

Lesson 13

Part One – Introduction to Systematic Theology

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

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Part Five – Anthropology and Hamartiology: The Doctrines of Man and Sin

I. The Doctrine of Man

a. The Study of Man's Origins

We must see man as God's crowning achievement, if you will. Why? Because he is uniquely made in the image of God (we are the *imago Dei*). Man is also the one in whom God has entered into covenant relationship. Accordingly, many theologians see him as *homo religiosus* versus merely *homo sapiens*. There are several arguments made for the existence of man. The first of these (and without a doubt the most dominant) is...

i. Atheistic Evolution

Atheistic evolution is, of course, based on a theory posited by Charles Darwin in his *Origin of Species*. All that is required, according to naturalistic evolution, is atoms in motion. A combination of atoms, motion, time, and chance is responsible for everything we see throughout the universe. These components simply merged together and, by random chance, not only resulted in the various life forms we see today but the earliest life forms then began to evolve into higher and more complex life forms via survival of the fittest and natural selection until, voila!... modern man emerged. Some evolutionists, puzzled over the lack of actual transitional forms in the fossil record, have actually suggested that something called the "Cambrian explosion" occurred during which new, more highly evolved life forms came into being without having to go through a process of gradual change! What are some of the shortcomings of atheistic evolution?

No transitional forms; nonexistent (not simply very high odds, but nonexistent) odds; no basis from which to explain a common morality (i.e. we're not the products of our environment; all cultures view murder without cause as wrong). The second argument that is often made for the existence of man is known as...

ii. Theistic Evolution

Theistic evolution is the teaching that plants, animals, and man gradually evolved from lower forms but that God supervised the process. Incidentally, this is the official position of the Pope and hence the Roman Catholic Church. What are some of the shortcomings of so-called theistic evolution? Well, aside from the same arguments made against atheistic evolution, theistic evolution constitutes an unnecessary compromise between science and God. Proponents of theistic evolution want to have it both ways: They don't want to discredit what is the majority scientific opinion in the world and they don't want to unnecessarily offend God. Little do they

know, they actually do both. Humanistic evolutionists think they're crazy for injecting God into the picture and they do a grave disservice to God because their beliefs are not only diametrically opposed to what we read in God's word but they also suggest that God is really not very good at this whole creation thing (i.e. He has to have successive "do-overs" or "mulligans" in order to get it right).

iii. Progressive Creationism

This theory, also known as the "day-age theory" is based in part on Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 in rejecting a literal six day creation. The days of creation are not to be understood as days of 24 hours but as ages. Traditionally, the day-age theory held that the days were equivalent to geological ages. However, this posed several problems: seeds prior to the creation of land animals posed a problem in that some seeds depended on insects for pollination and fertilization. And what problems do those who believe this theory face? There are several. First of all, Exodus 20:10-11 draws an analogy between a person working six days and resting on the seventh and God creating six days and resting on the seventh. This analogy demands literal 24 hour days. Furthermore, this theory would mean there was death before the Fall because it involves such a long period of time. Genesis, however, indicates that there was no death until Adam sinned.

iv. Gap Theory

The gap theory places a lengthy period of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, basically as an accommodation to science.

This enables proponents of the gap theory to hold to the antiquity of the earth and yet understand the words of Genesis 1 and 2 literally, adhering to a belief in literal 24 hour days of creation. The gap theory teaches that there was an original creation and as a result of Lucifer's rebellion and fall, the earth became "formless and void." Allegedly, millions of years took place between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, in agreement with scientific evaluation concerning the age of the earth. And what are the problems with this view? First of all, it doesn't fit the grammatical construction of the passage. The word "was" simply does not mean "became." The tense of the verb indicates that God, on the first day of creation, brought into existence (ex nihilo) a world that was void and without form.

v. Literal Twenty-four Hour Days

The view that God created everything in literal 24 hour days is also called *fiat* creation – God created directly and instantaneously.

