Pentecost: "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Christ is Lord and Master of all believers bought free by means of His precious blood (I Cor. 6:20; II Cor. 5:15).

3.4 Christ

Both Greek words 'Christos' and 'Messias' mean literally 'one who has been anointed'. 'Messias' is of course the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew 'mashiyach' which also means 'anointed'. Just as prophets and kings (I Kings 19:16) and priests (Exod. 40:14-15) in the OT were anointed when they were 'reserved' for their high calling, so Christ is the

Anointed of His people (church) to fulfil the roles of Prophet, Priest and King (Luke 14:18-19; Acts 10:38).

3.5 Son of Man

Christ received this name with His incarnation and whereas ‘Son of God’ honours His Godly nature, ‘Son of Man’ indicates His human nature. Closely related to the latter is the term ‘Son of David’. It means that on the human side He is a descendant of David (Isa. 11:1-5; Jer. 23:5; Matt. 1:6). This is in accordance with the promise made to David (II Sam. 7:16).

3.6 Jesus

‘Iesous’ is a Greek transliteration for the Hebrew name ‘Yehowshuwa’ or ‘Yehowshua’ meaning ‘Jehovah-saved’ = (Eng.) Joshua. In Matt. 1:21 the angel of the Lord instructed Joseph: “...and you shall give him the name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” This was already foreshadowed in the OT (Isa. 63:9). This rescue mission was also implied in Moses, the judges and others, all types prefiguring Jesus Christ.

3.7 The Alpha and Omega

Christ said about Himself: “‘ I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty’” (Rev. 1:8). Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This underscores the **eternal** nature of Christ.

3.8 Lamb of God

“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’” (John 1:29). Under the Old Covenant sacrifices for the sins were mandatory and a lamb was often used for this purpose. In Exod. 12 the latter plays an important role with the institution of the Passover. All these sacrifices were types foreshadowing the perfect atonement wrought by Christ on Calvary. This is why Christ is called the Lamb of God; He was the sacrifice offered by God Himself. In his prophetic vision John saw Christ in this role when he writes: “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain...” (Rev. 5:6).

3.9 Emmanuel

The original Hebrew is ‘Immanuwel’ meaning ‘with us (is) God’. This name is applied to Christ in Matt. 1:23 because He is the revelation of God amongst His people. That was Jesus in the flesh on earth; now He achieves it by means of the Spirit. That is why He could say to His disciples: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt. 28:20).

LECTURE 6 CHRISTOLOGY (cont.)

CHRIST'S WORK

Our Lord had a very busy time on earth, but His most important work was to wash away our sins (Matt. 1:21; John 1:29). To accomplish this immense task required His Death of Atonement, His Resurrection and His Ascension.

1. The Death of Christ

1.1 The significance of His death

The outstanding event and the central message of the New Testament can be summarized in the words: "...Christ died for our sins..." (I Cor. 15:3). His death of atonement is a unique feature of the Christian religion. Martin Luther pointed out that Christianity had a distinguishing feature at its centre: the Cross. The whole struggle known as the Reformation was about the correct interpretation of Calvary's role. The Reformers correctly stressed the key concepts of **grace** (sola gratia) and **faith** (sola fidei), but these principles can only operate in terms of Christ's death.

Here we have the outstanding feature of the Gospel that makes Christianity **the** religion, because it opens the way to rescue and release from the biggest problem: the debt and power of sin. Jesus is "... the source of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9), and that means complete salvation. Anything that could possibly bind a person, is defeated by the price our Lord paid on Calvary.

1.2 The meaning thereof

At the time of Creation there was a positive relationship between Man and his Creator. Then came the Fall and the relationship was broken. For mankind this meant separation from God and a godless condition. In addition, his sin became a massive barrier that no human endeavour could remove.

But God Himself came to the rescue. He sent His Son to this world to remove the barrier and to make reconciliation with God possible again. The Son had to die to make this possible. He carried our sins and atoned for them. Because of the magnitude and paramount importance of atonement and salvation, we will reserve them as subjects for a separate lecture.

1.3 False theories about His death

In modern times a variety of misleading theories about the meaning of Christ's death cropped up. We look at some of them shortly:

1.3.1 The coincidence theory

According to this theory Christ's life ended accidentally on the Cross. But this can be refuted from Scripture:

- (i) Jesus spoke in advance of His death on various occasions (Matt. 16:21; 20:18-19; Mark 9:30-32).
- (ii) He knew in advance when people conspired against Him (Luke 4:28-30; 22:21-22; John 8:59).
- (iii) Jesus willingly laid down His life for us (Mark 10:45).
- (iv) That Jesus would die, was prophesied long before He came to earth (Ps. 22; Ps. 69; Isa. 53; Matt. 26:53-56).

1.3.2 The Martyr theory

According to this theory Jesus died as a martyr, just as an apostle of the Early Church would have died. He merely gave His life for a good cause. But the theory is disproved by the following:

- (a) If He was just another martyr, why was He forsaken by God in His hour of death? In the end of a martyr's life, God's presence was so real that it seemed to subdue the terrible pain. And how much more would the Son of God have experienced His Father's presence, if He was dying as a martyr.
- (b) Why did Jesus show signs of flinching when confronted with the terrible 'cup' in Gethsemane, if He was merely going to die? Other martyrs welcomed the end and even showed signs of joy. But Jesus' soul was tormented for He had to take the sins of the whole world on Him and then die a death of atonement.
- (c) Stephen, the first martyr, died a few years after Jesus. He was a prominent leader of the Church, but forgiveness of sin was never preached in terms of **his** death.

1.3.3 The Moral Example theory

According to this theory the death of Jesus was intended to inspire man to a better life morally. The example of His suffering was supposed to soften the heart of mankind, help it to reform itself by conversion and self-improvement. Then God would grant forgiveness just because I have repented and reformed. But did this ever happen? Did Jesus' suffering move the Jews to conversion? Before God no true conversion and acceptance is possible if the sin / guilt problem is not taken care of. And that is why Jesus died.

1.3.4 The Hostage theory

According to this theory, God had to demonstrate His hatred of sin and so He used Jesus as an example. But, the question then arises, why use an innocent man for such a purpose, while there are so many guilty ones?

1.3.5 The Love theory

According to this theory Jesus had to die so that God could show sinners how much He loved them, and that this would stimulate love in return and induce the sinner to follow the Lord. But this is impossible, because there can be no mutual love between God and man while the problem of sin remains unresolved. God did indeed reveal His love through Christ's death, but His love also includes making it possible for man to rid himself of his sins and to qualify for eternal bliss.

2. The Resurrection of Christ

2.1 His resurrection as fact

The resurrection of Christ is the wonder of Christianity. When the reality of this miracle establishes itself in our consciousness, then the other wonders of the Bible become understandable. It is fundamental to Christendom and speaks loudly and clearly to us, even after two millennia. The resurrection is proof that Christ was indeed what he claimed to be, the Son of God. It is thus a guarantee for what Christians proclaimed and

preachers preached over all these centuries. But thank God, "...Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (I Cor. 15:20).

2.2 Evidence supporting the Resurrection

2.2.1 Jesus predicted it (Matt. 17:23).

2.2.2 Jesus Himself referred to it at a later stage (Rev. 1:18).

2.2.3 Angels testified about it (Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7) and according to Heb. 2:2 they are reliable witnesses.

2.2.4 Many trustworthy persons testified about it

After His resurrection Jesus stayed on for a period of 40 days and appeared to more than 500 persons (I Cor. 15:6). These folks were serious Christians whose testimony we can accept. There were, for example,

- Mary of Magdala (John 20:14-18)
- Peter and six others (John 21:1-22)
- The eleven disciples (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark. 16:14-19)
- Two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31)
- Paul (Acts 9:3-6).

2.2.5 *It is recorded in secular history*

A report ascribed to Tertullian (circa 155-222 AD) has it that Pontius Pilate wrote a letter to Emperor Tiberias (42 BC - 37 AD) in which he informs him of the wonderful happenings in Jerusalem, specifically the resurrection of Jesus.

2.2.6 *The Day of the Lord*

If Jesus did not rise from the dead on the first day of the week, we would still be celebrating the Jewish custom on the seventh day (Sabbath). Our Sunday custom is first mentioned in Acts 20:7. In the early part of the 4th century, Emperor Constantine made the Christians' day of assembly, Sunday, a rest day - forbidding ordinary work. Sunday is therefore a monument to the Resurrection!

2.2.7 *The establishment of the Christian Church* is in itself proof of the Resurrection. The risen Christ appeared to His band of badly demoralized and fear-ridden followers, and galvanized them into action. They could start anew in the all-conquering faith in a Risen Lord, and they could preach a message based on His Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Second Coming. Thousands accepted and experienced the Lord Jesus in their lives and so Christianity spread over the entire world. But in all this the resurrection of Jesus Christ played a key role.

2.3 The significance of the Resurrection

2.3.1 *A cornerstone of Christianity*

The Apostle Paul wrote: "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost" (I Cor. 15:17-18). Walter B. Knight quotes the following from the Sunday School Times:

“As a missionary finished preaching in a market place in one of the villages of northern India, a Mohammedan stepped up to him and said: ‘You must admit that we have one thing you have not, and it is better than anything you have.’ ‘And what is it you have?’

‘When we go to Mecca,’ said the Mohammedan, ‘we at least find a coffin. But when you Christians go to Jerusalem, your Mecca, you find nothing but an empty grave.’

Smilingly, the missionary explained, ‘That is just the difference. Mohammed is dead and in his coffin. And all false systems of religion and philosophy are in their coffins. But Christ is risen, and all power in Heaven and on earth is given to Him. He is alive forevermore!’”

2.3.2 It seems to prove that Jesus was all He claimed to be

He is truly the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and the Lord of lords

(Rom. 1:3-4). Evil forces might have thought that Calvary was the end, but God answered with the Resurrection—even death was conquered by Jesus!

2.3.3 It proves the reality of the atoning work of Christ

“...for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Rom. 4:24-25).

2.3.4 It proves that we have a sympathetic High Priest in Heaven

He lived the same life that we live; He has firsthand knowledge of our problems and weaknesses and he can help us each day to live Christ-worthy lives. He who died for us, now lives for us - see Rom. 8:34 and Heb. 7:35.

2.3.5 It proves that there is life beyond the grave

The septic complains that nobody has ever returned from the other side to inform us. Wrong! One did come back - Jesus Christ! To the question, “Is there life hereafter?” the scientist may say, “I don’t know.” The philosopher may concede: “There should be a future life.” But the Christian’s answer could well be along the following lines from a poem by Edna Read:

“Why should we dread the thing called death?
Its just an open door,
Where all within is love and peace
And joy forever more.
‘Because I live, you too shall live,’
We hear the Saviour say.
Let’s consecrate our lives anew,
On this glad Easter Day.”

2.3.6 It proves personal immortality

In John 14:19 the Master declared: “Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. **Because I live, you also will live.**” See also II Cor. 4:14 and I Thess. 4:14.

2.3.7 It proves that a Day of Judgment is really coming

Before the Council of the Areopagus in Athens, Paul declared: “For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given

proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Christ has risen from the dead to eventually act as judge, and man will also rise, to be judged by Him.

2.4 False allegations re the Resurrection

Of course, it suited certain enemies of Christianity to disprove the Resurrection. The theories they concocted include the following:

2.4.1 Fraud by the disciples

These people claim that the Lord never rose, but His disciples stole His body from the grave, while the soldiers slept. They then spread a rumour that He had risen from the dead. The chief priests paid the soldiers to spread this lie (Matt. 28:11-15).

Evidence to the contrary

- (a) Soldiers sleeping on duty were punished by execution. They would’ve made double sure that they stayed awake. But, if they had slept, how could they have known that His **disciples** had stolen the body? How could they identify perpetrator that they themselves hadn’t seen?
- (b) The disciples were honourable men. They wouldn’t have committed such a fraud. And **if** they had been really so dishonest, they wouldn’t have made such a big deal of the Resurrection—preaching about it in spite of persecution and (in many cases) martyrdom.
- (c) Jerusalem residents rejected the fraud theory in their thousands and many were soon enthusiastic followers of Jesus.
- (d) If the disciples did steal the body, why did they waste time removing the cerement? Why transport a naked body? (Luke 24:12-AV).

2.4.2 The Fable theory

These hostile folks classified the Resurrection account as just another fable, like the one about the wandering Jew, for example.

Evidence against

A mere fable would never have induced the disciples and members of the Early Church to suffer all forms of persecution and even death.

2.4.3 The Coma theory

According to this theory, Jesus fell into a coma and, after deposit in the cool crypt, the fresh air and the sharp smell of the embalming spices, brought Him round. So, on the third day, He could appear to His disciples.

Evidence to the contrary

- (a) If this could at all have happened, picture a half-dead person, pierced by wounds that require immediate and intensive medical care, playing the role of Conqueror of death and grave to convince His disciples and inspire them for the immense task ahead. It just wouldn’t work out and the effect on the disciples would have been more negative than positive.
- (b) When the soldiers checked His condition by plunging a spear in His side, there was a flow of blood and water - a medical sign that He was really dead because His heart’s function had broken down.
- (c) Jesus was declared dead by competent person’s (Mark 15:44-45; John 19:32-37).

- (d) The embalming spices were normally a potent poison and a person in a coma would've been unable to survive the application thereof.

2.4.4 The Spirit theory

As maintained by this theory, it was only the spirit of Jesus that appeared on Easter Morning and thereafter, and not the complete / perfect man. His body must have been stolen.

Evidence to the contrary

Jesus Himself denied that He was just a spirit - see Luke 24:36-43. He even ate solid food in the presence of His disciples.

2.4.5 The Hallucination theory

Those who advanced this theory, suggested that the disciples and women just imagined seeing Jesus. The idea of the empty tomb stimulated such enthusiasm with Mary and the others, that they imagined seeing Him alive.

In contradiction

- (a) Scripture cancels out the enthusiasm bit about Mary; on the contrary, she wept in grief, didn't think about a possible resurrection at all, but wept because she thought that His body had been removed to an unknown place (John 20:11-13).
- (b) The disciples were the last people to be taken in so easily. Even when Jesus actually appeared to them, they could initially not be persuaded to accept that He was indeed present.

3. *The Ascension of Christ*

3.1 *The reality of His Ascension*

3.1.1 It was foreseen in the Old Testament (Ps. 68:18 - AV; Ps. 110:1)

3.1.2 Jesus Himself referred to His Ascension (John 6:62).

3.1.3 Eyewitnesses confirmed the fact. They, the disciples, were reliable people; they were present and they could afterwards witness from personal experience (Acts 1:3-9).

3.1.4 Peter, eyewitness and leader of the Early Church, testified about its truth (Acts 2:32-35; 5:30-32; I Peter 3:22).

3.1.5 Those who testified about the Ascension, got their information directly from the disciples (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Ephes. 4:8-10; Philip. 2:9; Heb. 4:14 - AV).

3.1.6 Stephen saw Jesus in Heaven, standing at God's right hand (Acts 7:55-56).

3.1.7 With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there was further proof that Jesus had ascended to Heaven, because that was precisely what He had predicted in John 16:7.

3.2 *How the Ascension took place*

- 3.2.1** One Scripture reference (John 20:17) shows Jesus taking the initiative (ascending), and another (Acts 1:2), that He “was taken up to heaven.” The first one refers to Jesus entering the presence of His Father on His own accord. The second reference emphasizes action by the Father, by whom He was elevated as a reward for His obedience, even unto death.
- 3.2.2** During the Ascension He stretched out His hands to bless His disciples and “While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven” (Luke 24:51). The marks in those hands was a last reminder of the real reconciliation He had brought between mankind and God. His Second Coming will be very unpleasant for those who rejected Him on earth.
- 3.2.3** By rising slowly, He made it clear to His disciples that He was **leaving** life on earth and not simply disappearing. In this way they could now be better eyewitnesses.
- 3.2.4** It was unthinkable that the appearances of Jesus after His Resurrection should grow fewer and fewer until finally they petered out. That would have effectively wrecked the faith of men. There had to come a day of parting, when the Jesus of earth finally became the Christ of Heaven. As Henry Halley summarized the Ascension:

“His forty days of post-resurrection ministry finished, His earthly mission accomplished, waiting Angel Chariots bore the triumphant Saviour away to the throne of God.” (Bible Handbook, p. 525).

