

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 1 (HCLD 1)

Preparation: Begin and end each time of study with prayer for God to guide you to His truth. Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 3.

Background reading: Ephesians chapters one and two.

Vocabulary: Regeneration; Salvation; Atonement; Depravity; Election; Conversion; Disciple; Grace.

Question: What is the reason God created man and to what is the duty and destiny of man?

Answer: Man's primary and highest end is to glorify God,¹ and fully to enjoy God forever.²

In this opening question and short one line answer, we find both the duty of man and his destiny.³ We also find that the proof texts are sparse,

¹ - For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen. {whom: Gr. *him*} (Romans 11:36 AV)

² - Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory. Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: *but God is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. {strength: Heb. *rock*} For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But *it is* good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.(Psalms 73:24-28 AV)

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. (John 17:21-23 AV)

³ - Heidelberg Catechism (1563) Question 1: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer 1: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death,(1) am not my own,(2) but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ,(3) who with His precious blood (4) has fully satisfied for all my sins,(5) and redeemed me from all the power of the devil;(6) and so preserves me (7) that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head;(8) indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation.(9) Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life,(10) and makes me heartily willing and ready

namely, Rom. 11:36 and 1 Cor. 10:31. Yet, we could spend many pages and hours of study properly doing the exposition and laying the foundation for such a complete and bold Statement.

from now on to live unto Him.(11)

(1) Rom. 14:7-8 (2) I Cor. 6:19 (3) I Cor. 3:23 (4.) I Peter 1:18-19 (5.) I John 1:7; 2:2 (6.) I John 3:8 (7.) John 6:39 (8.) Matt. 10:29-30; Luke 21:18; (9.) Rom. 8:28 (10.) II Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 8:16 (11). Rom. 8:1

Few new comers to the faith either understand or appreciate this statement of fact until much later in their spiritual walk with the Lord. The answer calls for far more knowledge than they have, and the proof texts while valid, seem to lack the authority to commit such a full and lifelong obedience to God from such an ancient text. The light of nature provides enough light so man acknowledges there is a God in heaven.⁴ The hearing of the Gospel is used by the Holy Spirit to bring man before God in repentance.⁵ However, this is not the end but the beginning of a life long learning experience and growth in grace and faith. Nowhere in the whole Bible is there a command to go and make converts. The so-called great commission is to make disciples or students of all nations.⁶

Nonetheless the understanding and application of this tenet of our faith is not only the foundation of our faith, it is the capstone. The understanding thus gained will lead to what our fathers called piety, and what we today would label worldview. Worldview (Christian) is an internal filter by which everything a person thinks, says, or does agrees with the Bible less man unwittingly sin against God.⁷

This then being the basis for our life here and in eternity, it would seem most advisable for us to fully understand what we must do to glorify God. Since even to the most ignorant it must be most clear there is nothing the creature can do for God, or that God needs from the creature, the answer to this question is not as simple and obvious as one might think. It will take much time, study, and prayer for the beast within (even the redeemed) to come to the point where they can see and agree there is no purpose under the heavens for mankind other than God's glory. We simply have a problem putting aside self and bowing to the total will of another, even God. When for various and sundry reasons man does see it as in his best interests and so subject himself to another, the subjection will be neither perfect nor long lasting, the nature of the beast will soon regain control and bring about the downfall of man's decision. Thus, we see woven into this first question, the necessity of two of the five classic points of Biblical theology, Total Depravity and Perseverance of the Saints. This beginning point also requires assent to the Sovereignty of God. This is the foundation, heart, and end of the Biblical faith.

By Total Depravity we do not mean that man is as bad as he can get. This means that because of the first sin and the resulting curse of God

⁴ - Rom. 1:19-20

⁵ - Rom. 10:17

⁶ - Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion Book 1, chapter 1, sect 1-3.

⁷ - Calvin-Institutes: 1.7.4

that man is corrupt in all of his faculties and cannot save himself from condemnation by a just and holy God.

By Perseverance of the Saints we mean that God saves man initially and sustains man's salvation by His will alone through the power of His word alone. Man did not begin the process, man cannot sustain his salvation, and man will not persevere until the end without God's continuing grace. Since man has no part in his salvation and it is totally by God's sovereign will, and God is able to accomplish all of His holy purpose, those God chose will persevere to the end.

This does not remove the responsibility from man to do all things whatsoever God has commanded. Obedience to God will flow from a thankful heart once God in His grace alone gives to the believer the Holy Spirit who will so to speak open the spiritual eyes of the believer. This is regeneration. In this new condition man can for the first time see himself in comparison to a holy and just God and realize how lost he is apart from God. As man is a dichotomy, that is two parts, body and soul, so man lives in two worlds. Man is both of the earth (carnal) and of the spirit (spiritual).⁸ Thus wise men can read and understand the Bible but not see God because they are of this world in body and soul, already condemned from before the foundations of the earth.⁹ The believer having had their spiritual eyes open will be able to see and walk in both worlds. What a believer does in the flesh will be influenced by this spiritual knowledge. In the flesh however resides the will of man and there will be war between the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit that indwells the believer.¹⁰

