

## Lesson 9

### Part One – Introduction to Systematic Theology

- I. Introduction
  - a. What is Systematic Theology?
  - b. What is the relation between Systematic Theology and Hermeneutics?
  - c. Why is it important to study the Bible systematically?

### Part Two – Theology Proper - Beginning at the Beginning

- I. Introduction to the One True God
  - a. Arguments for the existence of God
  - b. Why only one God
- II. The Nature of God
  - a. God's incommunicable perfections (attributes)
  - b. God's *communicable* attributes
    - i. Spirituality
    - ii. Intellect (includes knowledge, wisdom, and veracity)
    - iii. Morality (includes goodness, love, grace, mercy and longsuffering)
    - iv. Holiness
    - v. Righteousness
    - vi. Justice
  - c. God as Trinity
    - i. Definition
    - ii. Misinterpretations/Misunderstandings
    - iii. Explanation
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- III. The Decree of God
  - a. Definition
  - b. Characteristics of God's Decree
  - c. Order of God's Decrees
- IV. The Names of God

### Part Three – Christology: The Doctrine of Christ

- I. The Pre-existence and Eternality of Christ
  - a. Direct Proof
    - i. Micah 5:2.
    - ii. John 1:1.
    - iii. John 8:58.
    - iv. Hebrews 1:8.

- v. Colossians 1:17.
- b. Indirect Proof
  - i. Christ's heavenly origin proves His eternal existence.
  - ii. Christ's pre-incarnate work proves His eternal existence.
  - iii. Theophanies prove His eternal existence.
- II. Old Testament Prophecies of Christ
  - a. Prophecies Concerning Christ's Lineage
    - i. Virgin Birth
    - ii. Line of Shem
    - iii. Line of Abraham
    - iv. Line of Isaac
    - v. Line of Jacob
    - vi. Line of Judah
    - vii. Line of David
  - b. Prophecies Concerning Christ's Birth
    - i. The Manner
    - ii. The Place
  - c. Prophecies Concerning Christ's Life
    - i. His Forerunner
    - ii. His Mission
    - iii. His Ministry
    - iv. His Teaching
    - v. His Presentation
    - vi. His Rejection
  - d. Prophecies Concerning Christ's Death
    - i. A Painful Death
    - ii. A Violent Death
  - e. Prophecies Concerning Christ's Victory
    - i. His Resurrection
    - ii. His Ascension
- III. The Incarnation of Christ
  - a. Meaning of the Incarnation
  - b. Explanation of the Incarnation
    - i. Genealogies
    - ii. Virgin Birth
- IV. The Humanity of Christ
  - a. Meaning of Christ's Humanity
  - b. Characteristics of Christ's Humanity
    - i. He was virgin born

- ii. He had a true body of flesh and blood
  - iii. He had a normal development
  - iv. He had a human soul and spirit
  - v. He experienced the same things as humans
- V. The Deity of Christ
- a. Meaning of Christ's Deity
  - b. Scriptural Proof for Christ's Deity
    - i. His names
      - 1. God
      - 2. Lord
      - 3. Son of God
    - ii. His attributes
      - 1. Eternality
      - 2. Omnipresence
      - 3. Omniscience
      - 4. Omnipotence
      - 5. Immutability
      - 6. Life
    - iii. His works
      - 1. Creator
      - 2. Sustainer
      - 3. Forgiver of sin
      - 4. Miracle worker
    - iv. He receives worship
- VI. The Hypostatic Union
- a. Meaning of the hypostatic union
  - b. Explanation of the hypostatic union
  - c. Kenosis and the hypostatic union
- VII. Earthly Life of Christ**
- a. Introduction

The earthly life of Christ is important in the study of Christology because it authenticates Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. One of the main reasons for the accounts provided to us by the gospel writers is to demonstrate that Jesus alone fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the identity of Messiah. Matthew, for example, has 129 references to the Old Testament. Many of these utilize the introductory formula, "that it might be fulfilled, saying" (cf. Matthew 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23, etc.). Each of the gospel writers wrote for a different

audience, but all wrote as an apologetic concerning Christ and His claims. All the gospel writers emphasize the authenticity of His claims as Messiah.

### b. The Words of Christ

The teaching of Christ was important in authenticating His claims of Messiahship, hence, the gospel writers give considerable space to the actual words or teachings of Christ. The following chart illustrates that emphasis in terms of space devoted to the actual words of Christ.