3.3 Significance of the Ascension for Christ Himself

- 3.3.1** It proved once more that Jesus was a Godly Person. His departure was an **ascension**, while His entry into this world was a **descent**. But both movements were supernatural.
- 3.3.2** A new relationship now became possible. His disciples would no longer regard Him as ‘Christ in the flesh’, but as the glorified Christ in Heaven. There He is in God’s presence and He assists His disciples by means of the Holy Spirit.
- 3.3.3** A dividing line. The ascension meant a demarcation point between two life periods of the Saviour - first in the flesh as sinless man on earth, part of mankind’s history. Then from the Ascension into the (eternal) future, to be known on a spiritual level.
- 3.3.4** It proves the omnipotence of Christ. He had here reached a point in time when He could declare: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matt. 28:18).
- 3.3.5** The paramount Christ. He had now entered a sovereign position: “For in Christ all the fulness of the deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority” (Col. 2:9-10). See also Rom. 14:9; Philip. 2:9-11; I Peter 3:22. The Church, His body on earth, can certainly put their trust in Him.

3.4 Significance of the Ascension for the believer

- 3.4.1** It assures us of His Second Coming (John 14:2-3). He is preparing the way for us (Heb. 6:19-20).

- 3.4.2** He is now our High Priest and Mediator - see Heb. 7:25-27 - and nothing can separate us from His love (Rom. 8:34-35).
- 3.4.3** It provides additional evidence of life eternal. He has ascended and He is preparing a heavenly dwelling for us (John 14:2-3, 18).

LECTURE 7 PNEUMATOLOGY

(The doctrine relating to the Holy Spirit)

THE ENTITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We are now in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-15) but the Church in general knows very little about the character and work of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore imperative that we pay close attention to the doctrine about the Holy Spirit.

1. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

It is quite natural to accept God the Father and God the Son as **persons**, but the workings of the Holy Spirit are so mysterious that one is inclined to picture the Spirit as an influence or a manifestation of God's power, rather than a person. This is strengthened by the symbols often used in connection with the Spirit, namely, breath, wind, power, oil, fire, water, anointing, etc. Nevertheless, Scripture clearly mentions the personality of the Holy Spirit.

1.1 What is a personality?

We associate characteristics like thought, will and emotions with a definite person. This applies to the Holy Spirit as well:

- He can exercise a deliberate choice of action, i.e. **will** (I Cor.12:11);
- He has abundant power (Acts 1:8);
- He can teach (Neh 9:20; John 16:13);
- He possesses knowledge (I Cor. 2:10-12);
- Inspires love (Rom. 15:30).

1.2 Descriptive names that imply personality traits

The name 'Counsellor' (Comforter in AV) in John 14:16 and 16:7 surely does not refer to a mere influence, but to a person. This is also clear from the pronouns 'him' and 'he' used in e.g. John 16:7-15.

1.3 Associated with God

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in the same context as the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; I John 5:1-8).

1.4 Joins hands with God's children

The central church council in Jerusalem declared: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us..." (Acts 15:28 - AV). This surely indicates His personal existence.

1.5 The Holy Spirit can be affected by human actions

He can be **grieved** or **stifled** (quenched - AV) - Isa. 63:10; Ephes. 4:30; I Thess. 5:19. It is possible to speak **blasphemously** against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31). People have **lied** to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3) and we are warned against **insulting** the Spirit (Heb. 10:29). All this shows that He is a Person.

1.6 The Holy Spirit acts like a personality

For example:

- He speaks through a believer (Acts 6:10 - AV) and to a group of believers (Rev. 2:7).
- He mediates for God's children (Rom. 8:26).
- He supervises and even sends believers out on missions (Acts 13:2,4).
- He steps in to prevent wrong moves (Acts 16:6-7).

2. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

2.1 He is called God - Acts 5:3-4

2.2 Divine characteristics are ascribed to Him

2.2.1 Eternal - Heb. 9:14

2.2.2 Omnipotent - Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13 - AV; Luke 1:35

2.2.3 Omniscient - Ps. 139:7-10; John 14:26; I Cor. 2:9-11

2.2.4 Omnipresent - Ps. 139:7-10

2.2.5 Holy - He is the **Holy** Spirit

2.3 He performs Godly functions

As far as the Trinity is concerned, the Holy Spirit seems to have the executive power:

2.3.1 He creates - Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30

2.3.2 He regenerates - John 3:5-8

2.3.3 He justifies - I Cor. 6:11

2.3.4 He consecrates - Rom. 15:16

2.3.5 He raises from the dead - Rom. 8:11

2.3.6 He glorifies - I Cor. 15:43; II Cor. 3:18

2.4 The Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Bible

He is the author and expositor of Scripture - II Sam. 23:2; John 16:14-15; II Peter 1:20-21.

2.5 The Holy Spirit has a Godly relationship with Jesus Christ

Jesus was totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. He never claimed to be solely responsible for miracles. It was the Father who worked through Him, by means of the Holy Spirit.

2.5.1 Christ's birth was initiated by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35).

2.5.2 Christ was led by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 4:1).

2.5.3 He was anointed with the Holy Spirit to serve whoever needed Him (Acts 10:38).

2.5.4 He offered Himself to God through the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14).

2.5.5 He gave instructions to the apostles through the Holy Spirit - and through them to His Church (Acts 1:2).

2.5.6 It is Christ who introduces us to the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Acts 2:33).

All this goes to prove that the Holy Spirit is one with the Godhead, the third Person in the Almighty Trinity.

3. Names for the Holy Spirit

3.1 The Spirit of God

The Spirit is the executive power in the Deity; it is through Him that everything is created, maintained or destroyed. The Spirit acts as ‘the finger of God’ (Luke 11:20 read with Matt. 12:28) in our spiritual lives: regeneration, sanctification and the perseverance of the saints.

3.2 The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9)

There is no difference really between the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit, because there is but **one** Holy Spirit just as there is only **one Father** and **one Son**. The various names are just indicative of His varied ministries. The ‘Spirit of God’ points to the Deity’s work in Creation and in general. The ‘Spirit of Christ’ calls attention to the LORD’s regenerating power in a person’s life. The ‘Holy Spirit’ Itself, is strongly associated with the Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the Spirit. The Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, because that which Christ has become for us, He applies in our lives.

3.3 The Holy Comforter (AV), Helper (MT), Counsellor (NIV) or Advocate (Revised English Bible) - John 14:16

The original Greek word ‘parakletos’ covers a wide spectrum of meaning, including words like Helper, Encourager and Mediator. The hard, ‘legal’ term **advocate** is considerably mellowed if we take into account the ancient custom of a friend who helps a friend in a court case, not for gain but purely for the sake of friendship. In that sense, the Holy Spirit is also our advocate to assist our own petitions and to plead our case with the Father.

3.4 A Spirit of judgment burning like fire (Isaiah 4:4)

He judges sin and evokes a sense of guilt with man, together with feelings of being lost. If one opens his heart to the Holy Spirit, He applies the blood of Christ in our lives and blots out all our sins.

3.5 The Spirit of Truth (John 15:26; 1 John 5:6)

Through the Spirit’s revelation, the Truth (clear will) of God reigns in our lives.

3.6 The Spirit of promise (Ephes. 1:13 - AV)

He is the Spirit promised by Jesus and the Father (Luke 24:49; John 16:7; Acts 2:38-39).

3.7 The Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29)

A person can only be saved by the grace of God and this grace is applied in a person’s life by the Holy Spirit. If a person surrenders to the workings of the Holy Spirit, the result is conversion and salvation.

3.8 The Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15)

The Spirit of adoption enables us to pray: ‘Abba! Father! To all who accept Christ, He gave the right (power - AV) to become children of God (John 1:12).

3.9 The Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:2)

The Spirit gives life to body and soul. It rejuvenates souls mutilated by sin and heals bodies subjected by disease.

3.10 The Spirit of glory (I Peter 4:14)

The Holy Spirit brings joy and glory to man's life. The Spirit enables the believer to rejoice, even during serious tribulations; the only explanation for signs of joy with the martyrs of past ages.

3.11 The Spirit of wisdom, counsel and knowledge (Isaiah 11:2)

The Holy Spirit must open our eyes and enlighten our minds in order for us to understand the things of God.

3.12 The Spirit of prophecy (II Peter 1:21; Rev. 19:10)

The Spirit of prophecy comes over believers and provides them with the anointing and power to transmit the thoughts of God to man. This Spirit may function through a believer who is not baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Sam. 10:10-11), but He more often uses those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Although He may not be **in** a person, He can manifest very clearly **with** that person.

4. The Work of the Holy Spirit

4.1 The symbols of the Spirit

God chose to illustrate by means of symbols, things which we would otherwise not have been able to understand at all, due to the limitations of language. In the same way He uses symbols to reveal the mysterious working of the Holy Spirit.

4.1.1 Fire (Isa. 4:4; Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 2:3).

Fire illustrates the purification, refinement, diligence and enthusiasm that is wrought by the Holy Spirit.

4.1.2 Wind (Ezek. 37:9; John 3:8; Acts 2:2)

Wind symbolizes the regenerating work of the Spirit and is an indication of His mysterious working - independent, penetrating, life-giving and purifying.

4.1.3 Water (John 3:5; 4:14; 7:38)

The Spirit is the Fount of Living water - the purest, the best, because He is the real River of Life. He cleanses our souls and frees them from sin. Spiritually the Holy Spirit does what water does in the material world. Water refreshes, cleanses, quenches thirst and makes a barren field fertile. It removes contamination and restores purity. It is a fitting symbol of Godly grace, which not only purifies the soul, but also endows it with Godly beauty. Just as water is indispensable for physical life, so the Holy Spirit is vital for the spiritual life. The expression 'Living water' points to a continuous contact with the living God, by means of which His life flows continuously through me, welling up, enriching me and blessing others.

4.1.4 Seal (Ephes. 1:13; 4:30)

This symbol reminds us of the following:

- (a) **Ownership.** The imprint of a seal represents the owner. Believers

belong to God and this fact is 'sealed' by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

(b) Certainty (Ephes. 1:13; Rev. 7:3)

The Spirit brings a feeling of certainty of filiation in the heart of the believer (Rom. 8:16). He is the first and foremost part of our heavenly inheritance, evidence of the glory awaiting us. Christians are sealed, but must be careful not to do something that could break the seal (Ephes. 4:30).

4.1.5 Oil

Oil is perhaps the best known symbol for the Spirit. When oil was used in the ceremonies of the OT, it always symbolized usefulness, fertility, beauty, life and regeneration. It was generally used for food, light, lubrication, medication and skin care. Similarly, it is the Spirit that strengthens, illuminates, frees and resuscitates the soul (Isa. 61:1,3; Heb. 1:9).

4.1.6 The Dove (Matt. 3:16)

The dove symbolizes kindness, tenderness, loveliness, innocence, mildness, peace, purity and patience. The indwelling Spirit promotes these traits in the hearts of believers. According to a Jewish tradition Gen. 1:2 could be translated: 'The Spirit of God hovered like a dove over the waters.' Christ referred to the dove as the embodiment of the innocence He expects from His followers (Matt. 3:16).

4.2 The work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

4.2.1 The Spirit took part in the creation of the universe (Gen. 1:2).

4.2.2 He endowed the craftsmen with the necessary skills for the construction and furnishing of the Tabernacle (Exod. 31:3,6).

4.2.3 He endowed David with the wisdom required for drawing up plans for the Temple (I Chron. 28:11-19).

4.2.4 He gave Samson in a moment supernatural physical strength (Judges 14:6).

4.2.5 There are countless instances in the OT where the Spirit spoke with and acted through the saints, e.g.,

- Bezalel, master craftsman (Exod. 31:2-5); Moses and the 70 elders (Num. 11:17);
- Othniel, the judge (Judges 3:9-11); Jephthah (Judges 11:29);
- Gideon (Judges 6:34); Samson (Judges 13:25); Saul (I Sam. 10:6,10; 19:23-24);
- David (I Sam. 16:13); Elijah (II Kings 2:9); Elisha (II Kings 2:15);
- Azariah (II Chron. 15:1); Jehaziel (II Chron. 20:14);
- Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:12; 8:3); Daniel (Dan. 4:8); Micah (Micah 3:8-AV), etc.

4.3 The work of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation

4.3.1 He brings a conviction of sin (John 16:8-11).

- 4.3.2** He regenerates (John 3:5-8).
- 4.3.3** He dwells in the believer (I Cor. 3:16).
- 4.3.4** He sanctifies, renews and brings the believer into spiritual adulthood (Rom. 15:16; Gal. 5:16, 22-23; II Thess. 2:13; Tit. 3:5).
- 4.3.5** He reveals the future (Luke 2:26; Acts 21:11).
- 4.3.6** He teaches the believers how to answer those who persecute them (Mark 13:11).
- 4.3.7** He reminds the believers of God's Word (John 14:26).
- 4.3.8** He teaches about the Word of God (John 14:26; I John 2:27).
- 4.3.9** He reveals Godly details (John 16:14; I Cor. 2:10)
- 4.3.10** He arms the believer with power from Above (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).
- 4.3.11** He marks (seals) the believer as belonging to Christ (Ephes. 1:13-14; 4:30).
- 4.3.12** He transports the believer (Acts 8:39). Philip's experience was not an isolated case (e.g. I Kings 18:12 - Elijah). This same power may manifest itself at the Rapture (I Thess. 4:17).
- 4.3.13** He baptizes or fills a believer (Acts 2:4).

LECTURE 8 ANGELOLOGY

The doctrine, or study, of angels

1. *Their existence*

From Genesis to Revelation, angels are often mentioned: 108 times in the OT and 160 times in the NT. There can be no doubt about their existence. Nevertheless, the Bible informs of the sect known as the Sadducees, who did not believe in angels. And we find this denial among modernists who regard any belief in angels as superstition. Some say that it is a superstition that developed when the Jews were in exile and were 'contaminated' by the Babylonian and Persian mythologies. Nevertheless, we know that angels exist. The Bible refers to them repeatedly and Jesus Himself confirmed their existence (Matt. 26:53; Luke 15:10; John 1:51). As a matter of fact, the existence of angels is interwoven with the whole history of salvation.

2. *Their nature*

2.1 They were **created** by Almighty God. We have no idea when this took place, but it must have been long before man was created. The rebellion by Satan took place long before man was created. The result: two classes of angels, the good and the bad. Because angels are creatures themselves, they may not be worshipped (Col. 2:18) and they themselves refuse to be worshipped (Rev. 19:10; 22:9).

2.2 Spirits

The angels are described as spirits (Heb. 1:14), because unlike man, they are not limited by natural and physical conditions. They appear and disappear at will; they go from place to place in the wink of an eye, without using any natural aids. Although they are spirits, they are able to appear in human form, in order to make themselves visible to man (Gen. 19:1-3).

2.3 Immortal

They are not subject to death. In Luke 20:35-36 Jesus explains to the Sadducees that the resurrected saints will be immortal, like the angels.

2.4 Numerous

Scripture shows us that the number of angels is enormous: "Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (Dan. 7:10). In Matt. 26:53 -- "...my Father...will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels..." And in Heb. 12:22 -- "...thousands upon thousands of angels..." Their Creator and Master is therefore quite appropriately referred to as the 'Lord of Hosts'.

2.5 Sexless

Descriptions normally create the impression that angels are male, but they are actually sexless; they do not increase in number by means of procreation (Luke 20:34-36).

3. *Their Classification*

Because order is the first law of heaven, it is to be expected that the angels will be classified according to rank and duties. We find an indication of this in I Peter 3:22, where mention is made of “angels, authorities and powers.”

3.1 The Angel of the Lord

The way the ‘Angel of the Lord’ is described, distinguishes this angel from all other angels. The authority to forgive trespasses or otherwise, is vested in this angel; the Name (authority) of the Lord is in him - see Exod. 23:20-23.. In Exod. 32:34 we read about a promise: “...my angel will go before you...” and in Exod. 33:14 the Lord says: “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” In Isa.63:9 ‘angel’ and ‘presence’ are combined: “In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them...” So, there is a close association between this angel and God Himself. Consider also Jacob’s experience with God in human form - Gen. 32:24-30; 48:15-16. There is a strong possibility that this mysterious angel was the Messiah Himself, the later Saviour of the world. From this we could deduct that the Angel of the Lord was not created but exists from all eternity.

