

FRIDAY NIGHT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

MAN, SIN, SALVATION

INTRODUCTION

- A.** This week's lesson can aptly be described as 'purest theology'.
1. From time to time we must touch on the essentials.
 - a. We have sought to cover many theological topics.
 - (1) Some are more interesting than others.
 - (2) Some are more important than others.
 - b. What we will look at today is probably the most important.
 - (1) It may be suggested that Christology (the doctrine of Christ) is more important.
 - (2) But this lesson in fact includes Christology; it moreover assumes that our doctrine of Christ is already correct!
 2. Nothing is more important than salvation.
 - a. It deals with *the* reason God sent his Son into the world.
 - b. It deals with our own souls - where we will spend eternity.
 - (1) If there is a heaven and a hell, and we go irrevocably and irretrievably to one or the other when we die, nothing is more important than going to heaven.
 - (2) We must know how we may know we will go to heaven; in other words, that we are saved.
- B.** Soteriology (def.): doctrine of salvation.
1. It comes from two Greek words:
 - a. *Soter*: salvation.
 - b. *Logos*: word.
 2. Soteriology deals with two questions:
 - a. Does man need to be redeemed?
 - b. If so, how?

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3. Being `saved' is thought to be an old-fashioned word.
 - a. Some refer to being `converted' or `committed'.
 - b. The Bible word is unashamedly `saved'.
 - (1) `She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.' Matt. 1:21.
 - (2) `Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved.' John 5:34.
 - (3) `Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.' Acts 4:12.
 - (4) `He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"' Acts 16:30.
 - (5) `That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.' Rom. 10:9.
- C. This study will give a panoramic view of the biblical history of redemption.
 1. Redemption (def.): being bought back.
 - a. The terms `salvation' and `redemption' can be used interchangeably, but each has its own meaning.
 - (1) Salvation (def.): saved from the wrath of God. Rom. 5:9.
 - (2) This will necessarily include being saved from the penalty and power of sin.
 - b. Redemption refers to Christ's blood buying us back from the lost condition into which we were born.
 2. This takes us to the doctrine of man - in two stages:
 - a. Man as he was created - before the Fall.
 - b. Man as he became after sin came in - after the Fall.
 - (1) The Fall (def.): the moment of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden.
 - (2) The Garden of Eden was a place on the map; the Fall was a date in history.

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- D.** The first major theologian to articulate the theology of sin and salvation after the apostle Paul was St Augustine (354 - 430 AD).
- 1.** When asked why no-one before him (after Paul) dealt with this matter he replied, 'No-one had to counter the error of Pelagius' (c.400 AD).
- a.** Pelagius, a British monk, was angry when he read Augustine's famous prayer, 'Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.'
- (1)** Pelagius saw through the predestinarian implications of Augustine's thinking.
- (2)** He therefore wrote a treatise attacking Augustine's thinking.
- b.** Augustine replied to Pelagius; the result was the first major treatment of the subject of sin and salvation.
- (1)** The doctrine of salvation in church history was never the same again.
- (2)** From then on, a person was either Augustinian or semi-Pelagian (a view that anticipated what many today would call Arminianism).
- 2.** Augustine's soteriology can be summarised generally by his famous 'four stages' of man in the history of redemption.
- a.** *Posse peccare* 'able to sin'.
- (1)** This is man as he was created - before the Fall.
- (2)** He was thus created sinless but with the possibility of sinning.
- b.** *Non posse non peccare* 'not able not to sin'.
- (1)** This is man after the Fall.
- (2)** Man was thus unable to do other than sin after sin emerged; a condition into which all men were born.
- (3)** Note: Pelagius regarded all people as being born as Adam was before the Fall.
- c.** *Posse non peccare* 'able not to sin'.
- (1)** This is man after being saved.
- (2)** Man was thus able, by the power of the Holy Spirit, not to sin.
- d.** *Non posse peccare* 'not able to sin'.
- (1)** This is man after he is glorified. Rom. 8:30.

