

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 11 (HCLD 3)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2

Vocabulary: Transgression, unconditional, grace, representative, federal

Questions: (A) Did man continue in the condition that God created him?

(B) Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?

(C) What was the effect of the fall on mankind?

Answers:(A) Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocency wherein they were created.[1]

(B) The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation,[a] sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.[2]

¹The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 3

Q6: Did God create man thus, wicked and perverse?

A7: No,[a] but God created man good and after His own image,[b] that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.[c]

[a] Gen. 1:31

[b] Gen. 1:26-27

[c] II Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24

Q7: From where, then, does this depraved nature of man come?

A7: From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise,[a] whereby our nature became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin.[b]

[a] Gen. ch. 3; Rom. 5:12, 18-19

[b] Psa. 14:2-3; 51:5

Q8: But are we so depraved that we are completely incapable of any good and prone to all evil?

A8: Yes,[a] unless we are born again by the Spirit of God.[b]

[a] John 3:6; Gen. 6:5; Job 14:4; Isa. 53:6

[b] John 3:5; Gen. 8:21; II Cor. 3:5; Rom. 7:18; Jer. 17:9

(C) The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.[3]^{2 3}

In these questions we have the revelation for the necessity of the Reformed TULIP, and begin to see how the complete doctrine of the Bible can be so tightly interwoven into these five classic points of Calvinism. The TULIP can easily and truthfully be called the Five Classic Points of Christianity as these five points are biblical truth to be understood and embraced by all. While some doctrines are not clearly taught in the points themselves, the necessity for each doctrine for the TULIP to stand is immediately apparent, and it is there we find we must first acknowledge the sovereignty of God, and accept the presuppositional statement that the Bible is God's word, neither having nor needing external proof, but resting entirely in the hand of God Himself. This means that if a critic could prove from the Bible that one of these five tenets is not true (Scriptural) the whole fabric of the Reformed faith would be torn. The foundation is the sovereignty of God and that God has revealed His will in the Bible. The Reformed adopted the five classic points of Calvinism in their refutation of Arminianism. It is a fact however that without the sovereignty of God and the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture the five points are not able to withstand the critics of Calvinism.

We see the infra/supra question before us. This is one place an exact answer to this question would shed light into the text, and allow more definite statements to be made. The Westminster Divines words, "left to the freedom of their own will" seems to place the decree of election after the fall. Since the fall we know the election is in place and man is not ultimately "free" to choose, as the words of the Westminster Divines appear to indicate before the fall. I use the word "appear" here deliberately. While the terminology chosen by the Westminster Assembly like that of Dort might appear to give some credence to an infralapsarian position, the complete works of both councils testify otherwise. Adam and Eve did not choose eternal life, in fact they ignored eternal life and did not eat of the tree of life (Christ sacramentally present in the Garden of Eden). Some would debate here the question of death being present before the fall and teach if Adam had not sinned he would not have died. There is a bias in the Scripture here as it is written it is given for man once to die then the judgment and the teaching of the Bible that by one man sin and death entered the world. By sin spiritual separation (death) entered the world, physical death existed is my answer. Can I support that? No! However it best fits the Bible and there I stand leaving the things God reserved to Himself in the mystery of God. This is a curious question to use the term of the Second Helvetic Confession in my opinion. The Triune God removed man from the garden so man would not eat of the tree of life and live eternally in his sin. Therefore, Adam was missing something here and that something was physical mortality or eternal immortality. Which? I think the eternal scheme of things was in sight in this revelation of the beginnings of all things in the Bible. The choice given to Adam was to obey God in the covenant and by *merit* have eternal life. In other words Adam would have earned his salvation. While the whole revelation of Scripture is not before us in the text of Genesis, the only context for the proper interpretation of Scripture is the whole Bible. Thus, we can see with the giving of the Law at Sinai that the Law was never intended to save any person. Can we read this later revelation back into this creation account? Yes! Nothing else fits and God changes which is impossible; God is immutable.