3.2 The Archangel

This is the angel-in-chief and is referred to as Michael (I Thess. 4:16; Jude 1:9; Rev. 12:7). He appears as the guardian angel of Israel (Dan. 12:1). The name Michael is of Hebrew origin and means ‘who is like God’. He disputed with the devil about the body of Moses (Jude 1:9), and in Rev. 12:7-9 he successfully leads the heavenly host against the dragon and his angels.

Gabriel is also mentioned respectfully, implying a high rank. Gabriel means ‘Man of God’. Both Jews and Christians regard him as an archangel, although there is no direct Scripture reference to support this view. There is his own statement to Zechariah, the priest: “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God...” (Luke 1:19). He is sent from the throne of God to deliver important messages, e.g., he announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah; he had to tell Daniel that God had answered his prayer (Dan. 9:21-23); to the virgin Mary he announced the birth of Christ (Luke 1:35).

3.3 The elect angels

Apparently these are the angels that remained loyal to God during Satan’s rebellion (Matt. 25:41; I Tim. 5:21).

3.4 Angels of the Nations

From what we read in Daniel 10:12-20, it appears as if there is a prominent angel for every nation on earth. Daniel prays for Jerusalem and the return of the Jews, but the resistance of Persia’s angel must first be overcome. The angel for Greece also enters the picture (Dan. 10:20). The NT mentions ‘rulers’, ‘authorities’ and ‘powers’ (Ephes. 3:10; 6:12; Col. 2:15). These may be angelic rulers of the nations, both good and evil.

3.5 Cherubim

The cherubim are another order of mighty entities, who are near God’s throne. They are usually associated with the retributive and saving plans of God with man. The first reference to them is when Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of

Eden and cherubim were posted as sentries to guard the garden (Gen. 3:24). Then they are mentioned as images on the atonement cover of the Ark (Exod. 37:7-9). Here they are associated with salvation. The demeanour of these golden images symbolized worship and serious meditation. Perhaps the latter could be linked to the idea expressed in I Peter 1:12 - "Even angels long to look into these things."

Certain symbols are associated with the cherubim. According to the visions of Daniel and John, their faces are fourfold - the face of a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle. Israel trekked through the desert in four divisions and each section had its own banner, according to tradition. On Juda's banner was a lion, on Ruben's a human face, on Ephraim's a calf and on Dan's banner there was an eagle. This is according to tradition and is probably true. In a symbolic sense the four faces of the cherubim represent the fourfold character of the Son of God:

- the King, symbolized by the lion;
- the servant, " " " ox;
- the man (and the Incarnation) symbolized by the human face;
- Advent and Ascension symbolized by the eagle.

3.6 *The Seraphs*

Very little is known about them and in the Bible they are only mentioned in Isaiah 6. One writer suggests that they hold the highest rank in the angelic host, and that their outstanding characteristic is their burning love for God (the Hebrew 'saraph' means 'burning'). Isaiah describes them as wonderful beings, each with six wings, and when he observed them in his early vision, they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3).

4. *Their characteristics*

4.1 *Obedient*

The angels execute orders without query or hesitation. Therefore we also pray: "...your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). See also Ps. 103:20, I Peter 3:22 and Jude 1:6.

4.2 *Reverent*

Their most important work is to worship God (Neh. 9:6; Philip. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:6).

4.3 *Wise*

"...like an angel of God in discerning good and evil" (II Sam. 14:17), seemed to be a well-known phrase in Israel. Although they are also subject to limitations, the mental capacities of angels are far superior to that of man. However, they don't seem able to read our thoughts (I Kings 8:39) and their knowledge of Spirit-inspired Gospel work, also seems to be limited (I Peter 1:12). Nevertheless, it has been said that their intellectual images are far more comprehensive than ours and that one single image in

an angel's thoughts, could contain more facts than what a human being could accumulate over a lifetime of study.

4.4 Humble

The angels remain humble and non-aggressive, even when provoked (II Peter 2:11: Jude 1:9).

4.5 Powerful

In Ps. 103:20 they are called 'mighty ones'.

4.6 Holy

Because they serve God in special ways, they are called 'holy angels' (Rev. 14:10).

5. Their work

5.1 God's agents

They are described as the executors of God's judgments (Gen.3:24; 19:1; Num. 22:22-27; II Sam. 24:16; II Kings 19:35; Matt. 13:39, 41, 49; 16:27; 24:31; Acts 12:23).

5.2 God's messengers

The word 'angel' derives from the Greek 'aggelos' which means 'messenger'. By means of angels God sends:

- Announcements - Matt. 1:20-21; Luke 1:11-20
- Warnings - Matt. 2:13; Heb. 2:2
- Commandments - Dan. 4:13-17; Matt. 28:6-7; Acts 10:5
- Encouragement - Gen.28:13-15; Acts 27:23-24
- Revelations - Dan.9:21-27; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2; Rev. 1:1

5.3 God's servants

"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). Angels are sent:

- to attend, to strengthen, to assist - I Kings 19:5,7; Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43
- to guide and protect people - Gen. 16:7; 24:7; Exod. 23:20; Rev. 7:1
- to save or liberate - Gen. 48:16; Num. 20:16; Ps. 34:7; 91:11; Isaiah 63:9; Dan. 6:22; Matt. 26:53
- to plead - Zech. 1:12; Rev. 8:3-4
- to escort and assist after death - Luke 16:22

In Matt. 18:10 we read: "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."

There are people who dogmatize on this point and insist that every believer has a guardian angel. The latter would then help the believer and protect him/her against dangers and sin. But it seems more probable that the Lord is here merely stating that He regards small children as so important, that even the angels in heaven are ready to see to their needs. In Luke 18:16 Jesus says that “the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

5.4 *The work of angels in the present age*

At present we have no full revelation of the service rendered by angels, and we will have to wait for the fulness of time to learn how they served Christ's Church. The Church of Christ is hated by Satan, and it seems plausible that angels are continually busy in warding off devilish attacks. We have Scriptural evidence of how Godly people like Paul and Peter were protected by the angels. In history there is ample evidence of how God's children were time and again miraculously rescued from threatening dangers. We believe that when we commit ourselves and our loved ones to God's protection, He will send His angels, although invisible to us, to protect us. Was this not what missionaries experienced on dangerous expeditions to hostile people, even cannibals?

6. *Their abode*

If someone would ask: 'where?' we are inclined to reply immediately: 'in heaven' (Mark 13:32). But the term 'heaven' is very wide. In Hebrew 'shamayim' is a plural and even the Greek 'ouranos' often occurs in the plural. In our Bible translations the word 'heavens' is repeatedly used (e.g. Ps. 148). The Bible intimates that there are three heavens, with the throne of God in the third heaven (I Cor. 12:2).

There are indications that the Tabernacle was constructed on a heavenly model: the Courtyard, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, and that Moses on Sinai had seen the threefold heaven (Heb. 8:5). It could then be deducted that God Himself is in the third heaven where He is worshipped day and night by the seraphs and the cherubs. This would leave the first and second heaven as abode for the angels. In the OT the stars are mentioned in the same verse as the angels (Job 38:7) - literally, the 'sons of God'. There may be a connection between angels and stars, or it may just be symbolic or poetic language (e.g., the morning stars singing and the angels shouting for joy).

LECTURE 9 Angelology (cont.)

SATAN AND THE FALLEN ANGELS

1. *The history of Satan*

1.1 *His origin*

The revelation concerning Satan starts in the incalculable period between the perfect creation of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1) and that point in time when some or other calamity left the earth 'formless and empty' with 'darkness over the surface of the

deep' (Gen. 1:2). In Ezek. 28:11-19 there is a detailed description of Satan's history under the title 'A prophecy against the King of Tyre'. Certain phrases clearly identify Satan:

"You were in Eden, the garden of God"

"You were on the holy mount of God"

"You were anointed as a guardian cherub", etc.

So, this is Satan, the fallen senior angel. Because Satan was himself created, he is dependent on God for his existence. He might try to claim an independent existence, but this lie will be exposed at the end.

1.2 His previous glory

Of all creatures Satan commanded attention for being: "...the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." He was "...anointed as a guardian cherub..." and must've had a certain authority in the first creation. In Ezek.28:14 it is clearly stated that he was "on the holy mount of God," thus close to God's throne, the centre of God's power and dominion (Ps. 48:1; 68:16; Isa. 2:2).

In Isaiah 14:2 he is called the "morning star, son of the dawn", which is indicative of the prominence he enjoyed. We must, however, distinguish between Lucifer (Isa. 14:12 - AV) and the 'Bright Morning Star' or 'Sun of Righteousness' - Mal. 4:2; John 1:9; 12:46; II Peter 1:19; Rev. 2:28 and 22:16 -- Jesus Himself.

1.3 His rebellion

In Isaiah 14:13-14 Satan's evil plan is exposed:

"I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

His status and his exalted position went to his head and, having a free will like man, he turned against God. To be like the Most High, meant to rebel against God's sovereignty. He did not plan or attempt a violent uprising, but like Absalom, he tried to win over sufficient support, to get other entities to worship him, and in doing so to gradually usurp God's position. But the rebellion led to his banishment, together with those who followed him.

1.4 Satan's position after the rebellion

After his mutiny, Satan was not thrown out of heaven - Isa. 14:5, Luke 10:18 and other texts refer to a future occurrence - but because of his sacrilegious position he was no longer welcome on the holy mountain. According to Job 1:6, Luke 22:31-32, Ephes. 6:11-12 and Rev. 12:10, Satan has access to heaven, to earth and back again to heaven - to lay accusations against believers with God. He is **not** confined to hell at this stage. Although he is a fallen angel, he is still a power to be reckoned with, and there can be no doubt how he asserts himself on earth.

1.5 Satan and the first Adam

In Gen. 3 we see Satan in the guise of a serpent, coming to man and leading him astray. Here man, instead of standing firm on God's commandments, listened to Satan's stories and, in so doing, chose for Satan instead of for the Lord. This gave Satan a hold on all man's descendants and his insidious influence is even today

clearly visible in all mankind. Even the Lord acknowledges him as the ruler of this world (John 12:31).

His whole approach to man proves his rebellion against God and that he is always trying to recruit more rebels. Therefore, every sinful thought or deed is evidence of loyalty to Satan and enmity towards God's throne of grace. 'I want to', is the basic cause of sin by man, and even with believers we see glimpses of the 'flesh' in the form of 'I want to'.

1.6 Satan and the second Adam

Although Satan got the better of the first Adam, it is a completely different story with the second Adam. Here judgment is against him and his doom is sealed. With Calvary in mind, Jesus said: "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out" (John 12:31). And again in John 16:11 He says "...and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned." See also Col. 2:13-15. So it is clear that whereas Satan triumphed over the first Adam, he was completely vanquished by the last Adam on Calvary.

It is understandable that Satan concentrated all his efforts on preventing the crucifixion of Christ. He attacked the forefathers of Jesus the human being and even used some of His disciples to frustrate the Divine purpose of Golgotha. There was of course, the earlier fruitless attempt of Satan to tempt Jesus in the desert to worship him.

1.7 Why is Satan still tolerated?

Satan's relationship to this world finds a parallel in the history of Saul and David. David was of course the first king on the throne of David and he typified the coming Christ, who would sit for ever on the throne of David (Luke 1:31-33). Just as a considerable time elapsed between David's anointing by Samuel and the demise of Saul, while Saul, the violent one, went from bad to worse, so Satan carries on as 'rough-neck', although he is already convicted and Christ must still be enthroned. In the present dispensation then, Satan 'rules' as the violent one on earth, but as rejected ruler who has already been sentenced. It is just a matter of time, when his sentence will be carried into effect and Christ will reign for ever, on earth as well.

God's grace towards man postpones this final turn of events, but after allowing Satan maximum opportunity, he will be destroyed and God the most High will be honoured. At the same time, Satan's final bit of leeway is an opportunity for believers to get purified and to become victors.

1.8 Satan and the execution of judgment

"And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down - that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him" (Rev. 12:7-9). In the last days then, Satan and his followers will be banned from heaven, and from then on he will be restricted to earth.

Here he will concentrate all his efforts and that will be the time of the great distress.

"But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short. When the dragon saw that he had

been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child” (Rev. 12:12-13). Meanwhile the saved will have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air and share the victory and glory in heaven I Thess. 4:17; Rev. 12:10-12).

After the great distress Satan will be seized, bound for a thousand years and thrown into the Abyss. For a thousand years he will be unable to deceive the nations (Rev. 20:1-3). But then, “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth - Gog and Magog - to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:7-10).

2. *The character of Satan*

Satan’s character is reflected in the names by which he is known:

2.1 Satan

The Hebrew ‘satan’ means adversary, opponent. The Greek ‘Satanas’ means the accuser, the devil. He always persists in his evil attempts to frustrate God’s purposes. He tried to exterminate the coming Messiah’s family lineage. Cain, who belonged to the Evil One, killed his brother (I John 3:12), but God replaced Abel with Seth. The descendants of Seth were led astray by Satan, and the Flood became necessary. Then Noah had to represent righteousness and his family tree leads us to Abraham. Then Ishmael breaks away, Esau opposes Jacob, Pharaoh oppresses the Israelites, etc. So Satan kept on attacking the family lineage from which the Messiah had to come. Even the life of the baby Jesus was threatened. But Satan’s plan did not bear fruit and the battle of the centuries will end when Christ comes again.

2.2 Devil

The Greek ‘diabolos’ means traducer, false accuser, slanderer. This applies fittingly because Satan slanders both God (Gen. 3) and man (Job 1:9-11; Zech. 3:1-2; Luke 22:31; Rev. 12:10).

2.3 Destroyer

The Greek words ‘Apolluon’ and ‘Abaddon’ mean destroyer. Abaddon is from the Hebrew, also meaning destroyer. He is apparently filled with hatred towards the Creator and His works; this makes Satan a sort of despoiler god.

2.4 Serpent

“...that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan...” (Rev. 12:9). Way back in our early Bible history he came in the guise of a deceitful snake, to lead Adam and Eve astray.

2.5 Tempter

The Greek noun used in Matt. 4:3 is ‘ho peirazown’ and this means ‘one who tempts or tries people with the intent of making them sin’, therefore ‘Tempter’.

While God puts man through a testing period to purify and strengthen him, Satan offers temptations whereby he can destroy the person.

2.6 Prince of this world / god of this age

See John 12:31 and II Cor. 4:4. These ‘titles’ indicate Satan’s influence on the organized society that exists outside God’s will (I John 2:16; 5:19). The ‘world’ mentioned in Scripture is usually that host of human activities motivated by the feverish search for honour, pleasure and profit. These three are supported by literature, business, commerce, government, etc. Everything is then judged in terms of human status and success, fake principles of honour, false ideas about the purpose of pleasure, and emphasis on the value and honour emanating from financial wealth. It appeals to the lower urges of man, and clothes him in a false and materialistic sophistication.

3. *The Activities of Satan*

3.1 *The nature thereof*

Satan obstructs God’s work (I Thess. 2:18), interferes with the Gospel (Matt. 13:19; II Cor. 4:4), occupies, blinds, defrauds and holds the wicked (Luke 22:3; II Cor. 4:4; I Tim. 3:7; Rev. 20:7-8). He ruins (Job 1&2) and tempts (I Thess. 3:5) the saints. He is known as overproud (Matt. 4:9), conceited (I Tim. 3:6-7), rules a kingdom (Ephes. 2:2; 6:12), malicious (Job 2:4-5), cunning (Gen. 3:1; II Cor. 11:3), deceitful (Ephes. 6:11), savage and cruel (I Peter 5:8).

3.2 *Localities and victims*

He does not limit his activities to the wicked; he sometimes invades the highest circles masquerading ‘as an angel of light’ (II Cor. 11:14). He will join any religious meeting and even a conference of angels (Job 1). He is interested in religion for his own purposes so that “some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (I Tim. 4:1). In Smyrna the Church was slandered by a group described as ‘a synagogue of Satan’ (Rev. 2:9). At times his agents present themselves as ‘servants of righteousness’ (II Cor. 11:15).

3.3 *His motives*

Why is Satan so eager to destroy us? Joseph Hussbein says that Satan hates the image of God in us. He hates every human characteristic in us that was also displayed by the Son of God. He hates God’s obvious glory that man must promote in his own life in order to obtain eternal bliss for himself. He hates the joy that is in store for us, because he himself is deprived of all that for ever. He hates us for a thousand reasons and begrudges us everything positive.