The basis for this belief is the biblical account of Genesis 1 and 2. The Hebrew word for “day” is “yom.” When modified by a number, it always designates a literal 24 hour day. The phrase “evening and morning” which is used repeatedly in Genesis 1 further emphasizes a 24 hour day. To suggest anything but a literal construct here, one must deny the normal meaning of these words.

b. The Material Part of Man

i. Structure of the Body

Scripture makes a distinction between the material (body) and the nonmaterial (soul/spirit) (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23). Genesis 2:7 indicates the body of man was formed from the dust of the ground. There is a definite play on words here: “The Lord God formed man (adam) of dust from the ground (adamah).” The very name “Adam” was to remind man of his origin. He is of the earth. What’s interesting is that a chemical analysis of the human body actually reveals this. Man is made up of calcium, iron, potassium, and so forth, all of which are found as key components of the earth itself. Additionally, what happens to man long after he’s dead and gone? He returns to the dust from which he came (Genesis 3:19; Psalm 104:29; Ecclesiastes 12:7).

ii. The Purpose of the Body

There are several different views concerning the purpose of the body. These include:

- The body is the prison house of the soul. This was the view of the Greek philosophers who saw a great dichotomy between the body and the soul. The soul was nonmaterial and good; the body was material and evil (remember, this is what the gnostics believed. It caused them to reject Christ as having come to earth in a real body). Problem is, the Bible nowhere suggests that the body, in and of itself, is evil.
- The body is the only part of man that is important. This view is called hedonism and represents the opposite of the previous view. Hedonists believe that a person should seek to please the body by doing whatever is necessary. Hedonists, if they believe in a soul at all (many don’t), insist that it is far less important than the physical body. Scripture, on the other hand, states just the opposite. A man may gain the whole world but what good is that if, in the process, he loses his soul?

- The body is the partner of the soul. The body is the means of glorifying God since it is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19). The body is not to be the master so that the believer caters to it in self-indulgence, nor is it to be an enemy that needs to be punished. The body is to be submitted to God (Romans 12:1) so that Christ may be glorified in it (Philippians 1:20). Ultimately, the believer will be rewarded for deeds done in the body (2 Corinthians 5:10).

- c. The Non-material Part of Man
 - i. Scriptural Account

When God created man He created Him in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27). The question is: What is the image of God in man? The image of God in man can't be physical because God is spirit (John 4:24) and does not have a body. Incidentally, let me make another plug for the value of studying Systematic Theology. Listen to the following statements made by those who have obviously not undertaken the study for themselves:

Kenneth Copeland: *"[God is a] being that stands somewhere around 6-2 , 6-3 that weighs somewhere in the neighborhood of a couple of hundred pounds or a little better, has a [hand] span of 9 inches across."* How does Copeland know this? He's "seen" Him on a number of occasions.

Copeland also said: *"[Adam] was the copy, looked just like [God]. If you stood Adam upside God, they look just exactly alike. If you stood Jesus and Adam side-by-side, they would look and sound exactly alike."*

Mormon Theology: Mormons (who claim to be Christians) have stated in their doctrinal statement that *"God is a being with a body in form like man's; that he possesses body, parts and passions; that in a word, God is an exalted, perfected man"*

Remember what we studied earlier about the nature of God. He is incorporeal; without a body. He is Spirit. The image, then, must be nonmaterial and would involve the following major elements:

1. Personality

Man has a self-consciousness and a self-determination that enables him to make choices, lifting him above the realm of animals. All aspects of man's intellect would come under this category.

2. Spiritual Being

Charles Hodge expressed this thought as follows:

“God is a Spirit, the human soul is a spirit. The essential attributes of a spirit are reason, conscience, and will... In making man after His own image, God endowed him with those attributes which belong to His own nature as a Spirit. Man is thereby distinguished from all other inhabitants of this world, and raised immeasurably above them. He belongs to the same order of being as God Himself, and is therefore capable of communion with His Maker... It is also the necessary condition of our capacity to know God, and therefore the foundation of our religious nature. If we were not like God (speaking here of the spirit nature), we could not know Him. We should be as the beasts which perish.”

3. Moral Nature

Man was created in “original righteousness.” This was lost through the fall but is restored in Christ. Ephesians 4:24 emphasizes that the new self of the believer is “in the likeness of God (and) has been created in righteousness and holiness.” Colossians 3:10 declares that the new self is “being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him,” a reference to Genesis 1:26.

ii. The Origin of the Nonmaterial Part of Man

1. Theory of Preexistence

This view, which advocates that the human soul has existed previously, has its roots in non-Christian philosophy; it is taught in Hinduism and was also held by Plato, Philo, and Origen. This theory teaches that in a previous existence men were angelic spirits, and as punishment and discipline for sin, they were sent to indwell human bodies. There are a number of problems with this view: there is no clear statement of Scripture to support this view (although many think John 9:2 to be proof); no one has any recollection of such an existence; the doctrine of sin is not related to Adam’s sin in Genesis 3 but to sin in an angelic realm.