God never intended anyone to include Adam to be saved by their own merit. Adam was

² [1] Gen. 3:6-8, 13; Eccl. 7:29; II Cor. 11:3

[2] [a]. Acts 17:26

[b]. Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 5:12-20; I Cor. 15:21-22

[3] Rom. 3:23; 5:12

³ Westminster Larger Catechism Q 21-23

created in perfect (sinless) communion with God. If death did not exist the covenant introduced could be said to be referring to physical death. This violates the Scripture in another place (It is given man once to die...) Thus this cannot be the right explanation (interpretation) of the creation passage. Did God see the fall in the eternal council? Yes! If the answer is no there is no need for the election in the eternal council and that is where Scripture says the election was made. We do not need to appeal to science or philosophy (falsely so called) as the Bible itself says this is the way it is. Christ stood in the garden, freely offered, but not seen by man. Christ stands in the world since the fall, unseen by man. Thus, from the beginning it has been the intent of God for all mankind to be saved by faith alone (believing the word of God, and faith has always been a separate and distinct gift of God. This little exercise is how we *do theology*. In doing theology we must continually insure our conclusions in one place do not cause a contradiction of another place. God's word is one and in perfect harmony. This is why I can say that if we find one of the five classic tenets to be false the whole falls.

We also see the "personal" revelation of God begin to move toward representatives of the elect, and not dealing with the people as a whole. This is not a change in that Adam was the head of all to follow him and that is how all mankind became guilty and cursed in the sin of Adam. The so-called federal theory of representation is the biblical one for sin coming upon all through one man. The curse brought about the necessity of the covenant agreements and those who would administer this covenant through the generations be made more visible to all mankind. There was a covenant as such in place between God and Adam. However it is by the words and consequences of those words we see the covenant. God did not say to Adam here is the deal, I will make this covenant with you as God did with those to come later. To the head so chosen by God, (Note Jacob wasn't the eldest son, thus chosen or 'elected' of God) God spoke personally or through angels. This gap will widen until after the time of the patriarchs, it is only through God's chosen prophets God speaks to the people, and I believe we will see that move to an even greater distance as these words seem to be in the form of visions (dreams) and less and less personal utterances from our Creator. In the Bible the prophet Joel spoke of the coming of Christ and Pentecost when these means of communication from God would be restored. Until the baptism of our Lord, we do not see the personal voice of God sounding in history after the era of the Patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament. For four hundred years God is silent and the earth in spiritual darkness.

The tangle of the theological process that must now take place to put all this in order concerning free will is why the Reformed church has always demanded an educated clergy. We may thank and praise our God, such detail is not needed for our salvation. Yet being able to hold two or three threads apart, even as one weaves the tapestry of a life that requires full obedience to God's law, though tedious is a necessity. Much of the difficulty will disappear when we can receive the Bible as the very word of God without mental reservation and understand that God did not hide the revelation of Himself and His will behind or under the words in the Bible. There is no secret code. There is a spiritual darkness that stops us from understanding what God has said. This is why prayer is an absolute necessity in Bible studies. Without the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit we will not understand what God has said to us. Christ taught in parables that all might not understand but said to His disciples, to you it is given to understand. It is to the diligent seeker Christ reveals Himself and said search the Scriptures, it is they that testify of me. It cannot be said then that theology and doctrine do not matter because we will not give proper attention to that which we do not understand.

It isn't my attempt here to dive into such a theological discussion, but to point to the fantastic highlights of the work God so graciously reveals to us that we might understand God and

self. The first question raised is that of “free will.” Those opposed to Calvinism would claim full autonomy for man and say we have a choice. The so called hyper-Calvinist would say we have no choices. In my opinion, the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes. True Calvinism doesn’t deny free will, but does deny that man may choose salvation. While a sovereign God who counts the hairs on man’s head and sees the sparrow fall from the air is definitely a God who is involved with His creation and in control of all things, to what extent does he order the events of daily life for His creation, particularly man? To try and limit it to the election diminishes God’s love and concern for His creation. To move it toward the other end of the continuum makes men mere robots from whom God could receive no glory. With prayer I invite you to again read the creation story, and let the Holy Spirit speak from the Word of God. While not a thing indifferent, I do believe we have much leeway from the Bible in what we each perceive this truth to be, and that this truth may change as we mature in the Spirit and in our obedience to God.

Know this, God is Sovereign; God is always with His people; and God does providentially care for His people. Let us then stand in awe of this awesome God of creation as these things fall out in history according to His perfect plan. Does man have freedom in this eternal plan of God? If so to what extent?