3.4 *The limitations thereof*

Although Satan is a very powerful adversary, we must not overrate his power. For those who believe in Christ, Satan is already a vanquished enemy (John 12:31). He can only assert himself strongly towards those who give him the opportunity. In spite of his raving fury, he is a coward for James says “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (4:7). He has power, but it is limited. He can’t tempt a believer (Matt. 4:1), or ruin him (Job 1&2), or kill him (Job 2:6; Heb. 2:14), or touch him **without God’s permission**.

4. The Satanic host

4.1 Fallen angels or devils

There are two Greek words:

daimonion = (a) evil spirit or demon, e.g., Luke 4:33,35; 8:31,33; I Cor. 10:20; Rev. 16:14.

(b) a supernatural being of somewhat lesser status than a 'theos' = god e.g., Acts 17:18 = foreign gods

diabolos = (a) the Devil (Greek also employs 'Satanas', but this is a borrowing from Aramaic, meaning 'Satan').

(b) demon

(c) slanderer, e.g., I Tim. 3:11; II Tim. 3:3; Titus 2:3.

Important distinction: Of 'daimonion' (pl. daimonia) = demon(s) there are many, but of 'diabolos' - the Devil - there is only one.

The demons were originally angels in good standing, but they followed Satan in his rebellion and in so doing they lost their status and position. Many of them are in Satan's active service, while others are already in prison - see Luke 8:31 and II Peter 2:4. The believer must especially note the free moving host - Ephes. 6:12. A final showdown is still awaiting them - see Rev. 12:7.

The demons have personalities, although they are spirits without physical bodies. We can't perceive them, unless they enter and manifest through a human body, or, are encountered on a physical plane. At the end these demons will be sent with Satan to the eternal fire (Matt. 25:41).

4.2 Demon Possession

Scripture gives many instances of demon possessed people whom Jesus delivered.

4.2.1 Why do demons take possession of people?

There are indications that demons (evil spirits) like to take possession of a physical body (Matt. 12:43-45; Luke 8:31-33). Perhaps it provides rest, but it is an effective method to carry forward the will and authority of Satan on earth. Man also has a Spirit and is predisposed to both the Holy Spirit and evil spirits. This is a competition that Satan would like to win - to his glory.

4.2.2 The control / power of the devil over a person

The degree of control can vary, e.g.,

- **The power to tempt.** The devil is capable of tempting anyone; he even attempted to ensnare the Lord Jesus. With ordinary humans, the tempter has a good start because of the inherited sinful nature.
- **Demonic influence.** Sometimes the devil manages to exert an extraordinary strong influence on somebody, e.g., by means of physical torment (e.g. Job), or by inducing psychological problems - see I Sam. 18:10-11. In a case like this the

sufferer still has a free will.

- **Demon possession.** Here the demon is in the person as a separate personality, side by side with the sufferer's own. Now the person has no longer sole control over his body because the indwelling demon exerts a powerful influence. The person's free will is handicapped to a large extent, but not entirely.
- **Total demon control.** In cases of this nature the devil controls not only the body of the victim, but the whole person. This happens when a person has committed himself entirely to the devil. An example of this is in John 6:70 where Jesus says of Judas: "...one of you is a devil!" This 'total' situation will of course apply to the Antichrist and the false prophet. It means the person has no more free will and is no longer susceptible for salvation.

4.3 The consequences of demon possession

As mentioned above, these are cases where one or more demons take possession of a person, so that the sufferer will display more than one personality. The evil spirits quite often reveal themselves, e.g., when they are confronted with / by Christ (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:33-36,41). One must, however, be careful not to classify all psychic problems under demon possession (a Christian psychologist or psychiatrist will usually know the difference). Sometimes the sufferer becomes engaged in a terrible struggle with the demons in him / her. In other cases superhuman abilities appear, e.g., abnormal physical strength, knowledge or eloquence (Mark 1:34; Luke 8:39) - traits the person does not normally possess. One could speak of the gifts of the Evil One in contrast to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

4.4 What causes demon possession?

In this field we can receive valuable instruction from people active in the ministry of deliverance. In their practical guide to deliverance, Frank and Ida Mae Hammond list three important 'causes' of demon possession, so we quote from their chapter on causes:

"Demons are evil personalities. They are spirit beings. They are the enemies of God and man. Their objectives in human beings are to tempt, deceive, accuse, condemn, pressure, defile, resist, oppose, control, steal afflict, kill and destroy. Demons enter through 'open doors'. They have to be given an opportunity. There must be an opening. In other words, one does not pick up a demon by walking down the street and accidentally bumping into one that is looking for a 'home'. The organization of Satan's kingdom enables him to attack each one of us personally. There is not a person on the face of the earth who escapes his notice. He devises a plan to ruin and destroy each one. It is a sobering realization that you and I are definite targets of Satan's wiles. But how does he gain entrance?

Sin

The door for demons to enter may be opened by oneself through sins of omission and commission. In the fifth chapter of Acts we read of a couple named Ananias and Sapphira. They sold their property that they might give the full proceeds for the benefit of the church. But they became covetous and decided to keep part of the money for themselves. In order to cover up their act they perpetrated a lie. But Peter received a supernatural word of knowledge as to what they had done. Peter asked Ananias why he had opened himself to the Devil... (Acts 5:3). Because of their sin Ananias and Sapphira

opened themselves to be filled with *spirits of covetousness, lying and deceit*. The same thing can happen to anyone who sins wilfully.

In the fifth chapter of Galatians we find a list of 17 'works of the flesh'. They include the sins of adultery, fornication, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, envying, murders and drunkenness. Through my experiences in deliverance I have encountered demons that responded to each of these designations. What, then, is the relationship between the works of the flesh and the works of demons? When a man yields to temptation he sins in the flesh. Through such sin the door is opened for the invasion of the enemy. Then he has a compounded problem - the flesh and the devil. The solution is two-fold: crucify the flesh and cast out the demons.

A classic example of the door being opened by sin of omission is the failure to forgive. In the case of the unjust steward (Matt. 18), he was turned over to the 'tormentors' because he was unwilling to forgive his fellow servant after he himself had been forgiven by his master. God warns us that all who have experienced His forgiveness and refuse to forgive others, will be turned over to the tormentors. What clearer designation of demon spirits can we find than 'tormentors'? Unforgiveness opens the door to the torment of resentment and hatred and related spirits.

Life Circumstances

Evil spirits have no sense of fairness. They never hesitate to take full advantage of times of weakness in a person's life. Of course, the weakest times in most lives is childhood. A child is completely dependent upon others for protection. Without question the majority of demons encountered through ministry have entered the persons during childhood...

One of the first questions asked in pre-ministry counselling is, 'How did you relate to your parents as a child?' In the majority of cases this question opens the door for a listing of grievances for which the parents are blamed.... (He quotes the example of an alcoholic father)... As a child in such a home grows a little older, he becomes embarrassed and ashamed. The quickest way to understand what doors were opened for demons to enter, is to hear an account of a person's childhood.

The Ruse of Inheritance

...If a child is told that he is like his parents and can expect to inherit their weaknesses, he becomes vulnerable. My own mother was a very nervous person. When I was a young boy, she had a nervous breakdown. I developed a fear that I would inherit this weakness. The fear of being nervous actually opened me to the reality. My nerves began to give way. It was as though something was inside my body and crawling all through me. I would become very weak and unable to fulfil my responsibilities as a pastor... Five years ago I was delivered from the *demon of nervousness* and related spirits. There has been no more crawling nerves and no more need for drugs. The demons that told me that I had to be like my mother were all liars!

If we allow him to do so, the devil will give us our inheritance. But the Psalmist said of God, 'He shall choose our inheritance for us...' (Ps. 47:4 - AV). I have found many others like myself who accepted the lies and fears suggested by the devil. Many persons are collapsing from a fear of mental illness. Because a parent had this problem, the devil says, 'This is your inheritance.' Do you know that a person can be so possessed by the fear of mental illness that he will eventually end up in a mental hospital? I have seen many persons delivered from this particular tormenting fear."

(Hammond then tells us about the heart troubles of his parents, aunts and uncles and how the devil kept telling him that this was his inheritance. This idea was strengthened by a doctor who questioned him about the family's medical history, and sure enough...) "At the age of 46 I went to the hospital suffering from chest pains... The doctor could find no damage to my heart but was sure that I had experienced a light heart attack. Two months after I left the hospital I had a second attack. It struck me on a Sunday morning before I got out of bed. By this time I had learned of the operation of demon spirits. I announced to the congregation that we would have a special meeting that afternoon in which they would minister deliverance and cast out the *demon of heart attack*. That was five years ago, and I have never had another pain in my chest and no longer expect to have one. I do not accept the proffered inheritance of the devil but accept the healing and health of the Lord Jesus... (John 10:10)." *Pigs in the Parlor*, pp 23-26.

Another 'door' for the demonic opens when people, voluntarily or involuntarily, get involved with the **occult**. Derek Prince has identified three specific forms of the occult that are prevalent in our contemporary culture:

1. The power branch of the occult

Acupressure, acupuncture, astral projection, table-tipping, telekinesis, 'touch' healing, witchcraft, etc., are all examples of this branch.

2. The knowledge branch of the occult

Here the many examples include astrology, clairvoyance, crystal balls, divining, horoscopes, kabbala, mediums, palmreading, seances, tarot cards, etc. Prince also lists all false religions or cults here. One test he applies is their position re the Bible, i.e., if they claim supernatural revelation but contradict the Bible, they are false. The other **very** important question is, how do they present the Person, the nature or the redemptive work of Jesus Christ? This immediately disqualifies Islam, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Rosicrucianism, Scientology, Spiritualism, etc., and all the Eastern religions.

3. The branch operating through physical objects, etc.

Among the objects listed we find amulets, crystals used for healing, hex signs, 'lucky' symbols (e.g., inverted horseshoes), ouija boards, pagan fetishes or religious artifacts, talismans and zodiac charms.

Prince refers us to **God's** estimate of those who are involved in one or more of the branches listed above. It is spelt out clearly in Deuteronomy 18:10-13 and Acts 19:18-19. (Prince, Derek *Blessing or Curse, you can choose* Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1990, pp. 68-71).

4.5 Deliverance from demon possession or bondage

This is a big, complicated subject and in congregational practice, deliverance should only be attempted by suitably qualified persons. However, each committed Christian can assist in this important ministry and must take cognizance of the devious ways that Satan and his cohorts use to infiltrate even the lives of regular churchgoers. It is also important for the committed Christian to know how to handle 'infiltrations' into his / her own life. It is therefore recommended that students will acquaint themselves with at least one good book on the subject. Some books, like Don Basham's *Deliver us from evil*, are written from a personal or biographical point of view, but we can recommend the following two as practical handbooks:

- Hammond, Frank & Ida Mae
Pigs in the Parlor; a practical guide to deliverance
Kirkwood, Missouri: Impact Books, 1996
- MacNutt, Francis
Deliverance from evil spirits; a practical manual
London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995

LECTURE 10 Anthropology

DOCTRINES ABOUT MAN

1. *The Creation of man*

According to Scripture it is clear that God created man (Gen. 1:27; 2:7). The Bible also indicates that it was an instantaneous act of will by God (Job 32:8; Zech. 12:1) and that all humans are descendants of the first couple, Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:7, 22; 3:20; 5:2-3; 9:19). Further evidence is the following:

1.1 *History*

When we delve into the history of all the earth's peoples, the Near East seems to have been the cradle of the human race. The Garden of Eden could have been somewhere between Armenia and India. It can be assumed that important landmarks simply vanished with the big Flood (Gen. 6-8).

1.2 *Study of languages*

Comparative studies reveal elements that all languages have in common, which would mean that there was one original language, possibly the home language of Adam and Eve.

1.3 *Psychological factors*

With personality and character studies world-wide, it became clear that we share so much that we must have been one family shortly after Creation.

1.4 *Physiology*

When the bodily functions of man are studied, e.g., our susceptibility for disease, reproduction, growth patterns, etc., we find so much similarity that it all points to a mutual origin.

2. *The Composition of Man*

According to Scripture man consists of a material and a non-material nature. The soul provides the body with life and without the soul, there is no life - the body is then dead. The Bible refers to man's spirit, soul and body, e.g., in I Thess. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12. It is, however, incorrect to think in terms of a threefold division. The three 'components' are in reality only **aspects** of one and the same person. With this in mind, there is no problem to accommodate a view that soul and spirit are one. They are so closely related, in any case, that one could regard them as variants of the same aspect, even in the Bible:

Eccles. 12:7 - When man dies his **spirit** returns to God

Matt. 10:28 - Body versus **soul**

James 2:26 - body needs the **spirit**

Rev. 6:9 - the **souls** of the martyrs.

Some theologians associate the **soul** with the living person and the **spirit** with someone who has already passed on, but in the light of the above Scripture references, it could be an over-simplification. Still, it has been said:

Man's spirit gives him God consciousness

Man's soul gives him self-consciousness.

2.1 The human spirit

Every person has a God-given spirit, in a unique form (Num. 16:22; 27:16). The Creator placed this in man and it can be renewed or developed (Ps. 51:10). The spirit is the centre and origin of human life; it is encompassed by the soul (personality) and asserts itself by means of the body. In the beginning God breathed the spirit of life into man "...and man became a living being ('soul' in the AV)." So, when spirit and body unite, we get the human soul (personality). The soul is immortal because it exists through the spirit, seeing that soul and spirit are intertwined. They form a unit.

His spirit distinguishes man from all other living creatures, because the spirit contains self-consciousness and conscience (Job 32:8; Prov. 20:27). The Hebrew word **nephesh** occurs 754 times in the Old Testament and it is so frequently used of animals (Gen. 1:20, 24, 30; 9:12, 15, 16; Ezek. 47:9), that we can say that, although animals have no spirit, they do have souls. (The 'spirit' mentioned in Eccles. 3:21 is from the Hebrew **ruwach** meaning wind or **breath**). In contrast to man, the animal cannot know God. But man's spirit, when indwelt by God's spirit (Rom. 8:16) becomes a centre of worship (John 4:23-24), of adoration (I Cor. 14:15) and of service (Rom. 1:9; Philip. 1: 27).

The spirit represents the higher qualities of man and it determines the nature of his character. For example, if one allows pride to get the better of you, then you have 'a haughty spirit' (Prov. 16:18). In accordance with the various factors that influence a person, he may have an embittered spirit (Ps. 106:33 - Rev. Eng. Bible), a quick temper (Prov. 14:29), a miserable spirit (Ps. 42:5, 11; 43:5) as well as a broken and humble spirit (Isa. 57:15 - REB; Matt. 5:3). It is possible to have a slavish spirit (Rom. 8:15), or a fit of jealousy (Num. 5:14). Man must guard his spirit (Mal. 2:15), control it (Prov. 16:32) and look to God for a new spirit (Ezek. 18:31), and trust Him for a new spirit (Ezek. 11:19).

When a person becomes dominated by bad urges, it means that his spirit becomes totally warped. Instead of living under control of the Spirit, his life is now controlled by self and the flesh. He becomes a helpless victim of his lower urges. This is equivalent to spiritual death, for then there is real need for a new spirit (Ps. 51:10; Ezek. 18:31). It is only Him who gave the first man the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), who can now provide a new spirit. He alone can provide the spiritual re-birth (John 3:8; 20:22; Col. 3:10). Now the spirit regains control over the person's life, and he becomes spiritual. This spirit must however be renewed and strengthened by the Spirit of God on a continual basis.

2.2 The Human Soul

The soul is that part of the human being where life and understanding is centred. The soul utilises the senses to investigate and gain knowledge of the environment. It expresses itself through the body and applies the bodily organs to make contact with the world around him. The soul had its inception through a supernatural act, God breathing His Spirit into man. It was not the Spirit of God Itself, but the result of the Spirit's influence. Therefore we can describe the soul as alive and spiritual. The soul is also natural because it functions through a body. The soul is not part of God, because it can sin. It must rather be seen as a gift from God (Zech. 12:1).

Four distinctions must be made:

2.2.1 It is the **soul** that distinguishes man and the animals from lifeless objects. They both have souls (Gen. 1:20 - 'living' is in Hebrew **nephesh** = soul). In a very limited sense one could concede that plants (alive) also have souls.

