

## Lesson 11

### 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
    - iv. Difficulties
- 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
- b. The Words of Christ
- c. The Works of Christ
- d. The Rejection of Christ
- e. The Death of Christ
  - i. Substitution
  - ii. Redemption
  - iii. Reconciliation

- iv. Propitiation
- v. Forgiveness
- vi. Justification
- VIII. The Resurrection of Christ
  - a. Importance
    - i. The resurrection determines the validity of the Christian faith.
    - ii. The resurrection was the guarantee of the Father's acceptance of the Son's work.
    - iii. The resurrection was essential in the program of God.
    - iv. The resurrection fulfilled the prophecies.
  - b. Proofs for the Resurrection
    - i. The empty tomb.
    - ii. The linen wrappings.
    - iii. The resurrection appearances.
    - iv. The transformed disciples.
    - v. Observance of the first day of the week.
    - vi. Existence of the church.
- IX. The Ascension of Christ
  - a. Facts about the ascension.
  - b. Significance of the ascension.
    - i. The ascension ended the earthly ministry of Christ.
    - ii. The ascension ended the period of Christ's humiliation.
    - iii. The ascension marks the first entrance of resurrected humanity into heaven and the beginning of a new work in heaven (Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:20).
    - iv. The ascension made the descent of the Holy Spirit possible (John 16:7).
- X. The Offices of Christ
  - a. Prophet

In **Hebrews 1:1-2**, we read:

*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

The writer is signifying here that, under the Old Covenant, God spoke to his people through the prophets, an office which was actually established in **Deuteronomy 18:15-18**:

*“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or<sup>f</sup> who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”*

It’s important to point out here that, while Moses is speaking of the prophetic office in general terms, he’s also himself making a Messianic prophecy. When he says, *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to **him** you shall listen,”* he is looking forward to the day when Christ Himself would serve in the role of prophet, priest, and king. Theologically, Moses has incorporated here what is called the *“transcendent you.”* Let me give you the textbook definition:

*Transcendence is the Biblical phenomenon that occurs in PROPHETIC PASSAGES by which God speaks to an immediate physical audience, such as the apostles or the Israelites of Moses day for example, but is actually addressing future unborn generations with just as much certainty and absoluteness.*

We see this occurring quite often in the Olivet Discourse

**Matthew 24:33-34** - So likewise **you**, when **you** shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto **you**, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

In the case of both Deuteronomy and Matthew 24, the speakers (Moses and Jesus respectively) are indeed speaking to their immediate physical audiences but they are also addressing future unborn audiences as well. It is a misunderstanding of the *“transcendent you”* (among other things) which causes so much confusion among *“full preterists,”* those who teach that all prophetic prophecy ended before or on 70 A.D. and nothing remains on the prophetic calendar to be fulfilled. Those known as *“partial preterists,”* however, realizing the validity of the *“transcendent you,”* understand that prophecy can thus have a primary, secondary, even a tertiary fulfillment.

So, how do we know that Moses was actually indicating that the Messiah would fulfill his prophecy in **Deuteronomy 18**? Look first at **Acts 3:17-26**. Peter, speaking in Solomon's portico, says:

*“And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. **Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’** And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. **You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers,** saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ God, having raised up his servant, sent **him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”***

Peter speaks here about the continuing validity of what Moses had said to their fathers about the prophets in general and, more specifically, Jesus Christ.

No singular prophet completely revealed the will of the Father except Jesus Christ. When Christ came He completely revealed the Father to the people; He explained the Father to the people (**John 1:18**).

### b. Priest

It's not enough that God be represented before man; man must also be represented before God. This was the function of the priest. The Old Testament priest was one who bore the responsibility for representing man before God by taking man's sacrifices to Him and offering them as a payment for his sins. This is especially vivid in view of the annual Day of Atonement observed by the Jews.

Year after year, the priest would accept man's sacrifices and would take the blood and, entering into the holy of Holies, he would sprinkle the blood all over everything in hopes that God's wrath against sin would be appeased. We read all about this in **Hebrews 9 and 10**:

*Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.*

*These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

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*For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.*

*Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,*

*“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body have you prepared for me;  
in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.  
Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,  
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”*

*When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.***

This makes Jesus Christ not just a high priest, but the perfect high priest; the perfect intercessor for you and for me. Because He lives forever, His intercession will never cease. Also, unlike His earthly “shadows,” Christ has no personal sins to impede His duties. He finished His priestly work with the offering of one sacrifice: Himself!