Paul in Romans chapter twelve begins with the words “By the tender mercies of God . . .” As we try to peer into the deeper things of God, it is well to take the time to prayerfully read that chapter again. The infra/supra connection? When did God limit these choices by election? When in God’s mind did the covenant of grace to replace this Adamic covenant take place? How would this order in God’s mind change the operation of the covenants and their administration? Huge questions, with eternal consequences. They can be dealt with when one diligently seeks God’s answer, even by the non-theologian, when sufficient time is spent reading the Bible and paying attention to the ancient creeds of the church where the church doctors from each generation have wrestled with these questions for us. There is no way I can cover this much ground in one or even a dozen lessons. It is a process of moving from complete darkness into the full light of God. Each must understand his own responsibility and find the answers to these questions in Scripture. Meantime, hold fast to this precious faith delivered to us by the blood of Christ and His martyrs through the centuries.

“Through the temptation of Satan . . .” the Westminster Divines note the reason of our first parents fall in the garden. It is no different today, as the tempter is immortal and exists to tempt each generation into sin. Since the original fall, I am not so sure we even put up the token resistance of Eve in that we are now born with a sinful nature in the flesh that she did not have. From the fall of those created without sin, and the ease with which the evil one caused them to sin, we each should moment by moment know we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit and constantly seek God’s face in prayer. Because our first parents were deceived by Satan is not the reason or cause of sin. Sin lies squarely in the lap of mankind. God said to Cain that sin desired Cain but that Cain had power over sin. All mankind to include the reprobate can choose not to willfully sin. The devil did not “make” man sin. God says there is no temptation that man cannot find a way out of and that the temptation is not from God, but a result of the lust of man himself. You and your own willful acts are the barrier between you and God, not what any other person or being says or does. The Total Depravity of man is clear and not debatable from a Biblical perspective.

The classic by Charles Sheldon (In His Steps) asks “What Would Jesus Do” before we make any decision. WWJD emblazoned on everything imaginable was the fad a few years ago. Wrong question if one is to obey God. We don’t know what Jesus would or would not do pragmatically speaking. We do however know that Jesus would only do that which brings glory to God and that

bringing glory to God is our only duty to God. We can strive for the result of bringing glory to God in thought, word, and deed. How do we glorify God? By loving and obeying Him is the answer from the Children's catechism of the Westminster tradition. Do we have free will? Not if you mean to choose Christ and salvation. Yes if you mean will we do only that which brings glory to God. This is the picture of Joshua when he drew that proverbial line in the sand and said as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. Joshua was not choosing eternal life, he was choosing to obey God. We have that choice too.

Note that it wasn't a big decision, but a normal every day activity like eating, Satan chose to entrap Eve. God requires perfect obedience, but He continues to give us the thing required before asking for it, and in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit has provided this power also. Then in complete consistency with His own character, our God provides words to comfort and give hope to the frail and faithless people He has chosen for His own in that John wrote that as often as we confessed these sins, God was faithful and just to forgive them. Thankfully then we live not by our faithfulness, but by God's faithfulness toward us. This is not an excuse for sin, nor can we rationalize it away, but even as God left hope for the first created humans, He leaves hope for His people today, that He is there and they are his, despite their failure to meet His standard perfectly. As we see in Romans 5:1-5, when we place our faith in Him, the "experience" of that faith in life brings the assurance of this hope to fruit in our lives.

"Fell from the state of innocency . . ." is another interesting statement. When we consider that a large percentage of the population suffers from shame and guilt and fill the counsel rooms of the world seeking answers, perhaps we can begin to understand what this fall from innocency really means. Man was created innocent, not impeccable (unable to sin). When I was studying psychology my professor was working on a model of "Christian" personality whereby the ills of the human mind could be Biblically defined and from there Scripture applied to bring the person back to this state of innocency. I was intrigued that he chose the titles "nakedness" and "hate" for the two axis model where man moves away from the shameless innocency in which he was created. Along these two lines he showed how as man moved from this place of creation in innocency, the ills of the psychological world developed in direct proportion to how an individual was thinking about himself in self exaltation or worthlessness in combination of their opinion of others, whereby they exalted or degraded others. When God was the center, man knew his proper place and none of the mental illnesses existed. This fits with this account from the creation story, as we see man first become aware and ashamed of his own shortcomings, and hate enter into the world via pride and self exaltation. Paul speaks of this internal struggle and notes that which he wants to do he doesn't and that it goes as far as saying that which he hates, he does. Thus the internal struggle of man apart from the peace with God known in the creation and shattered by the fall, as man struggles to return to that place of innocence and peace apart from God. The Bible doesn't teach the all important self-esteem of the psychologist. The Bible says do not think more of yourself than you should. Perspective is the word we need here and it is only in prayer and seeking God's will mankind finds the proper perspectives concerning life and self.