2.2.2 The nature of the human soul distinguishes it from the animal soul. The soul of an animal does only exist as long as its body remains alive (Eccles. 3:21). The human soul, on the other hand, exists through the human spirit and is controlled by that spirit. Just as flesh displays variations and differences, so with the soul. There is a human soul and an animal soul.

By means of his soul man has the mental capacity to acquire insight, to remember things and to reason about matters. Because of these abilities, man can get to know his environment, himself and his fellow-man. The more systematized knowledge man acquires about himself and the things around him, the more control he gains over his environment and the better he can express himself. This enables him to prepare food to his own liking, to build a house as he prefers it, to clothe himself according to his own taste. He can use animals and objects as he prefers. Through all this man gets to know himself and his soul can find expression in language, art, music, scientific inventions, etc. Likewise, man can get to know his Creator.

The animals, on the other hand, are mentally far more limited. Their understanding consists mainly of inborn instincts, seeking the best adaptation for existing circumstances. These abilities are rather stereotyped and can only be influenced, to a limited extent, by learning. Therefore the animal will always seek food and shelter, and fight in plus-minus the same way. Whereas man gains control over his environment, the animal is simply part of the environment and is to a large extent controlled by that environment.

To take this comparison a step further, we must give attention to the following four life expressions:

- (a) Maintenance of the organism through food and procreation.
- (b) The principle of realization of the environment via the senses. Things are seen, heard, tasted, felt and this leads to certain reactions.
- (c) The intellectual life, where, apart from impressions through the senses, knowledge of and insight into the organism itself and its environment are obtained. Here reasoning enters the picture with a powerful effect on the living organism.
- (d) The moral life, i.e., the acceptance of the principles of right and wrong and acquiescence thereto. With animals only the above (a) and (b) apply; with man we find all four expressions.

2.2.3 By means of the soul one person can be distinguished from another

This forms the basis of individuality. 'Soul' is often used as a synonym for 'person'. In the AV of Exod. 1:5 'seventy souls' means 70 persons. In the AV of Rom. 13:1 'every soul' means every person. We use it in everyday speech too, e.g., we say "not a soul turned up at the meeting".

2.2.4 The soul also distinguishes man from the higher forms of life

There is no indication that angels have souls, because, unlike man, they do not have physical bodies. Man became a 'living soul', i.e., he indwells an earthly body and is therefore subject to earthly conditions. Angels are described as 'spirits' in the AV of

Heb. 1:7,14 because they are not subject to material / physical conditions and limitations. Likewise God is called 'Spirit'. Angels, however, are created and limited spirits, while God is an eternal and infinite Spirit.

2.3 The Origin of the Soul

We have an indication of how the first soul originated, when God breathed into the first man's nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). But, how did souls originate since then? Bible scholars are divided in their opinions:

2.3.1 One group reckons that each individual soul is created by God. They quote the following Scriptures: Eccles. 12:7; Isa. 57:16; Zech. 12:1.

2.3.2 Another group maintains that the soul is transferred from the parents to the child. They point to the way sin was originally transmitted from Adam to us. There are also the normal parental characteristics that every child inherits to some degree. As regards Scripture, they quote the following: John 1:13; 3:6; Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:22,50. Perhaps the best would be to see the genesis of each soul as the product of cooperation between God and the parents. When new life begins, we have a Godly creation and already existing creatures are used in the process. Man reproduces in cooperation with the 'Father of our spirits' (Heb. 12:9). God's power penetrates and controls the whole world (Acts 17:28), and everything functions according to His laws of nature. When a living soul is procreated, it is the result of God's laws working in the creature. The origin of all forms of life are inherent in a mystery (Job 8-12; Ps. 139:13-16; Eccles. 11:5), and this fact is a warning to us not to keep on speculating about matters that are not treated in Scripture.

2.4 Soul and body

The relationship between soul and body can be described as follows:

2.4.1 Life resides in the soul, and in the soul there is the possibility to maintain life, to endanger it, or to lose it. For these reasons 'soul' is often translated with 'life' s Gen. 9:5; Exod. 21:23; I Kings 2:23; 19:3-4; Prov. 7:23; Acts 15:26.

When the soul permeates the body, there is life. Remove the soul and the body becomes a corpse, and the process of decomposition starts.

2.4.2 The soul penetrates and occupies every part of the body, and influences just about every part. This is the reason why the Bible often sometimes refers to the *heart* and the *kidneys* (Job 16:13; 38:36; Ps. 16:7; 73:21; Prov. 23:16 - Living B.; Jer. 12:2; Lam. 3:13), sometimes the intestines (in the AV - Song of S. 5:4; Isa. 16:11; Jer.4:19; Lam. 1:20; 2:11; Philemon 1:12 - all AV), and the stomach (Job 20:23; Hab. 3:16 - AV John 7:38 - AV)).

It is because the soul permeates the body so completely, that Scripture creates the impression that the soul executes the bodily reactions. 'Inmost being' is a reference to the internal organs, all permeated by the soul - Ps. 51:8; Isa. 16:11; 26:9; Zech. 12:1. All the higher activities referred to, do not originate in the physical organs, but in the soul.

2.4.3 By means of the body, the soul is informed about the world outside. These impressions are gained via the senses and are transmitted to the brain by the

nervous system. Through brain activity the soul processes the information received into intellect, understanding, memory and imagination. The soul reacts to the 'messages' received and sends commands, via the nervous system, to all relevant parts of the body.

2.4.4 The soul comes into contact with the world outside through its instrument, the body. Emotion, thought, wilful decisions, and other activities, all originate in the soul. "I" am the one who sees, not only the eyes; "I" am the one who thinks and not only the brain, etc. So *I'm* responsible for sinning and not the tongue or whatever bodily part. When an organ like the brain becomes impaired through injury or whatever, the soul becomes like a skillful musician with a broken or damaged instrument (M. Pearlman).

LECTURE 12 Man: his nature and the Fall

1. *The Moral Nature of Man*

By the moral nature of man we understand those factors in him which determine whether his actions will be good or bad. These factors are abilities like intellect, emotions and will, together with conscience and free will. Strong once said that to carry out a moral action man has

- (a) the intellectual capacity to discern between right and wrong,
- (b) sensitivity by means of which he can experience the result of the action, and
- (c) a free will to do as he prefers.

Intellect, sensitivity and will are three capacities in man, but another capacity also enters the picture: the conscience. While intellect, emotion and will are the main ingredients of the human personality, the conscience and free will are the main components of man's moral nature.

1.1 *The Conscience*

The idea has arisen that the conscience is an influence active in man but totally independent, even called the voice of God in our souls. A more acceptable point of view is that conscience is a reaction by the total personality to provide a self-accepted and authoritative standard. Man accepts a personal standard of living and the extent to which he measures up to this standard, he senses in his whole personality and as a result he feels guilty or otherwise.

When we analyse the conscience, we find the following elements:

1.1.1 *Self-consciousness*

Conscience is an awareness of myself and how I measure up to a pre-determined standard.

1.1.2 *Knowledge of a standard of obligation, or moral law*

This standard may be high or low, perfect or imperfect, but the extent to which I measure up to it, causes me to feel convicted or satisfied. This is how we must approach Rom.2:13-15. Some Christians have weak consciences and a possible reason for this is that they have no clear moral standard or law. It is therefore important that we have a clear idea of our spiritual duties, responsibilities and privileges (I Cor. 8:7-13; Titus 1:15).

1.1.3 *Knowledge about my standing in terms of the standard*

This is affected by my ability to apply self-examination.

1.1.4 *Feeling of condemnation or satisfaction*

This is coupled to the extent to which I meet the standard or not.

1.2 *The Free Will*

Free will is the human ability to make choices that are not externally determined. If the person so wills, he thinks that thought or carries out that action. If he decides otherwise, he does not do any of these. Free will includes the following:

1.2.1 *Goal*

Each intelligent and responsible action is focused on the attainment of some or other purpose.

1.2.2 Motive

Behind every goal there is a motive, a reason why I want to reach this achievement.

1.2.3 Intellectual judgment

When considering the various goals and motives, one can determine which are the stronger and the more important.

1.2.4 Choice

Now one can choose any motive whether strongest or weakest, and act accordingly.

Free will does not mean that a person can do entirely as he pleases, for there are conditions that bind him, but it means that he himself can decide what to do.

Therefore he is responsible for his actions, and so we regard him as a moral being.

2. The Image of God in man

Scripture is quite unambiguous about this in Gen. 1:26,27 ("Let us make man in our image..."). The Hebrew word for image '*tselem*' means 'shade', 'phantom' and figuratively, 'illusion', 'resemblance'. We could therefore think of the *image* as a silhouette of God against a white wall. So man is a shadow image of God.

2.1 But what does the image consist of?

The image of God is a twofold one, i.e., Natural resemblance or Personality, and Moral resemblance or Holiness.

2.1.1 Personality

As already mentioned personality consists of intellect, emotion and will plus self-consciousness, conscience and free will. And while man has a personality of the described nature, he can choose right at the beginning of his life career, what his aim in life is going to be - self, the world, or God.

This personality stays with you, because it is the essence of your being, and even hell can't destroy it. Therefore, man as person should be respected, and God ordained very early in man's history that one person shall not kill one another (Gen. 9:6). Yes, even the person who we would like to curse, is still someone made in the image of God (James 3:9).

2.1.2 Holiness

Scripture implies in Ephes. 4:24 (AV) that man was originally righteous and holy just after Creation. This holiness was lost with the Fall. Holiness is not an essential part of the human being like his personality, because the man would cease to exist as soon as his holiness is destroyed by sin. But still, man is not a complete stranger to holiness, because our antediluvian patriarch Adam possessed it. The divine spark is still present in man and can be rekindled to the point where he will seek to glorify God in everything and to do His will.

2.2 What does the image mean?

2.2.1 The human body

The one we are familiar with is a copy of an original heavenly type. The original was not a Godly copy, but was created according to God's design. We learn more about it with Jesus' Incarnation (John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14).

2.2.2 Man's control of himself

Man is a composition of soul and body, and although the soul has control over the body and the lower urges, this is not absolute control. Man can improve this control progressively, i.e., develop himself.

2.2.3 Man's control over nature

Adam was Creation's crowning achievement. He had perfect knowledge and insight and he had no need for scientific investigation. This is proved by the way God entrusted the name-giving to him. He must have had a perfect understanding of the nature of every animal and bird to be able to do this (Gen. 2:19-20). Adam called his wife Eve, "because she would become the mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20).

Eve's creation is interesting:

- she was not taken from Adam's head to enable her to lord it over him;
- she was not taken from his feet, implying that he could stamp on her;
- she was taken from his side to be his equal, to enjoy protection under his arm, and to be near his heart to be loved by him.

The domination of man over animal starts with his separate origin, life and the Creator's purpose. No animal can aspire to the human standard, but unfortunately, man can lower himself to the level of the animal (Ps. 73:22; Prov. 30:2; Jer. 10:21 - AV). Sexual intercourse with animals incurred the death penalty (Lev. 20:15-16).

2.2.4 Communion with God (Gen. 3:8-9)

The original human pair had the privilege of God's presence and guidance (Gen. 2:16-17). He must have made Himself visible to them (Gen. 3:8). All this and Israel's later experience (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14) is a clear indication that man can commune with the Eternal.

3. The Test

The Bible shows us that after God had created man, He placed him in the garden of Eden and started a test period (Gen. 2:8-17). 'Eden' means 'pleasure', and it is possible that this paradise was situated on the Mesopotamian plain near the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The test for obedience was in God's commandment: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17).

3.1 The necessity for the test

The first couple was created with a holy nature, with their emotions and spontaneous actions / behaviour targetting the good. But they were susceptible to temptations from outside, and because the possibility of a slip-up existed, it was necessary to test their loyalty to God, and that is why God laid down that rule. We find a parallel in Matt. 4,

where the Lord Jesus, also amenable to temptations, was tested by means of Satan's proposals in the desert.

3.2 The purpose of the test

The purpose of the test was to enable the holy nature that man received at Creation, to develop into a holy character. Man had the propensity towards righteousness, but it was essential that he should develop fixed habits. In this way man could've developed into a being that would later rise above any susceptibility for temptation.

To make this possible, the test was not via a moral law, but via a positive law. The purpose of a moral law is very clear, namely, the healthy, continued existence of man, e.g., by not lying, it is not only beneficial to your fellow-man, but also for yourself and it is essential for a good and happy life. There is, therefore, a certain obligation with a moral law; you feel it is for your own good to obey it. With the positive law, on the other hand, there is no obvious reason why it should be respected, except for blind obedience. I'm not doing it because it is beneficial for me, but merely because God demands it. It is therefore a much better test for loyalty than the moral law. And this was the law under which our first ancestors stood: they were not allowed to eat from a certain tree, not because of an understandable reason, but simply because God required it.

4. The temptation and the Fall of man

Scripture shows us that our first parents were tempted to sin by ignoring the positive law of God (Gen. 3:1-6; II Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:14).

4.1 The instrument

The real Tempter was Satan (Rev. 12:9) but he used the serpent (Gen. 3:1-4). We read here that the serpent was 'more crafty than any of the wild 'animals', and it is quite possible that he was attractive and had an erect bearing (Gen. 3:14) and was able to speak.

4.2 Method

The serpent takes God's commandment and rephrases it in question form "Did God really say..." (Gen. 3:1). This method was also used by the Tempter when he confronted the Lord Jesus in the desert: "If you are the Son of God..." (Matt. 4:3). The Fall occurred through the following steps:

- (1) Listen to some gossip against God.
- (2) Question God's Word and His love.
- (3) Consider again that which God forbade.
- (4) Desire what God had strictly forbidden ("the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does..." I John 2:16).
- (5) Breaking God's commandment by taking a definitive step.

5. The consequences of the Fall

There were multiple consequences and we will consider them under four headings: the immediate consequences; the fourfold judgment by God; the threefold separation; the threefold death.

5.1 The immediate effect

5.1.1 A feeling of shame. *This was because the conscience had been awoken.*

5.1.2 The covering with fig leaves. *This was inadequate (Gen. 3:7). Compare this with the atonement covering (Philip. 3:9).*

5.1.3 A feeling of fear. This originated in the guilty consciences.

5.1.4 An attempt at self-justification. *Although they were guilty, they tried to justify their deed.*

5.1.5 An attempt to hide. *Adam and Eve foolishly thought that they could hide from God.*

5.1.6 Blame shifting. *Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent, i.e. Satan.*

5.2 The fourfold judgment of God (Gen. 3:14-19)

5.2.1 Against the serpent

He was doomed to crawl on his belly and to eat dust for the rest of his life (Micah 7:17). This sentence will not be rescinded, even during the Millennium, because the serpent was Satan's vehicle (Isa. 65:25).

5.2.2 Against the woman

She was doomed to painful childbearing and domination by her husband, but God's love shines through in I Tim. 2:15 where it says: "But women will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety."

5.2.3 Against the man

His was a sentence of suffering and hard labour (Job 5:7; Eccles. 2:22-23).

5.2.4 Against the Earth

Here the judgment specified thorns and thistles. The thorns, just like the serpent, remained natural enemies of man (Matt. 7:16). Scripture uses the thorn as a symbol of evil (Num. 33:55; I Cor. 12:7). The crown of mockery that our Saviour had to wear, was also made of thorns (John 19:2,5). During the Millennium this curse will be removed from earth (Isa. 55:13).

5.3 The Threefold Separation (Gen. 3:22-24)

5.3.1 From the tree of life

This symbolizes their loss of eternal life and the curse of a mortal body.

5.3.2 From the Garden of Eden

The pleasant life was over and now they were driven out to try and exist through toil and sweat.

5.3.3 From the personal, visible presence of God

Sin separates man from God and is the only thing that brings alienation. When Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, it was because their guilt and shame disqualified them morally from communion with Him.

5.4 The threefold death

The Lord had warned: "...for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17)

5.4.1 Physical death

Physical death is the separation of soul and body, and is a direct consequence of the Fall. It includes disease and all sorts of physical suffering.

5.4.2 Spiritual death

Spiritual death is the breach between the human spirit and God. It includes pangs of conscience, anxiety, distorted characters, etc. (Matt. 8:22; Luke 15:32).