#### Words of Christ in the Gospels

Gospel	Verses (KJV)	Number of Words	Percent of Gospel
Matthew	1,071	644	3/5
Mark	678	285	3/7
Luke	1,151	586	Nearly ½
John	879	419	Not quite ½
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,779</b>	<b>1,934</b>	<b>Almost half</b>

This chart reveals that in their combined writings the actual words of Christ make up more than half the material in the gospels. This indicates clearly that the writers wanted to emphasize Christ's teaching above all else. This teaching is what authenticated His claims as Messiah as He regularly indicated that the words He taught were from the Father who sent Him (John 12:49) and that He had come from the Father (John 17:8). Even unbelievers were astonished at the wisdom and power in His teaching (Mark 6:2; Luke 4:22).

[Read Luke 4:14-22; Jesus' first pronouncement of His Messiahship. How might this have been taken by those in attendance that day?]

### c. The Works of Christ

Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and healing to the lame (Isaiah 29:18; 32:3; 35:5-6). When John's disciples came to inquire of Jesus, He reminded them of these prophecies and applied them to Himself (Matthew 11:4-5). The miracles that Jesus performed were attestations to His deity and Messiahship; He performed the works of God in their midst. When the miracles are studied this truth becomes evident.

Let's look at some of the works of Jesus and compare them to the works of God the Father.

### Jesus' Works of God

Works of Jesus	Works of God
Stilling the storm (Matthew 8:23-27)	Psalm 107:29
Healing the blind (John 9:1-7)	Psalm 146:8
Forgiving sin (Matthew 9:2)	Isaiah 43:25; 44:22
Raising the dead (Matthew 9:25)	Psalm 49:15
Feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 14:15-21)	Joel 2:22-24

Now let's look at some of the miracles in John's gospel and note their particular significance with regard to how they show Jesus' mastery over all things.

### Selected Miracles in John's Gospel

Sign or Miracle	Significance
Water changed to wine (John 2:1-11)	Quality
Healing the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)	Space
Healing the man at the pool (John 5:1-18)	Time
Feeding the 5,000 (John 6:1-14)	Quantity
Walking on water (John 6:16-21)	Nature
Healing the blind man (John 9:1-41)	Physical malady
Raising Lazarus (John 11:1-44)	Death

When John wrote his gospel he selected seven pre-resurrection miracles that demonstrated Christ's authority in different realms. Christ performed many more miracles but those seven were representative in reflecting Christ's authority over every realm of mankind.

#### d. The Rejection of Christ

Jesus came as the Messiah and bore witness to His Messiahship through His words and His works. The gospel writers wrote their accounts of the life of Christ from a thematic viewpoint. This is particularly reflected in Matthew's gospel. In chapters 5-7 Matthew relates the teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount and demonstrates His Messiahship through His teaching (Matthew 7:28-29); in chapters 8-10 Christ performed miracles over various realms as an authentication through His works. So, in chapters 5-10, we see Christ authenticating His Messiahship through both His words and His works. By the time we get to chapter 12 of Matthew's gospel, Jesus' ministry and claims reach a climax with the leadership of the Jews declared, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." (Matthew

12:24). Notice that they were quite clear that He performed many miracles but they wrongly concluded that He had done so through Satan's power and not His own deity. Thus began what would be the wholesale rejection that would ultimately lead to...

### e. The Death of Christ

The remainder of our study will focus on this very important doctrine. There are a number of theories concerning the significance of Christ's death. Many believe that Jesus was little more than an inspirational figure whose life and death are recorded to inspire us to reach greater heights of goodness and sacrificial love. Others insist that He was simply a martyr, nothing more, nothing less, who died for a cause He believed in. All theories aside, however, what is the continual emphasis of Scripture when it comes to the purpose and significance of Christ's death? Well, Scripture actually emphasizes six things in relation to the purpose of Christ's death. The first of these is substitution.

### i. Substitution

The main emphasis in the New Testament when it comes to Christ's death is that He died a *substitutionary* death on behalf of sinners. His death is sometimes referred to as *vicarious*, meaning, "one in place of another." The pronouns in Isaiah 53 stress the substitutionary nature of Christ's death: "But **He** was pierced through for **our** transgressions. **He** was crushed for **our** iniquities. The chastening for **our** well-being fell upon **Him**, and by **His** stripes **we** are healed." The tone of 1 Peter 2:24 is similar: "and **He Himself** bore our sins in **His** body on the cross, that **we** might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by **His** wounds **you** were healed."