How do we glorify God becomes the most important question we will ever face. The answer is as brief as the question above, by obeying God. This is why Christ could say to Satan, ". . . *Man shall not live by bread alone, but every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Matt. 4:4). Jesus Christ then being God manifested in the flesh and testified to, as being the Word of God, was able to speak of His body as that bread which man can eat of and never hunger again (John 6:35). Likewise, we see Christ during His last Passover meal,¹¹ set in place the celebration of the Lord's Table, whereby the believer partakes of His body, that he might receive the full benefit of the death of Christ. By this gift of the living Word for a dead world, Christ was fully justified in saying "*if you love Me, keep My commandments*" (John 14:15). In these words of our Lord we can see a summary of God's command to the church in the wilderness and the

⁸ - Rom. 8:1-4

⁹ - John 3:18

¹⁰ - Rom. 8:3-16

¹¹ - Mt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:18; 1 Cor. 11:23

renewing of the covenant at Sinai in the giving of the Law. We see the result so vividly portrayed in the Scriptures when God's creation fails to obey Him in the first chapters of Genesis where man disobeyed God and death entered the world. Here we also see the fourth tenet of Biblical theology (God's grace is irresistible) become a reality, in that by nature man will disobey God, and refuse to obey God. Thus left to himself, man could not make use of the grace shown in the gift of God's Son (Word) to bring about the redemption of man and thereby glorify God. God gives the gift, and then providentially brings about the willingness of the created to obey Him and thus receive the grace offered. The Bible says, *"For it is God, which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* (Philippians 2:13).

To this point, we have seen three of the five classic points of Biblical theology tied to this first question concerning why God created man. The second tenet is most obvious in consideration of these facts. We both know by the Bible and experience the inability of man to maintain obedience to God's Word. When left to his own will man will not show a great concern for the keeping of the Law. The world around us screams the unworthiness of the created for the gift of grace bestowed on man by God in the redemption, thus unconditional election by God becomes a necessity. By Unconditional Election we mean that God for His own reasons and in counsel only with Himself did without any use of foreknowledge choose some to eternal life in Jesus Christ.

This seems harsh and unrealistic to some people who ask how can a God of love for no reason condemn people who haven't done anything wrong. First God says I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy. This isn't any different than mankind doing the same thing and choosing to help one neighbor and ignore another for no reason outside of themselves. The fact is man is already condemned to the last soul and for God to choose any to eternal life is a gift of grace beyond human understanding.

From these established facts, it is no stretch to see the third tenet of Biblical theology as also a necessity. If man's reward for meeting the requirement of God to Glorify God results in man's destiny, enjoying God forever, then the opposite for not glorifying God is also obvious and the fires of hell become very real. From many verses, we know that while hell was created for Satan and other fallen angels, there will also be a human populace there and the Unitarian is thus put to flight as the third tenet (Limited Atonement) spreads forth in full sight, and the harsh reality of those not elected of God being left in outer darkness. Here we also see the capstone of Biblical theology, the last tenet guarantee that which

man cannot do for himself, maintain the obedience needed to glorify God, God does for him. Man cannot effect his own salvation; neither can man bring it to fruit. Thus, we see that the beginning, life, and end of man is to glorify God, that man might enjoy God forever.

By Limited Atonement it is meant that while the atonement (work) of Jesus Christ was sufficient for all mankind, it is only efficacious to those whom God chose and gave the Holy Spirit of regeneration. Regeneration and conversion is the same thing, to use human language, God removes the hard heart of man and replaces it with a heart of flesh. This enables man to see, though darkly, in both the world of flesh and in the world of the spirit of God.

Thus in this first lesson we find not only the duty of man and his destiny, but the foundation and heart of Biblical theology. This clearly teaches that every thought and action in life must be brought within the bounds of the Bible in loving obedience to a merciful God, whereby Paul could proclaim, *“By the tender mercies of God, I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”* (Rom. 12:1).

Suggested Sermon Outline: HCLD 1

A Believer's Only Comfort - Sovereign Grace

What is your only comfort, in life and in death?
That I belong - body and soul, in life and in death - not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of His own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that He protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit His purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

How many things must you know that you may live and die in the blessedness of this comfort?

Three. First, the greatness of my sin and wretchedness. Second, how I am freed from all my sins and their wretched consequences. Third, what gratitude I owe to God for such redemption.

I. God Values Believers

A. Jesus purchased believers at the cost of His own life.
Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (1 Peter 1:18-19)

B. God redeems totally. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

C. No evil force can resist the Savior. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

II. God Directs the Lives of Believers

A. Salvation is personal, providential, and permanent. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:35) along with And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39)

B. Everything in life conforms to God's interest in my welfare. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

C. Through God's Providence there is always meaning in all of life's events. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

III. Believers Inevitably Respond to God

A. The Holy Spirit cultivates assurance in believers. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

B. Through the Holy Spirit believers become wholeheartedly committed to serving God. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14) along with And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:17)

IV. Three Truths Enable a Christian To Find Comfort in Sovereign Grace

A. Sin and wretchedness are enormously great. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. (Titus 3:3-8)

B. God frees His people from all their sins. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might

know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.
(John 17:1-3)

@ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:3-11)

C. Believers owe an enormous debt of gratitude to God for redemption. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

(Compare) For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8-10)