5.4.3 Eternal death

Eternal death follows from spiritual death and it includes eternal suffering and relentless remorse (Matt. 10:28; 25:41).

LECTURE 12

PREDESTINATION

This is, without doubt, a complicated and mysterious matter. We must consider here not only the clearly revealed will of God, but also His concealed will, that will mostly remain an enigma to man. Still, we can't avoid the subject, because if it is not properly dealt with it can undermine our faith. Even if one can't fathom it completely in one lecture we can at least try to see the subject in proper perspective and remove a number of stumbling blocks.

1. Two extreme points of view

1.1 Calvinism - from John Calvin (1509-64); Swiss theologian and reformer. The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Salvation comes only from God; it is purely a Godly matter, and man has nothing to do with it.
- (b) God provides salvation from His free grace. Man can do nothing to alter this; he cannot, e.g., refuse if God wants to save him and cannot ask for salvation if God has not fore-ordained it for him. In other words, as far as salvation is concerned, man has no free will.
- (c) God does not provide salvation for everyone, but only for certain people whom he predestined in advance, and the rest he leaves to themselves - to remain hell-deserving sinners.
- (d) Because God saves man, those elected can never be lost, no matter what happens—yes, even in spite of man himself. Thus, once saved, always saved.
- (e) To support this doctrine, Calvinists quote the following Scriptures: John 10:28-29; 17:6; Rom. 8:35; 11:29; Philip. 1:6; I Peter 1:4-5.

1.2 Arminianism - from Jacob Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch anti-Calvinist theologian. In opposition to Calvin, he taught the following:

- (a) Christ died for all people and it is God's will that all will accept Him.
- (b) Salvation, however, depends on whether man accepts the Lord or not. Through his free choice to accept or reject the Lord Jesus, man himself determines whether he will be saved or not.
- (c) By His foreknowledge God knows in advance who will accept Him or otherwise, but he has not predetermined this choice.
- (d) Having once come under the grace of God, is no guarantee that you will always retain it. The Israelites were under the grace of God when they left Egypt, but as individuals many of them disobeyed and backslid, i.e., were lost again.
- (e) The Arminianists quote the following for Bible support: II Cor. 5:14; I Tim. 2:3-6; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 2:9.

2. The Biblical viewpoint

Like all similar viewpoints Calvinism and Arminianism are both inclined to emphasize size one aspect of the matter; so it is best and Biblical to find a midpoint while leaving out the extremes. With problems of this nature it is advisable to adhere to the following principles:

- (a) Difficult and unclear portions of Scripture must always be interpreted by means of the more straightforward texts, where the meaning is obvious.
- (b) First find the fundamental truth in a subject and then you can develop supplementary ideas around it.

2.1 A good point of departure for our view of predestination would certainly be John 3:16 -- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This is an open invitation - just believe in him and you will be saved! To all appearances a combination of God’s astounding grace and man’s acceptance of it, in other words, a big step from God’s side plus a little, but important, response from man’s side. For the moment we have managed to avoid the extremes of Calvinism and Arminianism.

So it seems, but the matter is not quite as simple as that. If we keep on telling people to ‘only believe’, we are spreading a false gospel, a gospel denounced by the Christian martyr of our century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He called this ‘cheap grace’ and he deplored the way the church in Germany preached it. In his now famous book ‘The Cost of Discipleship’ he wrote on p. 45: “We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard.”

Jesus Himself was emphatic: “*Repent* and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15). In Heb. 12:14 we are warned: “Make every effort...to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” The apostle Paul is very explicit on this point: “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must *turn to God in repentance* and have faith...” (Acts 20:21). The absolute necessity for *repentance* and *conversion* is underlined in both OT and NT, but it is not popular with modern man. As A.W. Tozer stated: “But nowadays there is a deadly, automatic quality about getting saved. It bothers me greatly. I say an ‘automatic’ quality: Put a nickel’s worth of faith in the slot, pull down the lever and take out the little card of salvation. Tuck it in your wallet and off you go!” (Whatever happened to worship? p. 15).

So there is more to the salvation question. Jesus called people who accepted Him to a *life* of discipleship: “...anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27). And whoever is truly grateful for his wonderful salvation, should respond positively, even when Jesus reminds us of the *narrow road* that leads to life Matt. 7:13-14). But here Juan Ortiz sounds a note of warning:

“Some people live and think as if there are three ways, not two. The wide is for sinners headed to hell. The narrow way is for pastors and missionaries. And then there is a third way, not so wide but not so narrow - a medium way for the rest of the believers... The medium way is an invention of man. Either we are in the kingdom of darkness doing our own will, or we are in God’s Kingdom doing His will. There is no in-between.” (Disciple, p.29).

2.2 But in contrast to all the foregoing points on which man must exercise a choice or make a decision, Calvinism seems to place man as a piece of rolling stock on a railway line, along which he is moved by God’s pre-determined will. But all the signs are there that He relinquished some of His sovereignty when He created angels and man. That is why they could rebel against Him or obey Him. If this bit of ‘free will’ was not allowed, then God must have willed Satan’s rebellion, and that means, God was the Author of the fallen angels’ sin and so, also of Adam’s Fall. Then God could not hold man responsible for sinning, and judgment and eternal hell also had to fall away.

To summarize then: In God's sovereignty everything is subject to His power and will, except that God made it possible for man to accept or reject Him. And, as each person has this liberty and privilege, he is responsible for his actions. At the same time, if he eventually qualifies for heaven, this has nothing to do with any merit on his side, but only because he allowed God's saving grace into his life.

2.3 Calvinism maintains: once saved, always saved. Arminianism teaches that a person can fall from grace. Here we must beware of the extremes. To say that once saved is a permanent, watertight guarantee, could lead to licentiousness in a so-called believer. Jesus promised / warned : "...he who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22). "To him that overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne..." (Rev. 3:21), etc. Of course, no one can remain standing on his own; God must help us (I Thess. 5:23).

To answer extreme Arminianism, we believe that the believer who trusts the Lord in all humility, will be protected against loss of faith and won't fall from grace. It is only the person who loses faith and then turns against Christ, who can't expect God to keep him in 'good standing'. Even another round of repentance, conversion, etc., seems to be out and he is lost for ever (Heb. 6:4-6). But these are extreme cases. If we keep on trusting in Him and if we remain loyal to Him, He will strengthen and protect our faith until Eternity. Jesus said about His followers: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28).

3. Christ and Predestination

Under the Old Covenant God had direct dealings with individuals, families or even nations. There was often direct communication, even to make covenants (Gen. 17:1-22); sometimes the outcome was positive, sometimes it was negative (Heb. 8). According to the Old Covenant, man had to keep to the Law (Rom. 10:5). But man was prone to break the Law (Rom. 2:23; James 2:10), with the result that there was no salvation through the Law (Gal. 2:16). Therefore God introduced a New Covenant (Heb. 8:9-13). This Covenant wasn't made with men or nations but centres around Christ as Mediator for man. God had chosen Christ (Isa. 42:1) as He who would blot out the sins of man (Heb. 1:1-3) and give righteousness to the contrite and penitent (Philip. 3:9). Christ achieved this through His life and death, by fulfilling the Law and endorsing the New Covenant (Matt. 26:27-28; Rom. 8:3-4). So, if predestination exists, Christ is the centre of it - even the Old Covenant had to wait for His death and resurrection (I Cor. 15:17). From there on, God only deals with man through Christ. All who truly accept Christ, are the elect (Rom. 8:29-34). If someone does not accept Christ, he remains under the just judgment that is incurred by sin; he is therefore rejected.

4. Election and Predestination

Generally speaking, election and predestination are synonyms, but the content of their meanings differ. Sometimes election is conditional, sometimes it is unconditional. Predestination is always unconditional. So, only when election is unconditional, can it really be synonymous with predestination.

Scripture does not support the idea that man is predestined to be saved, only that the saved are predestined to be conformed to Christ's image (likeness) - Rom. 8:29. We may

be elected to salvation 'in Christ' but this is conditional upon faith. Just as there are requirements before a choice is made in our human world, so God lays down certain 'requirements' for election. This amounts to faith in Christ as a personal Saviour and to 'remain in Him'. There are many who are called by the Spirit but they do not accept the 'invitation' and therefore they cannot be elected (Matt. 22:14).

All who accept God's plan, become the 'elect' because they accept Christ, God's Elect. Now, what is predestined will transpire without any further conditions. Therefore one could argue that those saved and living by faith, are predestined to become Christlike, because predestination applies to the saved.

We must note that Israel was not elected to be saved while all other nations were destined to be lost. No, the election of Israel as a nation was to make them a blessing to all other nations, by bringing the Saviour of all mankind into the world! Another interesting point is that it is possible to have an election within an election, e.g., while on earth Christ had many disciples, but only twelve were chosen to be His apostles to bear fruit in some special ways (John 15:16). This also applied in Paul's case (Acts 9:15). In His infinite Wisdom, God can always choose certain vessels for specific purposes.

In addition, God has always seen to it that a remnant of His elect remains, to ensure that His message of salvation is proclaimed from generation to generation. In His Omniscience He knows that in every generation there will be those who will accept His gracious offer of salvation. Man gets elected for salvation on the grounds of faith in Jesus Christ. When he believes and continues to do so, he is ordained or predestined to be conformed to Christ's likeness.

LECTURE 13 HAMARTIOLOGY

(THE DOCTRINE ABOUT SIN)

Nothing compares with all the trouble, strife and suffering that sin causes man. Everyone should have a clear insight into this part of humanity.

1. The Origin of Sin

As indicated in Lecture 9, the origin lies with Satan's rebellion against God. According to Isa. 14:12-17 and Ezek. 28:17 Satan wanted to equate himself with the Almighty and so the rebellion started. He and those who followed him, lost their place in heaven, and since then, Satan hates God as well as the creatures made in the image of God. When the first human couple lived happily in the Garden of Eden and enjoyed personal communion with God, Satan hated them and engineered a situation which would lead man into a position similar to Satan's. In Gen. 3:1-6 we read the sad history when the first human couple obeyed Satan instead of God and actually desired to know good and evil like God - copying Satan's behaviour - and inheriting the curse of sinfulness (Gen. 3:14-19).

2. The Reality of Sin

Atheism, Christian Science, the School of Practical Christianity, and others, deny the reality of sin. But sin is something that cannot be disproved.

2.1 The Bible clearly confirms it

Sin and salvation are leading themes, from Genesis to Revelation. Sin is so real that we read in Gen. 4:7 "...sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you..." Sin had brought a separation between God and man, and the Bible informs us of how God opposes and punishes sin. It was **sin** that necessitated Christ's Advent and His terrible suffering and death of atonement (John 1:29).

2.2 Our community life acknowledges it

Our community life and all its organizations must be aware of sin. The legal system, policing, criminal courts, jails and reformatories, wars etc., are ample evidence that society knows what sin is. All religions acknowledge the problem of sin and seek solutions. The stark reality of sin even enters the world of literature, e.g., "One leak will sink a ship, and one *sin* destroy a sinner" (John Bunyan in 'Pilgrim's Progress').

"Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition: By that *sin* fell the angels" (Shakespeare in 'King Henry VIII').

2.3 The conscience proves it

Those feelings of guilt and misery that man knows so well after he has done a wrong thing, is living proof of sin. That feeling of shame towards the person that you have wronged; the sleepless nights when people toss and turn about things they should never have done; that feeling of despair that often drives a criminal to report to the police - all this is witness to the fact that sin is an ugly reality. The unregenerate sinner on his deathbed, trembling with fear for death and a very uncertain eternity, is just one more proof that man knows very well that sin exists.

3. The Nature of Sin

3.1 What sin is not

- 3.1.1** Sin is not an accident or coincidence that overtakes man, but deeds and attitudes for which man must accept full responsibility.
- 3.1.2** Sin is not an inborn feeling that is unavoidable, but a curse that has entered man's life.
- 3.1.3** Sin is more than the absence or negation of the good; it has an existence of its own (Ps. 51:3-4).
- 3.1.4** Sin is no excusable weakness that calls for sympathy, but a deliberate deviation from God's will.
- 3.1.5** Sin is not just lower instincts in man causing trouble, but is part of our sinful nature inherited from Adam and Eve.

3.2 Bible terms for sin

- 3.2.1** The Hebrew word for sin is *chattath* and in Greek the word *hamartia* is mostly used. Prof. J. Murray (Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia) describes sin as follows: "Sin is failure, error, iniquity, transgression, trespassing, lawlessness, unrighteousness. It is an unmitigated evil. But the definition of sin is not to be derived simply from the terms used in Scripture to denote it. The most characteristic feature of sin in all its aspects is that it is directed against God. David expressed this in his confession (Ps. 51:4)... and Paul in his indictment 'the carnal mind is enmity against God' (Rom. 8:7)."

3.2.2 Rebelliousness against God - I Sam. 15:23

This was the first sin and meant that the creature stood up against God.

3.2.3 Iniquity - Gen. 15:16 (AV)

This means the misuse or perversion of the pure and the genuine.

3.2.4 Transgression - I John 3:4 (AV)

This is a breaking of God's Law.

3.2.5 Vanity - Isa. 41:29 (AV)

Sin can be empty, vane and acting without purpose.

3.2.6 Hardness of heart - Exod. 4:21; Heb. 4:7

3.2.7 Rottenness / Badness - Isa. 5:24 (AV)

This form of sin is often of a habitual nature.

3.2.8 Ignoring salvation - Heb. 2:3

To ignore what Jesus Christ has done for us - that is sin indeed!

3.2.9 Unbelief - Heb. 3:12

Unbelief is a very common form of sin.

3.2.10 Omission of the good

"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17).

3.2.11 Failing to love

The great Commandment is that we must love God above all and our neighbour as ourself (Matt. 22:34-40). To neglect this commandment, is certainly to sin.

3.2.12 Debt - Matt. 6:12

Sin puts us in debt with God; therefore, all who sin are debtors.

Summary:

Sin is something of a Satanic nature in man that causes deeds, words and thoughts that deviate from the Godly plan and Law, and which brings man into direct conflict with God. Sin can be compared to a tree, with the various sins as the fruit.

4. The extent of sin

Where do we find sin?

4.1 In the heavens

We read in Job 1:6, Zech. 3:1 and Luke 10:18 that Satan also appears in heaven and that he even engages God in conversation. The Bible also admonishes us to fight against the evil spirits in the heavenly realms (Ephes. 6:12-13).

4.2 On earth

The whole earth with everything on it was affected by the Fall. But the day will come when 'the earth and everything in it' will be destroyed and the heavens will disappear (II Peter 3:10).

4.2.1 Vegetation - Gen. 3:17-18

After the Fall the soil was cursed and condemned to bring forth thorns and thistles. This curse will be lifted during the Millennium (Isa. 55:13).

4.2.2 Animal kingdom

It is not clear to what extent sin on earth plays a role in the apparent cruelty among animals, but we do know that the Millennium will bring astounding changes when: "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them..." etc. (Isa. 11:6-9).

4.2.3 Nature

Man's sin has often caused great natural and unnatural calamities, e.g.,

- Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16:30-33).
- Seventy thousand deaths through plague (II Sam. 24).
- Three years of drought (I Kings 17).

4.3 Humanity

As a result of Adam and Eve's sin, all their descendants were contaminated (Rom.5:19). And even today, no one can claim to be free from sin (Rom. 3:9-18, 23;

I John 1:8), in fact, humanity and its world is a nest of iniquity. Today's world is simply going from bad to worse. And each new baby inherits a sinful nature from his/her parents and eventually passes it on to his / her descendants.

5. The consequences of sin

5.1 For the world

5.1.1 The whole world yearns for salvation (Rom. 8:19-23). All creation yearns for liberation from the slavery of decay. Salvation for mankind could also

mean that creation gets liberated from the elements of disintegration that are now at work in it (verse 21).

5.1.2 Creation was destined to experience God's glory, but lost it through sin (Num. 14:21; Isa. 6:3; Hab. 2:14; Rom. 8:19-20). In ancient Israel's time, the Lord had to make use of specially prepared accommodation, i.e., the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:35) or the Temple (I Kings 8:11). And because of sin God's presence departed from the temple (Matt. 23:38-39). Since Jesus' Ascension, thousands are looking forward to His Second Coming (Rev. 22:17, 20), so that the earth can be filled with His glory.

