

Biblical Theology – Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 2 (HCLD 47)

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Read all of the Scripture references in footnote # 3.

Background reading: Read Romans Chapter one.

Vocabulary: Sufficiency/sufficient; Effectual/efficacious; Inerrant; Infallible

Question: How does it appear that there is a God?

Answer: The light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God;¹ but *only* the Bible and Spirit working together do *sufficiently* and *effectually* reveal God unto men for their salvation.²

In lesson one we opened the concept of there being five basic tenets to the Christian faith that are necessary to understand the Bible. Lesson one begins with the assumption that all mankind acknowledges there is a God in

¹ - Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:19-20 AV)

<<To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.>> The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard. (Psalms 19:1-3 AV)

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. (Acts 17:28 AV)

² - But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 AV)

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:15-17 AV)

As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever. (Isaiah 59:21 AV)

heaven. In this lesson we will develop the doctrine of God because man being created in God's image will not understand himself until he understands God.

The first thing I would like to do is tie this to the five classic tenets of Biblical theology. The sovereignty of God and Scripture; are the heart and soul of Biblical theology. Obviously, the issue of Scripture is the foundation of all we do, for there cannot be any truth about God unless God reveals it. That God most clearly is revealed in Scripture is one of the two faces of the knowledge of God in this question. Let us simply here agree that there is no other guide for faith or life than the Bible. The Bible is God's progressive revelation of Himself, ending in the prophecy of the book of Revelation concerning the end times and return of Christ. The Bible sufficiently addresses every issue of life. The Bible's primary purpose is to reveal God to His creation; that all would bow their knees in worship.³ Not parallel, but interwoven with this revelation of Himself, God sets forth His plan of salvation. His sovereignty ends all controversy of other ways to ascend this divine stairway. Jesus Christ, the substitutionary atonement is the only way of salvation. Thus, the place of Scripture and God's sovereignty are clear here. Which of the five classic tenets do we find being applied in question two?

We find the first tenet leaping from the page as we see the inability of the creature to see this divine revelation, despite the clarity of the presentation in both nature (within and without mankind) and the Word of God. Total Depravity reigns supreme in man apart from the gracious and efficacious application of the Holy Spirit in regeneration of man.

³ - The Belgic Confession of Faith (1561), Article II
By What Means God Is Made Known unto Us?

We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God, even his everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Rom. 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation.

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Lord's Day 47

Q122: What is the first petition?

A122: Hallowed be Thy name; that is, grant us, first, rightly to know Thee, and to hallow, magnify and praise Thee,(a) in all Thy works, in which Thy power, goodness, justice, mercy and truth shine forth;(b) and further, that we so order our whole life, our thoughts, words and deeds, that Thy name may not be blasphemed, but honored and praised on our account.(c)

(a.) John 17:3; Matt. 16:17; James 1:5; Psa. 119:105 (b.) Psa. 119:137; Rom. 11:33-36 (c.) Psa. 71:8, 16; 92:1-2; 100:3-4; Eph. 1:16-17

Next, we observe the tenets unfolding in order as it is easily ascertained that it is only by unmerited and unconditional love God has chosen to so reveal Himself to man. The third tenet likewise in turn spreads out its beauty before us since it is obvious that not all will accept this truth revealed by God Himself for the benefit of mankind. In fact without God giving the gift of faith from His grace alone, not one human being will seek God.⁴ Therefore, it would seem silly indeed to argue for anything other than Limited Atonement.⁵ Those who deny this doctrine simply refuse to be led of the Holy Spirit and see God's revealed truth. When asked the question will there be human souls in hell there is no one who having read the Bible can say no. Therefore to appeal to the love of God and it is God's will that all be saved is most silly. If it is God's holy will for all to be saved and there is one soul in hell, there is in effect no God in heaven for God could not do what He wills. The Bible most clearly declares that God can do all His holy will. The cults who cry out there is no hell, this is mere symbolism, denounce the Scriptures they claim to abide by. The same Bible that reveals heaven and eternal life have the Lord of all life saying hell is a real and literal place. This is hard to accept and as such is a hard doctrine, but it is biblical truth. The early fathers of the Protestant churches got it right.

As God's revelation is progressive and perfectly ordered by God, we find our forefathers have so ordered the tenets in this question. Tenet four (Irresistible Grace) bursts forth at the exact place and time it should in consideration of this question. That none would understand and believe this is the clear word of God in Romans 1:19-20 does no harm to the truth revealed. Were the creature able to resist, none would ever grasp the majesty of God's glory He has chosen to reveal to all. Nonetheless, except the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is present this revelation is in vain. *Irresistible Grace* remains a necessity if any are to be saved from their own arrogance and eternal separation from God. Alas, we do not see the five complete tenets burst into full bloom here, as it would be a stretch to bring in *Perseverance of the Saints* of necessity at this point. However the implied truth of the first four tenets does makes the fifth an absolute necessity.

⁴ - Eph. 2:8

⁵ - Canons of Dort (1619) Article 6

That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree. For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18, AV.). Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will (Eph. 1:11). According to which decree He graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe; while He leaves the non-elect in His just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy. And herein is especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men equally involved in ruin; or that decree of election and reprobation, revealed in the Word of God, which, though men of perverse, impure, and unstable minds wrest it to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation.