Here we have seen the introduction of grace and the beginning of the covenant of God with the Son of God for the benefit of His Elect. Perhaps we can now begin to see that the only model for salvation and life that is truly gracious is that of the precious TULIP revealed by God in Scripture and brought to us by our Reformed forefathers. If it were only possible to remove the prejudice and understand it isn't just a TULIP or the five classic points of Calvinism we are talking about. The acronym doesn't matter, these are the five basic tenets of the Christian faith.

I don't think we have any problem seeing all the petals of this flower from God, not in any

preexistent stage, but center stage as a jewel in the glorious crown of our King. Even in innocence, man did sin and tenet one (Total Depravity) stands tall in the garden. With sin now in the open, the second tenet springs forth as only by His unconditional grace God provided for the continuation of man, rather than eternal damnation as with fallen angels. As noted before, if there is an election, it must be some are not elected, or election doesn't exist, so tenet three stands firm (Limited Atonement). The first man has proven that given the choice, he will turn from God, and the necessity of the fourth tenet (Irresistible Grace) is in full bloom. Then as we have seen from the opening words of Scripture, God is sovereign, and tenet five (Perseverance of the Saints) is the only way for God to be consistent with Himself and His holiness. The critics of the Reformed faith have no foundation but their own vain imaginations to turn to in defense of their unbiblical schemes that cater to the heart of man, not God's revealed word.

Do not then simply accept these five tenets and hold to a dead acronym, rather embrace the living word of God and study these things until you can understand and share with another why you believe these to be necessary tenets of the Christian faith. These five tenets became necessities because man did fall and in that fall corrupted all of his faculties. God in grace for His own glory ordered this fall for His own glory and the good of those whom God elected. These elect God will preserve despite themselves forever as His glory. This is important because what we do not understand will forever solicit one of two responses from us: either we will be indifferent toward it, or we will ignore it. Neither the church nor we can afford either response. Either choice will allow the continued slide of the church into spiritual poverty and allow human misery to multiply on the earth. This is not the Reformed vs. the rest of the world, this is about "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded."

Suggested Sermon Outline

Is There a Design Flaw in People?

Genesis 3-1-24

Did God create man evil and perverse like this?

No. On the contrary, God created man good and in His image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that he might rightly know God his Creator, love Him with his whole heart, and live with him in eternal blessedness, praising and glorifying Him.

Where, then, does this corruption of human nature come from?

From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden; whereby our human life is so poisoned that we are all conceived and born in the state of sin.

But are we so perverted that we are altogether unable to do good and prone to do evil?

Yes, unless we are born again through the Spirit of God.

1. Did God Make a Creation Mistake?

A. God made the world perfect. And God saw every thing that he had made, and,

behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31)

B. The original design mirrored God Himself. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:27)

C. True righteousness and holiness were the primary design characteristics of original humanity. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)

D. God intended people to live with Him as friends. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Revelation 21:3)

+ This closing image of the future recalls original intent and gives hope for a final restoration of God's design.

11. The Fall Explains the Human Condition

A. Here is what took place. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Genesis 3-1-6)¹

B. Sin devolves through normal human heredity from the first family.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Romans 5:12)

C. As people think through their own experience they find evidence of the Biblical analysis. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)

III. Only Starting Over Will Solve the Problem

A. Whatever people may excuse or accommodate, God continues to demand holiness. GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

B. The substitutionary atonement of Christ for the believer is the only way out of the problem. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

C. The struggle for holiness arises in the context of the atonement. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh

and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

D. No one can get around the reality of the substitutionary atonement through Christ. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. (Job 14:4)

The Shorter Catechism states in Question 10, The covenant being made with Adam, not on only for himself, but for his is posterity: a all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

E. End products will reflect starting materials. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

F. Jesus summarized the facts of life. Jesus answered Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3-5)

G. The future is far better than one could speculate apart from Scripture.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.- but we know that, when he shaft appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:1,2)

Heidelberg Catechism
Lord's Day 3
Questions 6-8