5.2 For man

In Scripture the picture of sinful man is a truly depressing one:

- All have sinned: Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:9-10, 22; I John 1:8-10.
- No one is righteous: Ps. 143:2; Rom. 3:10-18.
- In terms of the Law all are under a curse: Gal 3:10.
- Alienated from God: Ephes. 4:18; Col. 1:21.
- Has become an object of wrath: Ephes. 2:3.
- Child of the devil: John 8:44.
- With deceitful heart: Jer. 17:9.
- Filled with evil thoughts: Gen. 6:5; 8:21.
- Totally corrupt: Rom. 1:18-32; 8:7-8; Eph. 2:1-3

It is important to pray to God to give us a fuller understanding of our depravity, so that we can kneel before God with true penitence, and then plead for purification by the blood of the Lamb (I John 1:9).

LECTURE 14 SOTERIOLOGY

i.e. The doctrine of Salvation

ATONEMENT

The discussion on predestination touched on the origins of God's grace and His plan to save man. But sinful man can't just be saved and regain his position in the kingdom of God. The holiness and righteousness of God demand that sin must be punished. A form of atonement had to be found. And the atonement problem brings us to the question: How could it come about that sinful, hell-deserving man could become reconciled with God and become acceptable to His holiness?

1. The meaning of and need for atonement

1.1 What does 'atonement' mean?

The root word in Hebrew is *kaphar* meaning literally to cover, e.g., with bitumen; figurative meanings are to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel, appease, make atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pardon, purge, reconcile. Examples in Scripture: Exod. 30:10; 32:30; Lev. 12:8; Num. 5:8, etc. Alternative Hebrew words are:

- *kasah*, e.g. in Ps.85:2 - "You forgave the iniquity of your people and **covered** all their sins".
- *ya'at*, e.g. in Isa. 61:10 - "...for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath **covered** me with the robe of righteousness..."(AV).

The foregoing conveys the idea that atonement means that the sin and nakedness of man is covered before the eyes of the holy and righteous God. We find a similar train of thought in the NT where the missing **wedding clothes** are mentioned (Matt. 22:12) and the sons of God are **clothed** with Christ (Gal. 3:27).

In the NT Greek, atonement is mostly expressed by:

- *katallasso*, meaning to reconcile, e.g., Rom. 5:10 - "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were **reconciled** to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been **reconciled**, shall we be saved through his life!"
- *hilasmos*, meaning propitiation, the means of forgiveness, expiation, e.g., I John 2:2 - "He is the **atoning** sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

From the last two examples it is clear that atonement is that action by the Lord Jesus by which peace and communion between God and man became possible. Taken together (Old and New Testament applications), our Lord Jesus achieved a 'covering' of man's sins in so perfect a way, that our 'charge sheet' has been obliterated and peace and communion between God and man has been accomplished.

1.2 The need for atonement

Atonement is necessary for the following reasons:

1.2.1 The sinfulness of man

After originating in the first paradise, sin penetrated the whole of mankind. God's Word therefore declares: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Also: "But your iniquities have separated you from our God: your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). To heal the breach, the terrible estrangement between God and man, a Mediator, one who could effect a reconciliation, was required.

1.2.2 The demands of the Law

God gave His Law to man and expected a careful observation of it (Exod. 20; Deut. 28:58-61; James 2:10). Because of his sinfulness it is impossible for man to live 100% according to the Law and so everybody came under the curse mentioned in Gal. 3:10 - "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." On man, as transgressor of the Law, rests the judgment for sin, namely eternal death. The only alternative is atonement, through which the demands of the Law (perfect adherence to) can be met, while eternal life is not lost.

1.2.3 The demand for holiness

God is holy and he who wants to exist in His presence will have to be holy. Therefore the Bible demands: "Be holy, because I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). See also Ps. 24:3-4 and Rom. 12:1. The realization of God's holiness and his own sinfulness, caused Isaiah to exclaim: "Woe to me!...I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips..." (Isa. 6:5). So, while man is sinful with no holiness in himself, he needs atonement to qualify for holiness.

1.2.4 The pending judgment on sinners

As already said, every person is a Lawbreaker and therefore a sinner. Just as infringement of a country's laws brings on punishment, so punishment must also follow the violation of God's laws. That is why the word of God mentions a future day of judgment - Matt. 10:15; Acts 17:31; II Peter 3:7 - and a white throne where all the guilty ones will have to appear (Rev. 20:11-13). Therefore man needs an advocate or mediator to make atonement for him before God, the eternal Judge.

1.2.5 The powerlessness of man

If it was at all possible for man to pay for his guilt towards God, or, to buy himself free from the curse of the Law, then atonement through Christ would naturally have been unnecessary. But it is exactly this incapability and unworthiness of man that made it absolutely essential that he should find Someone who could manage that reconciliation. "Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). This sounds a note of despair that genuinely reflects man's position.

2. Atonement in the Old Testament

Although true atonement only became possible in the New Testament era, we still find clear types in the OT that point towards the later, perfect atonement.

2.1 The atonement idea in paradise

Just after the Fall, the consciences of the first couple awoke and they discovered their nakedness (Gen. 3:7). And to correct their nudity God used animal hides to make some

garments for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21). Here some innocent animals had to suffer loss of life for the really guilty ones, so that the latter could hide their shame. This foreshadowed what was later to happen on Calvary. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we may become the righteousness of God” (II Cor. 5:21).

2.2 The institution of the Passover

On the night just before the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had to slaughter a lamb and put some of the blood on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses (Exod. 12:7). Since that night the Israelites celebrated the Passover annually, to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt, and each year a Passover lamb was slaughtered. This lamb points to our Lord Jesus Christ who, through His death and bloodshed freed us from sin and broke the hold of death.

2.3 The Mosaic sacrifices

In Leviticus chapters 1 to 6, various offerings on behalf of the Israelites are treated in detail:

2.3.1 The Burnt Offering (Lev. 1)

This was a voluntary offering for atonement purposes.

2.3.2 The Grain Offering (Lev. 2)

This could be an offering of the firstfruits. There was normally a ‘memorial portion’ to be burnt and the rest went to Aaron and his sons.

2.3.3 The Fellowship Offering (Lev. 3)

This was also an animal offering.

2.3.4 The Sin Offering (Lev. 4)

This was required when “anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands” (verse 2).

2.3.5 The Guilt Offering (Lev. 5:14-19)

This applied in a case “When a person commits a violation but sins unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD’s holy things (verse 14).

For all these offerings, the grain offering excepted, animals had to be slaughtered - animals without defect, and the blood had to be sprinkled against the altar. Just as was the case with the Passover lamb, these sacrifices are types of the perfect offering that was offered on Calvary. It is quite amazing when one compares the Burnt Offering and Ephes. 5:2; the Fellowship Offering and Lev. 7:15,19; John 6:53-54; the Sin Offering and II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:13-14; and the Guilt Offering and Isa. 53:10.

Once a year the High Priest had to enter the sanctuary area and sprinkle blood on the front of the atonement cover and before it. This was atonement for the whole of Israel. This is a type or presentation of what we read in Heb. 9:24 - “For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.”

The live goat on which the sins of the people were laid before sending it into the desert (Lev. 16:20-22), is a portrayal of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus who allowed all our transgressions, infirmities and sorrows to descend on Him (Isa. 53).

2.4 The imperfections of the Old Testament offerings

- 2.4.1** Those sacrifices were only an annual reminder of sins, because it was impossible for the blood of the sacrificial animals to take away sins.
- 2.4.2** These offerings were intended to outwardly cleanse those who were ceremonially unclean (Heb. 9:13), some forms of which could affect the social harmony (Lev. 5:1-6). But they could not really cleanse from sin.
- 2.4.3** The sacrifices of the OT were handled by priests and because they were human and imperfect, with themselves requiring atonement, they could never sacrifice a perfect offering (Heb. 5:1-4).
- 2.4.4** The offerings of the OT were continually repeated without completing the atonement process (Heb. 10:1, 2, 11).
- 2.4.5** Any value those offerings had, was not their atoning power, but they were holy tokens pointing to the future and directing man to Christ, the perfect offering. Therefore the offerings also required faith - faith in the promise of a coming Messiah (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15).

3. The New Testament or Perfect Atonement

With the shortcomings of the Old Covenant or Testament so obvious, it was time for a new and better covenant that would provide perfect atonement (Heb. 8:6, 13). Shortly before His final suffering and death, the Lord Jesus therefore said: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20).

3.1 How was perfect atonement attained?

In order to have a perfect atonement, it was necessary:

- (a) that the offering would be perfect;
- (b) that the priest administering the offering must himself be perfect;
- (c) that the blood be brought into the perfect sanctuary, i.e., in heaven, before God.

3.1.1 The Perfect Offering

This could not be some or other creature, because that would only effect a superficial cleansing. Only Christ could be that perfect offering, because it is only His blood that could "...cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Heb. 9:13-14). Animal offerings can never be a ransom for the soul of man; only the precious blood of Christ (I Peter 1:18-19).

Jesus Christ is therefore the perfect sacrifice that was chosen, even before the world came into being (Eph. 1:4), by God's set purpose and foreknowledge (Acts 2:23), to reconcile God and man by means of His death on the cross. Therefore, Calvary was the perfect altar where atonement was effected for the sins of the world.

3.1.2 The perfect High Priest and Mediator

The High Priest who sacrificed this perfect offering, was Jesus Christ "...who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God..." (Heb. 9:14). To mediate with God for man, the High Priest had to have empathy with the failings of man (Heb. 5:1-2). Therefore the Bible reassures us that the High Priest we have is not one "...who is unable

to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

A further description of our perfect High Priest is: "For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence" (Heb. 9:24). He is still there today to mediate for us. Christ's atonement was perfect and need never be repeated. Our sins have been atoned for forever. Therefore, He could exclaim on the cross: "It is finished!" There was nothing more to be added.

3.1.3 The power of the perfect atonement

Through His death and atonement on Calvary, Christ made the following possible:

3.1.3.1 Forgiveness of sins. Through Christ one and all, even the biggest transgressor, can receive forgiveness (Ephes. 1:7; I John 1:7; Rev, 1:5). And this absolution is so perfect that we need never to worry about our sins again, for God who pardons sin, hurls "...all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18, 19). This not only applies to the past, but also to the present and the future - if we confess our transgressions (I John 1:9: 2:1-2). But can't a limit be reached? No, "...where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (Rom. 5:20).

3.1.3.2 Fulfilling the Law and conquering death. As mentioned earlier, the Law requires that the transgressor of the Law will be punished by death. On Calvary, however, Christ bore the extreme penalty for the sins of the world, and so He fulfilled God's Law on man's behalf (Matt. 5:17). Because of this, we were freed from the Law, i.e., we died to the Law (Rom. 7:4-6). Therefore, Paul could exclaim triumphantly: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:55-57).

3.1.3.3 Victory over sin. Christ not only made it possible for us to receive forgiveness for sins, but He also made it possible to overcome our inherited sinful nature, so that its domination can be broken, and sin is no longer our master (Rom. 6:10-14).

3.1.3.4 Free access to the Throne of Grace. At the moment when Christ died on the cross, the curtain or veil separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, was torn in two (Exod. 26:33; Luke 23:45). That was sign and proof that Christ had opened up access for us to God and the Throne of Grace. Therefore, we no longer need a human high priest to pray for us. We ourselves may approach God and what we ask in Jesus' Name, will be granted (John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23).

3.1.3.5 Salvation for the saints of the Old Testament. What is the position of those who lived before Jesus' death of atonement? May they share in it? Yes, the atonement is also retroactive, i.e., it applies to those who faithfully waited for the promised Messiah in OT times (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15; 11:1-39).

3.1.3.6 Eternal bliss. Christ's death of atonement not only provided us with forgiveness for sins and made salvation possible, but also ensured life eternal (John 3:16; Rom. 6:22), the glorification in God (Rom. 8:30) and we become heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

3.1.3.7 And all this through Grace. Of all the blessings already mentioned, man cannot deserve any; no good works, no attempts at observing the Law will save him. It is only the grace of God that applies Christ's atonement in our favour. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from

yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast” (Rom. 3:28; Ephes. 2:8-9).

LECTURE 15 Soteriology (cont.)

SALVATION, CALLING AND REPENTANCE

1. *What is salvation?*

1.1 Definition

The Greek word *soteria* means a state of having been saved. And this applies to a hell-deserving sinner, saved by Jesus' atonement from God's judgment and wrath. Salvation is the application of Christ's work of atonement in the life of a person. Although He died on the cross for the sins of the whole human race, this does not mean automatic salvation for everyone of them. Only when a person allows the Holy Spirit to apply the work done in his life, does the Lord Jesus become a Saviour for him personally, and can he be called a 'saved' person.

1.2 Aspects of salvation. The following terms are used in connection with salvation: calling, repentance, faith, regeneration, justification and adoption. These terms do not apply so much to separate spiritual experiences, as to aspects of one and the same experience of grace that we can term salvation. The moment I am saved, I've answered the calling by God's Spirit, I've truly converted myself to the Lord, I'm exercising faith, I've been regenerated, I've been justified by God and I've been adopted as child of the Heavenly Father. Nevertheless, we must study these aspects separately to improve our insight into salvation, so that we can describe the process.

2. *Calling*

2.1 *God seeks out man*

In Gen. 3 we see how after the Fall it was God who took the initiative to visit and ask: Where are you? Because of his sinful condition, no man will seek his God and Creator out of his own, only when God's Spirit induces him to do it. That is why Jesus said: "No man can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him..." (John 6:44).

There are different ways in which God's Spirit knocks on the door of man's heart. It can be through preaching of the Word, through some or other event in the person's life, during an attempt to explain the way of salvation to him, while reading in his Bible, by means of a dream or vision, etc. Each saved soul can witness about the many ways and times the Lord spoke to him (Heb. 1:1).

2.2 *The enlightenment of the mind*

When the Holy Spirit visits man, He convinces him of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11). He reveals to man his sinful, lost condition. But at the same time He points man to Jesus and the way of righteousness. When a person realizes all this, his mind has been enlightened (Heb. 6:4). He can no longer say: I didn't know.

2.3 *The human responsibility*

When God's Spirit knocks on the door of man's heart, He desires entry but He will not force His way in. He wants to be invited in (Rev. 3:20). But man does not always respond to the pleading of God's Spirit, i.e., allow Him to do the work of salvation in that life. In other words, not all those who develop a conviction of sin and feel the need for a Saviour are indeed saved. Therefore Matt. 22:14 - "For many are invited, but few are chosen." It is man's responsibility whether he responds to God's call and choose the good road or otherwise.

3. Repentance

3.1 What is repentance?

The Greek noun *metanoia* means a change of mind, repentance. The verb *metanoeo* means to change one's way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude, with regard to sin and righteousness—to repent, to change one's way. (In Louw and Nida's Greek-English Lexicon they remark on p. 510 of Vol. I: "Though in English a focal component of repent is the sorrow or contrition that a person experiences because of sin, the emphasis in 'metanoeo' and 'metanoia' seems to be more specifically the total change, both in thought and behaviour, with respect to how one should both think and act...")

A good illustration is the history of Saul who became the apostle Paul. Initially all his powers, spiritually, mentally and physically were concentrated on the persecution of the Lord's Church. Then he has his *metanoia*, and now all his powers and talents are focused on the promotion of that same church.

3.2 How does one come to repentance?

When this experience in a person's life is closely examined, the following characteristics become noticeable: genuine remorse about sin, confession of sin, an about turn and a new life. This is what normally happens when a person is convinced of his own sin and when he allows the Holy Spirit to lead him back to his God.

3.2.1 Genuine contrition

When the Holy Spirit convinces man of his sinful state, it is natural - if he is serious - to be filled with deep remorse (II Cor. 7:8-11). You are not only sorry about all your misdeeds, but you also experience a gnawing feeling of self-reproach. This reaction we see in the prodigal son (Luke 15) and in the tax collector who cried: "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13). So it often happens that such a person will fall down in tears, at the feet of Jesus. Emotional expression will, of course, differ from person to person, and some will hardly show any emotion.

3.2.2 Confession

The Lord requires more than just sorrow about our sins, we must confess them. The prodigal son said: "Father, I have sinned..." This is what the Lord expects from us, when we become aware of sins in our lives: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). In order to confess, the sins must be mentioned before the Lord. If we had sinned against others, we must confess to them and, where applicable, make restitution (Luke 19:8).