2. Creation Theory

This theory teaches that each human soul is an immediate and individual creation by God; the body alone is propagated by the parents. This is the view held by Roman Catholics and many Reformed Christians, among them Charles Hodge.

There are two reasons for this view: 1) it maintains the purity of Christ – with this view Christ could not have inherited a sinful nature from His mother; 2) a distinction is made between a mortal body and an immortal soul – parents may propagate a mortal body but only God can produce an immortal soul. The problems with this view are: It necessitates an individual fall by each person because God can create only perfection; it doesn't account for the problem of why all men sin.

3. Traducian Theory

This view, ably defended by William G. T. Shedd, affirms that the soul as well as the body is generated by the parents. “Man is a species, and the idea of a species implies the propagation of the entire individual out of it... Individuals are not propagated in parts.” The problems with this view are: how can parents pass on the soul, which is nonmaterial?; and Christ must have partaken of the sinful nature of Mary if traducianism is true.

So, what are the strengths of this view? First, it explains the depravity of man. If the parents pass on the nonmaterial nature then it explains the propagation of the sin nature and the tendency, from birth, of every human being to sin. The sin nature cannot be explained if God creates each soul directly. Traducianism also explains the hereditary factor – the intellect, personality, and emotional similarities of children and their parents. If creationism were correct the similarities should not be as prevalent and noticeable. The Scriptures seem to affirm the traducian position (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12; Hebrews 7:10).

iii. Composition of the Nonmaterial Part of Man

While most will acknowledge that man has a nonmaterial constitution, what is the nature of the nonmaterial part of man? Are the soul and spirit distinct or are they the same? Generally, the Eastern church believed that man was trichotomous – consisting of three parts – body, soul, and spirit. Originally, the Greek and Alexandrian church Fathers held this view, including men like Origen and Clement of Alexandria. The Western church, on the other hand, generally held to the dichotomous position: man is body and soul. Men like Augustine and Anselm held to this view.

1. Dichotomous View

Dichotomy comes from the Greek “dicha” or “two” and “temno” which means “to cut.” Hence, man is a two-part being, consisting of body and soul. The nonmaterial part of man is the soul and spirit, which are of the same substance; however, they have a different function.

The support for the dichotomous view is: Genesis 2:7 affirms only two parts. God formed man from the dust of the ground, breathed life into him, and he became a living soul. Also, the words “soul” and “spirit” may be used interchangeably. Compare Genesis 41:8 with Psalm 42:6 and Hebrews 12:23 with Revelation 6:9. Finally, Body and soul (or spirit) are mentioned as together constituting the entire person in Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 5:3, and 3 John 2.

2. Trichotomous View

Trichotomy comes from the Greek “tricha” or “three” and “temno” which means “to cut.” Hence, man is a three part being consisting of body, soul, and spirit. The soul and spirit are said to be different in both function and substance. The body is seen as “world-conscious,” the soul as “self-conscious” and the spirit as “God-conscious.” The soul is seen as a lower power consisting of man’s imagination, memory, and understanding; the spirit is a higher power, consisting of reason, conscience, and will. Support for the trichotomous view is: (a) Paul seems to emphasize the three-part view in desiring the sanctification of the entire person (1 Thessalonians 5:23). (b) Hebrews 4:12 implies a distinction between soul and spirit. (c) 1 Corinthians 2:14 through 3:4 suggests a threefold classification: natural (fleshly), carnal (soulish), and spiritual (spiritual).