There are two Greek prepositions which teach the substitutionary aspect of Christ's death. The preposition "anti", translated "for" and meaning "instead of" (the other word for "for" is "eis"), teaches substitution. Matthew 20:28 states, "the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for (anti; instead of) many" (cf. Mark 10:45). The usage of "anti" in Luke 11:1 indicates that "instead of" is the basic meaning of this preposition. (read)

A second preposition, *huper*, meaning "in place of" also emphasizes substitution. 1 Timothy 2:6 states that Christ "gave Himself as a ransom for (*huper*; in place of) all." NOTE: There is a heretical doctrine called "Origen's Ransom Theory" that should be avoided at all costs. According to Origen, Christ died to pay a ransom to the devil in order for us to be released back to the Father. And what's wrong with this view? Well, first of all, it makes God's ability to save us subordinate to Satan's ownership of us. As Luther said, "The devil is God's devil," that is, he is utterly powerless to do anything *to* God (in terms of thwarting His plans) or require anything

from God. Does that mean we weren't "ransomed"? Not at all. The price that Christ paid for our sins was the price required by **God** for the atonement of those sins. We were, as the old hymn says, "ransomed from the Fall"; we were spared the death that should have been ours on account of our sin because Christ paid the price (to God) for us! As a matter of fact, far from giving Satan anything in return for our freedom, Christ actually took us from his domain leaving him with fewer sinners to mess with! This actually leads us to the next emphasis in the New Testament for the purpose and significance of Christ's death: Redemption.

### ii. Redemption

Christ's death provided redemption. 1 Corinthians 6:20 states that believers "have been bought with a price." The word "bought" is the Greek word "agorazo" (you can see the word for "market" in there (agora)). It is a word that pictures a slave being purchased in the ancient public slave market. Christ purchased believers out of slavery to sin and set them free. Notice I didn't say He saved us by paying Satan for our freedom. No, He saved us from the results of the fall. We have been redeemed!

### iii. Reconciliation

A further result of Christ's death is that man is reconciled to God, meaning that man, who was estranged and alienated from God, is now at peace with Him. The enmity and hostility has been removed (Romans 5:10). Through his rebellion in the garden, man moved out of fellowship with God and needed to return to fellowship. Reconciliation is God providing peace where previously there was enmity, and God restoring man to fellowship with Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

### iv. Propitiation

The death of Christ also provided propitiation, meaning that the righteous demands of a holy God were fully satisfied. Romans 3:25 explains that "God displayed (Christ) publicly as a propitiation (Gk. Hilasterion) in His blood through faith." Christ provided a satisfactory payment for sin through His death. God was satisfied, His holiness was upheld, and His divine wrath was averted. The word "propitiation" actually means "covering." Let me illustrate this with a story I once heard that helped me a great deal to understand the significance of propitiation.

**Illustration:** There was once a righteous and kind king who discovered that much of the food in the kingdom was being pilfered by the peasants, leaving little to be sold in the market and

hence the average, honest, hardworking citizen was having to go without food because there was none in the market to be purchased. As a result of this criminal enterprise, he made a law in which he declared that anyone caught stealing food from the royal stores would be given 49 lashes with the whip. One day, the authorities actually caught the king's 90 year old mother red-handed stealing food from a local merchant. As it turns out, she was actually doing a good deed for a poor family she knew and had fully intended, the next time she was in town, to repay the merchant for what she had taken. After all, she reasoned, she was the king's mother and surely the law didn't apply to her. When the authorities brought her before the king, they said to him, "Sir, we know you to be a man of honor and a man of your word. Do your laws not pertain to everyone in the realm equally? Or will you prove to be dishonorable, showing favoritism to members of your own family?" The good king knew that, for the good of his kingdom, his law must be immutable if his authority was to remain unquestioned by his people. His 90 year old mother stood trembling as the man with the whip emerged from the shadows. They tied her to the post and were ready to commence with the whipping (which would have surely killed her) when the king intervened. Descending his throne, he removed his coat and shirt. Walked up to his mother, stood behind her, and wrapped his arms around her. He then told the man with the whip, "*You may commence with the punishment.*" This is a picture of propitiation

### v. Forgiveness

Christ's death resulted in forgiveness for sinners. God could not forgive sin without a proper payment; Christ's death provided the legal means whereby God could forgive sin. Colossians 2:13 declares that God has "forgiven (Gk. Charisamenos) us all our transgressions." This word translated "forgiveness" comes from the root word for grace. The most common word for "forgiveness" is "aphiemi" and means "to send away" as in God's casting our sins as far as the east is from the west. We also think of the ancient Jewish ritual involving the "scapegoat" upon which the sins of the people would be cast and the goat sent away forever into the wilderness.

### vi. Justification

We will look at this in more depth in our study of salvation but, basically, justification is the legal or forensic act whereby God declares the believing sinner righteous through the merits of Christ's righteousness. Theologians refer to this as the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. Again, more to follow on this important subject.

Next time: In our next study, we will look at the resurrection and ascension of Christ as well as His present ministry in the world.