### c. King

In **Genesis 49:10**, it was prophesied that Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah and reign as king. **2 Samuel 7:16** indicated Messiah would have a dynasty, a people over whom He would rule, and an eternal throne. In **Psalms 2:6** God the Father announced the installation of His Son as King in Jerusalem. **Psalms 110** indicates that Messiah would subjugate His enemies and rule over them.

In **John 18:37**, you’ll recall the exchange that Jesus had with Pilate:

*“Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”*

So, was Jesus making the pronouncement here that He was indeed a king?

Look over in the next chapter, **verses 16-22**:

*So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."*

Of course, the believer needs no convincing that Jesus is a king. We know him according to the designation given Him in **Revelation 19** because one day He will come again and, according to John's testimony...

*On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **King of kings and Lord of lords**.*

- XI. The Present Ministry of Christ
  - a. Building His Church

In **Matthew 16:18**, Jesus declares, "*...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" In what way are we to understand this? Many view the church as the bricks and mortar with which it is built. We, however, know the church as the "*ekklesia*" or "*called out ones*" of God. While "*ekklesia*" can be used to denote all of God's people, from all ages, and in all places, it is represented most often in the sense of the **local church**. We'll talk more about this when we get to our section on ecclesiology, but I wanted to point out that we're referring to how Christ builds up the saints gathered in the local church. The first thing He does involves...

- i. The Formation of the Body

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, it is indicated that the Holy Spirit is forming the church, the Body of Christ. However, Christ as head of the church is guiding and controlling it. **Acts 2:47** indicates that Christ is the One who is producing the increase in the church.

This is consistent with **Acts 1:1** where Luke indicates that the gospel he wrote describes the work Jesus began to do, suggesting that His work continues today in the building of His church.

- ii. The Direction of the Body

Christ is not only head of the Body, but also head over it (**Colossians 1:18**) in giving direction and sovereign rule (**Ephesians 5:23-24**). As the human head gives direction to the entire physical body, so Christ, as head of the church, gives direction to the church through the word of God (**Ephesians 5:26**).

### iii. The Nurture of the Body

As an individual nourishes the human body, so Jesus Christ is the source of nourishment to the church; He is the means to nourish it to maturity (**Ephesians 5:29, 30**). Christ in His present work is bringing the body to maturity.

### iv. The Cleansing of the Body

Christ is involved in the cleansing of the body. He is producing sanctification in the believer (**Ephesians 5:25-27**). This denotes the progressive sanctification in which Christ is cleansing the church.

### v. Giving Gifts to the Body

Christ is the source of the spiritual gifts; the Holy Spirit administers them (**Ephesians 4:8, 11-13**). Gifts are given with the purpose that the whole church might be built up and increased in this manner. **Ephesians 4:11-13** indicates that the gifts are given that the body of Christ, the church, might grow to maturity.

### b. Interceding for Believers

#### i. Intercession Assures our Salvation

The believer would only be able to lose his or her salvation if Christ was ineffective in His role as mediator (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**). The intercession of Christ involves 1) His presence before the Father; 2) His spoken word (**Luke 22:32; John 17:6-26**); and 3) His continual intercession (note the present tense in the verbs).

#### ii. Intercession Restores us to Fellowship Following Sin.

Christ is also known as the believers' "Advocate" (Gr. Parakletos), meaning "defense attorney" (**1 John 2:1**). This means that, when we sin, Christ is able to represent us before the Father and, based on His righteousness, defend us from His wrath.

c. Preparing a Heavenly Dwelling Place for Believers

**John 14:1-3.** In glory, Christ is preparing many dwelling places in the Father's house. The picture is that of a wealthy oriental father who adds additional rooms to his large home in order to accommodate his married children. There is room for them all.

d. Producing Fruit in the lives of Believers

**John 15:1-7.** As a vine is rooted to the branch and draws life and nourishment from the branch to sustain life and produce fruit, so the believer is grafted into spiritual union with Christ to draw spiritual nourishment from Christ. Spiritual fruit will result.

XII. The Future Work of Christ

We will reserve our comments on this topic for our discussions on eschatology.

**Next Time:** In our next study, we will begin to look at the doctrine of the Holy Spirit or "*pneumatology*."