The biggest theological argument at this point will however hinge on tenet one and the depravity of man. This is presented as the ability versus inability of fallen man to see the revelation of God in both nature and Scripture. The liberal will deny God's sovereignty and avow man has the ability to see and decide all things about God from the evidence thus presented. They will consistently declare man the sovereign of his own destiny. The hyper-Calvinist will claim man is so depraved he has a complete inability to know God exists from nature and cannot accept this truth in any way from Scripture (The so-called Hyper-Calvinist goes to lengths that no true student of Calvin would recognize as being of Calvin.). He removes from man any "free will" whereas his liberal counterpart gives man total control of his will. The Biblical truth lies somewhere between these points in a way that must surely remain one of the secret things of God. Scripture teaches of man's free will, but just as clearly teaches of man's inability to see, understand, or apply God's truth in a way that will lead to salvation. "God working within you his good pleasure, both to will and do" is not a verse that the limited mind of man can easily explain. My preferred wording is that God makes us willing to be willing through the providential care over the events in our lives. In other words the world is cursed and corrupt, it will trample underfoot all mankind in time. God leaves His own chosen children to wallow in this mess to teach them to what end they will go without Him.

While some things are improper in and of self and are to be avoided, the end does not justify the means; I find that in the vast majority of life, the extreme of anything is bad for us. I think this is true with the debate of the ability of the creature to make all choices, or no choices in their lives concerning God's revelation and His salvation of the elect.

This however does not affect the truth of the material in lesson two. The devil acknowledges that God exists and trembles. God has shown Himself to us in the nature of the creature (man) through the natural "instinct" we see in every culture to leave its traces on earth to worship. To worship seems to be the point of light remaining in the fallen human race. As with the answer in lesson two so eloquently declares, Scripture energizes this spark so that it breaks forth as bright as the sun in the heart of God's chosen ones. We also see the glory and power of God in all of creation around us. Even fallen man will admit the beauty and glory came not by chance (evolution) but surely had a designer. The existence of the order in the universe not only declares, but also makes God a necessity. Scripture takes this natural revelation of God to its conclusion in the salvation of man through Jesus Christ. Christ is only truly found in the Scriptures; whereby Christ told the church of His day, search the Scriptures for they are that which testify of me.

Christianity is not an inclusive religion. Christianity is a supernatural religion that depends entirely upon God for all things and this includes the revelation of Himself and the salvation of mankind. God in His sovereignty for reasons that are of God alone chose some people to whom God extends grace and the gift of faith that they will see themselves as they appear to God and turn to God in repentance. This is the so-called conversion experience. Those whom God does not personally and by decree give the gift of faith will in no other way find eternal salvation. Nature reveals to us that God exists. However in nature alone the revelation of God's existence will not work in or with man to effectively lead man to eternal salvation. In the Bible alone (Gospel) we find God's chosen method to reveal God's plan of salvation in the completed work of Jesus Christ. This is not a new doctrine because it was revealed in Genesis chapter three immediately after the sin of man. Thereby the church of the Old Testament had the same promise and the seed of promise as truly as the New Testament church.

The five classic tenets of the Christian church are not from the imagination of man, but are an attempt to explain clearly what the Bible teaches concerning the reality of God and God's plan for mankind.

Suggested Sermon Outline HCLD 47

LORD'S DAY 47

The Holy Name

What is the first petition (in the Lord's Prayer)?

"Hallowed by Thy name." That is: Help us first of all to know Thee rightly, and to hallow, glorify, and praise Thee in all Thy works through which there shine Thine almighty power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, mercy, and truth. And so order our whole life in thought, word, and deed that thy name may never be blasphemed on our account, but may always be honored and praised.

I. Begin with the Proper Approach to God

A. Progress in prayer relates to progress in grace. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* (JOHN 17:3)

B. Jesus was teaching us to pray to the God He had revealed to us in Himself. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? *Jesus answered, Ye*

neither know me, nor my Father: *if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.* (JOHN 8:19)

C. Acceptable prayer can never move far from the original concern of any believer, to glorify and enjoy God. Thus saith the LORD, *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.* (JEREMIAH 9:23-24)

D. Nothing counts for much till we have prayed about it. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* (JOHN 6:27-29)

Belief displays itself in action.

E. The unredeemed man does not have the capacity to approach God properly. And Jesus answered and said unto him, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* (MATTHEW 16:17)

II. Seek Appropriate Answers

A. Fit prayer with Scripture. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* (PSALM 119:105)

1. Scripturally focused prayer will draw the believer to the holy God. *○ send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.* (PSALM 43:3)

2. Prayer must interact with Scripture to accomplish its objective. For the commandment *is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:* (PROVERBS 6:23)

B. Ask God not only for answers but also for the wisdom to deal with the answers. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* (JAMES 1:5)

C. Do not presume to know the answers to your problems. *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy*

ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. (PROVERBS 3:5-7)

D. Expect answers to prayer that are in keeping with what God has demonstrated about Himself and His expectations. *Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.* (PSALM 119:137)

E. Seek large answers from a large God. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! *How unreachable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or *who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (ROMANS 11:33-36)

III. Conform Life to Prayer

A. Display confidence in God's Providence. *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honor all the day.* (PSALM 71:8)

B. Look to God for protection, not to the schemes and patterns of sinners. *They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.* (PSALM 22:5)

C. Attach you welfare to God's cause from the start. *In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for a house of defense to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.* (PSALM 31:1-3)

D. Illustrate God's holiness in prayer. *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.* (PSALM 115:1)