3. Multifaceted View

Although soul and spirit are common terms used to describe the nonmaterial nature of man, there are a number of additional terms that describe man’s non-physical nature. Hence, man’s nonmaterial nature can be understood as multi-faceted. There are at least four terms used to describe the nonmaterial nature of man: (1) **Heart**: The heart describes the intellectual (Matthew 15:19-20) as well as the volitional part of man (Romans 10:9-10; Hebrews 4:7). (2) **Conscience**: God has placed within man a conscience as a witness. The conscience is affected by the fall and may be seared and unreliable (1 Timothy 4:2); nonetheless, it can convict the unbeliever (Romans 2:15). In the believer it may be weak and overly scrupulous (1 Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12). (3) **Mind**: the unbeliever’s mind is depraved (Romans 1:28), blinded by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4), and darkened and futile (Ephesians 4:17-18) In the believer there is a renewed mind (Romans 12:2) which enables him to love God (Matthew 22:37). (4) **Will**: The unbeliever has a will which is enslaved to the dictates of the flesh (Ephesians 2:2-3). The believer has the ability to do God’s will (Romans 6:12-13). With regeneration and conversion comes a new nature which enables us to love God and do that which is pleasing in His sight.

Various Views of Man's Composition		
Viewpoint	Material	Non Material
Dichotomous	Body	Soul and Spirit are of same substance
Trichotomous	Body	Soul and Spirit are Distinct
Multifaceted	Body	Soul Spirit Heart Conscience Mind Will

d. The Fall of Man

Genesis 3 doesn't describe the actual origin of sin, but it does describe the entrance of sin into the realm of humanity. Genesis 3 describes a historical event; Adam and Eve were historical people who sinned against God in time and space. The historicity of this event is essential if an analogy is to be seen in Romans 5:12-21. If Adam was not a real creature who brought sin into the human race at one point in history, then there is no point to Jesus' redemption of humanity at another point in history. Christ's own testimony, however (in Matthew 19:3-5), confirms the Genesis account as a historical event.

i. The Test

During their life in the garden, God tested Adam and Eve regarding their obedience. They were free to eat of the fruit from any tree in the garden except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). They ate the fruit anyway and failed the test.

ii. The Temptation

The avenue through which the temptation came to man and woman was the serpent (Genesis 3:1). However, the temptation must be seen as coming through Satan who was present in the form of the serpent. His strategy can be summarized in three phases:

1. Satan Raises Doubt

Satan raised doubt concerning God's Word (Genesis 3:1). The temptation created suspicion about the goodness of God; it raised a question whether God was dealing wisely and fairly with Adam and Eve.

Eve succumbed to the temptation in that she exaggerated God's prohibition by her response to Satan (Genesis 3:3). God had said nothing about touching the fruit.

2. Satan Lies

Satan lied by saying they would not die (Genesis 3:4). Satan made a categorical denial of God's earlier statement; Satan said, "You surely shall not die!"

3. Satan Confuses

Satan actually told a partial truth (Genesis 3:5). He told them they would be like God, knowing good and evil if they ate of the fruit. It was true that they would know good and evil, but Satan didn't tell them the rest – he didn't tell them about the pain, suffering, and death that would occur through their sin.

iii. The Results of the Sin

1. Judgment on the Serpent

Genesis 3:14. The serpent had earlier been a noble creature; as a result of the judgment it was altered in form and shape. Because the serpent had exalted itself it would now be forced to crawl on its belly and eat the dust of the earth as it did so.

2. Judgment on Satan

Genesis 3:15 must be understood as addressed not to the serpent but to Satan.

There would be enmity between Satan's seed and the woman's seed (mankind in general but specifically, Christ). "He shall bruise you on the head" is a prophecy concerning Christ's delivering the death blow to Satan at the cross (Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14).

3. Judgment on the Woman

Genesis 3:16. The woman would experience pain in childbirth and her desire would be for her husband. This is generally understood as the woman's tendency to want to usurp the authority of her husband (cf. Genesis 4:7).

4. Judgment on the Man

The first judgment was against the ground. No longer would the earth spontaneously produce its fruit but only through hard toil by the man would this happen. The second judgment on the man was death. Adam had been made from the elements of the ground. The death process would return the man to the dust from which his body had been formed.

5. Judgment on the Human Race

Romans 5:12. The result of Adam's sin was passed on to the entire human race.

6. Judgment on Creation

Judgment on creation (Genesis 3:17-18). All animal and plant life would be affected by the sin of Adam. Animals as well as plants would resist the man. Animals would become wild and ferocious; plant life would produce weeds to hinder productivity. All creation would groan with the effects of the fall and anxiously long for the day of restoration (Romans 8:19-21).

Next Up? The Doctrine of Sin