If we do not confess our sins, we cannot expect the Lord to forgive them. Judas Iscariot ‘was seized with remorse’ over his dreadful deed (Matt. 27:3-5), but because he never attempted to confess this to Jesus, he died in sin (vs 5b).

3.2.3 *Conversion*

Confession is not the ‘finale’ because it is possible to confess without changing your life in any discernible way. That is when no fundamental change or turnabout had taken place. Conversion is not only a change of feeling / attitude (the remorse / contrition part) or a change of heart (by confessing your sins), but also a change of will. The Lord expects us to really bid the old sinful life farewell, and to be keen to live from there on only for Him (I Sam. 7:3; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 18:30; Acts 26:20).

Man is, however, unable to transform himself through his own exertion, but if he commits himself fully to the Lord, he can expect Ezek. 11:19-20 to become truly applicable to his life: “I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them...Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

3.2.4 *The Fruits of Repentance*

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matt. 3:8), is God’s demand from the one who claims to have been converted. If you’re really changed, your life on the outside must prove it. Just as the fruit produced determines the tree type, so my actions will prove whether I have really become a new creation, or whether I’m still unchanged. He who has undergone a genuine conversion, can truly testify: “...the old has gone, the new has come!” (II Cor. 5:17).

3.3 The necessity for repentance

Repentance is essential for each and everyone **because:**

3.3.1 No one is born regenerated. Natural man is errant, straying away from the Lord (Isa. 53:6), and falling short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

3.3.2 It is the key word in the preaching of the OT prophets (I Sam. 7:3; Isa. 55:7; Ezek. 18:30, etc.), in the exhortations of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2); we notice it in the summons and prophecy of our Lord Jesus (Matt. 4:17; Luke 24:46-47), and that of His disciples (Mark 6:12; Acts 2:38; 20:21).

3.3.3 It is God’s wish for man: “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).

3.3.4 Because it is the only way by which we can become reconciled to God and avoid eternal damnation (Luke 13:3, 5).

3.4 The consequences of conversion

Conversion produces the following wonderful results:

3.4.1 Joy in heaven: “...I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:7,10).

3.4.2 Forgiveness and extirpation of sins. We receive forgiveness of sins on the strength of Christ’s atonement, but in order to turn that death of atonement into a force in our lives, we must convert ourselves to God (Mark 1:4; Luke 24:27; Acts 3:19).

3.4.3 It opens the way to the fulness of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit is for those who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38).

LECTURE 16 Soteriology (cont.)

FAITH

1. What is faith?

The Greek *pistis* is translated primarily with 'faith' or 'belief'. Faith represents a general principle in human life, e.g., when I go to a tap to get a drink of water, I believe that water is available there, although I can't see it. I board a train and believe it will take me to my destination. So, when one sees, hears, smells, tastes or touches something, he has faith then that his senses will not mislead him (Although that is quite possible). A lot of what man does, is based on faith. Moreover, society would've been impossible if a degree of mutual trust did not exist. One must have faith in the faithfulness of your wife, otherwise you would've balked at the idea of marrying her; you must have faith in the trustworthiness of a bank, otherwise you would not invest your money there; you believe the dentist will relieve your toothache, otherwise you would not visit him; you have to trust your fellow-man not to kill you, otherwise you will have to stay away from him or refuse to eat food prepared by someone else. Yes, it is quite natural for man to believe, to have faith in things, even before you have irrefutable proof of the trustworthiness of them.

But, the Bible does not refer to this natural faith (or trust) when prescribing faith as a prerequisite for salvation. Saving faith differs from natural faith in the following respects:

1.1 The Object

For natural faith there is usually some or other creature, natural phenomenon, social condition, etc., as object. Saving faith, however, does not focus on something of this world, but on Jesus Christ and God the Father, who gave Him as Mediator for man (John 14:1; Heb. 12:2).

1.2 Based on revelation

Natural faith is usually based on observation. As long as my observations confirm the truth of something, I will have faith in it. With saving faith it is completely different. It is impossible to observe God and the Lord Jesus, as I would look at some or other natural phenomenon. This is to be expected, because how can the natural touch the supernatural? If we could localize and identify God like some or other phenomenon, He would no longer be God—exalted, unfathomable, almighty and infinite. The supernatural can only be known by the natural to the extent that the supernatural reveals itself to the natural. It is impossible for man to find the Lord by some or other means; it is always the Lord that must reveal Himself to man (I Sam. 3:21; Luke 10:21).

1.3 Personal revelation

The existence of God is revealed in Creation and in human history (the general revelation) - Ps. 19:1. But God, and the way man can approach Him, are revealed in the Bible (The specific revelation) - II Tim. 3:16. However, even he who believes in God on the grounds of the revelation in creation and in the Bible, has not found Him yet and is not saved. A personal revelation is essential - not just deducting His existence from creation or Bible, but one must be conscious of Him personally and directly. That is faith

in the Lord. “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

1.4 A gift from God

No man can generate saving faith all on his own, otherwise he would be able to prepare himself for heaven. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God...” (Ephes. 2:8). Genuine saving faith is a gift from God that He reveals through His Holy Spirit in the life of man (Matt. 16:16-17; Gal. 1:15-16). For this reason the apostle Paul says: “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power” (I Cor. 2:4-5). The Holy Spirit is always willing to generate faith in man’s heart, but then the person must open up to Him just as with his conversion, when he listened to the Spirit’s voice when He pleaded with him. In this sense, the Lord can demand faith and conversion from man.

1.5 The content of faith

What does a person believe about God and the Lord Jesus when he has come to genuine saving faith? He believes what the Bible teaches us about the Deity and the way to salvation. The mere thoughts recorded in the Bible have no power in themselves, but when the Gospel is brought to a person by the Holy Spirit, they take on quickening power (II Cor. 3:6). That is why Paul could write: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...” (Rom. 1:16).

2. *The revelation of faith*

We may define saving faith, but we can’t really fathom or fully explain it. Precisely because it is so spontaneous and immediate, it remains a mysterious activity of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, there are clear signs indicative of the true faith. In Heb. 11:1 we see: “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” If we analyse this definition, two components of faith become evident, namely, a sincere trust and a firm knowledge (which consists of the proof of things which we do not see).

A sincere trust—He who has found true faith, has confidence that the Lord Jesus died on the cross for him as well, that his sins have been washed away and that he is now reconciled with God. This confidence leads us to accept the promises in the Word of God. Without this, man would not take his needs and problems to the Lord. We can prove our childlike trust by loving God and being desirous to obey Him in every way, in spite of discouragement, discomfort, grief, yes, even when threatened by death (Heb. 11:7-38).

This trust is based on the hope we have in Christ. “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2).

A firm knowledge—The person who has found faith knows it; he has proof of it because “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Rom. 8:16). Further proof is the Bible itself: “I wrote these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life”. (I John 5:13). Faith is further revealed in a firm conviction and assurance that the Lord Jesus had become my Saviour. This conviction and sureness does not flow from logical thinking or experimentation. It is a spontaneous result of the faith that the Holy Spirit had worked in my heart, by His witness and by the Word.

3. The importance of faith as revealed in its consequences

The wonderful results of faith are the following:

3.1 Salvation

Paul and Silas advised the jailer: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household” (Acts 116:31). See also John 3:16,18; 20 31; Rom. 1:16; Ephes. 2:8.

3.2 Spiritual light

Through faith we move from spiritual darkness to the light of Christ (John 12:36.46). While we were once separated, through sin and ignorance, from the knowledge of the Lord’s wonderful purpose in the lives of men, we have now through faith become participants in these wonderful truths.

3.3 Peace

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Martin Luther was spiritually in conflict and unhappy, until he discovered the key of childlike faith in Christ; then all the negative thoughts / feelings vanished.

3.4 Joy

When a person starts to believe, he is filled with joy because he realizes the magnitude of God’s grace for him (Acts 16:34; I Peter 1:8).

3.5 Answered prayer

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). See also Matt. 21:22; James 1:5-7; etc.

3.6 A source of living water

“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (John 7:38).

3.7 Power to overcome

Through faith we have Almighty God on our side. Jesus Himself assured us: “Everything is possible for him who believes” (Mark 9:23). “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (I John 5:5).

4. The relationship between faith and repentance

As already intimated, faith and repentance are aspects of the same subject, namely salvation. Therefore, true faith and true repentance always go hand in hand. This relationship is proved by the following:

4.1 Faith in the calling by the Holy Spirit, leads to repentance

When the Spirit calls you to Jesus, whether by the reading of God’s Word, a sermon, a life episode, etc., and you react in faith thereto, the immediate result is repentance (II Sam. 12:11-16; Matt. 3:2,6; Acts 2:37-38,41; 11:19,21).

4.2 Faith is a conversion from unbelief to belief

Unbelief is not only the absence of belief, but an evil force in man’s life (Rom. 11:20). Because of this evil force Pharaoh refused to obey God’s command; the Pharisees rejected the Lord Jesus and plotted His death; it was so potent that it restricted the miracle working of Jesus (Mark 6:5). To leave the condition of unbelief and take up a position of faith, is nothing but repentance.

4.3 The one is proof of the other

When people bring forth the fruits of repentance, we have proof that they have become believers. Vice versa, if someone believes, it is proof that he has repented. In summary then, conversion is the change that occurs when you are saved, and faith is the gift you receive when you are saved.

LECTURE 17 Soteriology (cont.)

REGENERATION

1. What is regeneration ?

Regeneration is that Divine operation whereby man becomes a partaker of the Divine nature (II Peter 1:4), in other words, whereby man receives a new heart (Ezek. 36:26-27). Through natural birth, man starts his natural life and his kinship with the human race. With his second birth - the regeneration - however, we have the inception of the Christlike nature - also called the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9) - in his life, and his relationship with the Deity. A regenerated person is therefore someone who, has not only had a natural birth at the beginning of his life, but also a spiritual birth (born out of God).

2. How does the Regeneration originate ?

Natural birth is a well-known natural phenomenon and explainable. The regeneration is, however, a mystery and unfathomable for human understanding (John 3:6-8).

Therefore, regeneration cannot be explained in terms of human experience. What we do know about regeneration, is as much as God reveals in Scripture. The following are Biblical symbols to illuminate this divine work in man:

2.1 The germination of spiritual seed

In Matt. 13:3-23 Jesus employs the parable of the sower to describe how new life is started in man. Just as the sower goes out sowing, so the Spirit of God busies Himself with sowing the Word of God, the imperishable seed (I Peter 1:23), in the lives of people. The soil onto which is sown, represents the heart of man. Some hearts are hard and inaccessible to the Word of God due to ignorance, with the result that it disappears quickly from their hearts (Matt. 13:19). Some hearts are like rocky ground with no depth. They also hear the Word of God and react quickly, but they do not allow the Holy Spirit to do a thorough work in them. The result? As soon as a testing time comes, the little spirituality they have is uprooted (Matt. 13:5-6,20-21). Other hearts again, could be compared to ground covered with weeds; they hear the Word of God and accept it, but because they do not abandon the sinful in their lives, their spiritual lives are choked by the cares and temptations of this world (Matt. 13:7,22). Then there are those whose hearts are like well-prepared soil, i.e., they are well-informed, they understand God's Word, their lives have been thoroughly ploughed by true conviction and remorse, and they have bid farewell to sin and unrighteousness (Matt. 13:23). Therefore, they receive the word of God and they bear fruit. These fruits, also called the fruits of the Holy Spirit, are listed in Gal. 5:22. When these 'fruits' are revealed in a person's life, it is proof that his carnal nature has been supplanted by the divine or spiritual.

2.2 A New Creation

In Genesis chapter 1 we learn how God, in the beginning, created everything that we see today in the visible and natural life. So the first man was also created, perfect and in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7). Through sin, the image of God in man was disfigured, so, as in the beginning, we now need something like a re-creation to restore God's image / nature in man. Therefore, a regenerated person "is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (II Cor. 5:17) -- see also Gal. 6:15 and Titus 3:5. This act of creation, however, does not make the entire person perfect in soul and body. No, it is only the renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:2) or heart (Ezek. 36:26). God created man with both a natural life and a spiritual nature.

2.3 Identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ

Man in his natural state is dead in his transgressions and sins (Ephes. 2:1), and has no power in himself to rise from that condition. Someone must raise him from the death of sin. The only One able to do that is Jesus Christ, because He died for man, was buried and rose again from death. When a person is regenerated, a resurrection to a new life has taken place in him (Ephes. 2:5; I John 3:14). This happens when we identify ourselves in faith with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The regenerated soul can then testify with Paul: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom. 6:4). This also shows, that when we are baptized, we confess our faith in that we die off the old life and resurrect into the new and eternal life.

2.4 Being born of God

For natural birth we need a father’s seed and a mother’s womb. With respect, we can apply this to the regeneration. From our Heavenly Father the seed of the Word emanated - the Lord Jesus (John 1:1,14; 3:6; 16:5) and the rebirth is from the Spirit (John 3:5-6). When we accept the Lord Jesus in faith, we undergo a rebirth through the Spirit of God and we become children of the Heavenly Father (John 1:12-13; I John 5:1).

To summarize—from the foregoing it is clear that regeneration takes place when

- (a) man genuinely converts to God (The well-prepared heart) and accepts the Lord Jesus by putting his faith in God’s Word;
- (b) God in His own mysterious way, rouses man from his sinful condition as a new creation and makes him a participant in eternal life. This shows the close relationship between conversion and faith, and regeneration. The latter ties in with the sacrament of baptism and baptism symbolizes the regeneration. (The sacrament itself will be discussed in Lecture 20).

3. The effects of the regeneration

3.1 Eternal life

Regeneration means man rises from the death of sin into the new and eternal life (Ephes. 2:5; I John 3:14).

3.2 Heir to the Kingdom of God

Each regenerated soul becomes an heir to the Kingdom of God, by virtue of his regeneration (John 3:3,5).

3.3 Child of God

Because the regenerated person was re-born out of God’s Spirit, he has become a child of God (John 1:12-14).

3.4 A divine nature

With his regeneration man receives, beside his old carnal nature, the higher, divine nature of Jesus. This new nature cannot sin (I John 3:9; 5:8), but does what is right (I John 3:29) and displays love towards God and his fellowman (I John 4:7).

3.5 Two natures in man

Because man has now received a divine nature to co-exist with his old carnal nature, he now has two dispositions. The one is centred in his physical being, and the other in his inner being (Rom. 7:18-23). Therefore, a child of God will at times feel like the apostle Paul, that another law is “at work in the members of my body, waging war against the

law of my mind” (verse 23). The sanctified and victorious life implies that we must crucify the old carnal nature and regard it as dead.

3.6 Victory over sin and flesh

Even the unregenerate person will try to meet the moral requirements by fighting sin and the carnal tendencies. Any success is just apparent and external. But when a person, through regeneration receives the divine nature and submits to the Holy Spirit, the victory over sin, flesh and the temptations of this world, comes naturally (Gal. 5:16-18).

3.7 Freedom from condemnation by the Law

The Law demands that sin be punished, yes, even by death. The regenerate soul is already dead in the crucified Jesus, and “...anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Rom. 6:7). Therefore the regenerate person is also free from condemnation by the Law (John 5:24; Rom. 8:13).

3.8 A temple of God

The regenerate person is a temple of God, because the Spirit of the Lord abides in him (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19). This ties in with the intimate relationship between the person and his God, as envisaged in John 15:4 - “Remain in me, and I will remain in you.”

4. The importance of the Regeneration

From the above effects it is clear how important regeneration is. It is absolutely essential that every person who reaches the age of understanding, shall be regenerated.

The reasons? --

4.1 It is a prerequisite for inheriting the Kingdom of God

“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again... no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:3,5).

4.2 Because man is dead in sin and transgressions

Natural man is by nature wicked, damnable and dead in sin (Ephes. 2:1). For those reasons he is unable to save himself or to meet God’s requirements. Therefore it is essential that he be restored to the divine nature which only can satisfy the Lord (Ezek. 36:26-27; Rom. 8:7; Gal. 5:19-21).

4.3 Because there is no substitute for regeneration

Education, morality, religion, baptism, personal reformation, good intentions, etc., are all good and well, but will never be able to replace regeneration (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Col. 3:10).