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(2) In heaven man will not be able to sin - ever.

E. Why is this study important?

1. It is the most essential teaching of the Christian faith.
2. It deals with our own condition; we are either saved or lost.
3. It is absolutely essential that we get it right on this aspect of theology.
 - a. Ecclesiology (doctrine of the church) is important but not essential.
 - (1) We have differing views on the nature of the church - whether we are episcopal, presbyterian or congregational.
 - (2) This is interesting but hardly as essential as salvation.
 - b. Eschatology (doctrine of last things) is interesting but not essential.
 - (1) No two people completely agree (that I know of) on, say, the Millennium.
 - (2) Obviously this is not essential to our theology as is the knowledge of salvation.
4. Our soteriology assumes a correct Christology.
 - a. We may have a correct Christology and a faulty soteriology.
 - b. But a correct soteriology almost certainly presupposes a correct Christology.
5. When it comes to witnessing to others, the doctrine of salvation is what we'd better be sure about!

I MAN BEFORE THE FALL

A. Man was created in the image of God. Gen. 1:26-27.

1. A spiritual being. We sometimes refer to this as conscience.
 - a. This means man was made with *more* than the physical senses (to see, smell, touch, hear, taste).
 - b. He was given a yearning to worship the Creator.
 - (1) He had pure fellowship with God, and conversed with God.
 - (2) There was no rival as man became after the Fall.

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2. Free will. `And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" Gen. 2:16-17.
 - a. In his unfallen state man had the power to choose.
 - b. And yet he was `able to sin'.
 3. Immortality.
 - a. God alone is immortal. I Tim. 6:16.
 - b. And yet God gave immortality to man when he was created; an essential part of his being made in God's own image. Gen. 2:17.
 4. Intelligence.
 - a. Man was superior to all other created beings. Gen. 1:28.
 - b. God let man name the creatures. Gen. 2:19-20.
 5. Work and responsibility. Gen. 2:15.
 - a. Essential to unfallen man was the capacity to do work.
 - b. Unfallen man however did not find work hard or tiring.
 - B.** Man was created innocent and sinless. Gen. 2:25.
 1. Innocence (def.): without any guilt or shame.
 2. Man was not created sinful but without any sin whatever.
 - C.** Note: there is a lot more to be studied with reference to man before the Fall. For example:
 1. The need for earthly fellowship. Gen. 2:18.
 2. The implications of the role of man and woman. Gen. 2:23-24.
- II Man after the Fall: the emergence of sin**
- A.** The unhappy event that led to man's sin is in Genesis 3:1-7.
 1. The devil came to Eve in the form of a serpent. Gen. 3:1.

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2. The devil twisted God's word to man. Gen. 3:1-5.
 3. Eve gave in to temptation. Gen. 3:6.
 4. Adam followed her. Gen. 3:6.
- B.** The consequence of their sin.
1. Death. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23.
 - a. The moment they ate, death set in.
 - (1) They lived on for a good while.
 - (2) It was only a matter of time that they would die.
 - b. Spiritual death entered in. Eph. 2:1-3.
 2. Shame. Gen. 3:8.
 - a. Before they sinned they were not self-conscious of being naked.
 - b. Immediately after they sinned they felt a need for covering their bodies. Gen. 3:7.
 3. Refusal to accept responsibility (self-righteousness). Gen. 3:12-13.
 - a. Adam blamed Eve.
 - b. Eve blamed the serpent.
 4. Fear. Gen. 3:10.
 5. Note: there are other consequences of the Fall, for example:
 - a. Punishments:
 - (1) To the woman. Gen. 3:16.
 - (2) To the man. Gen. 3:19.
 - b. To the rest of creation. Gen. 3:17ff.
 - (1) The ground is cursed.
 - (2) There is every reason to believe that the whole of earthly creation was adversely affected. Rom. 8:20ff.

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C. Further consequences of the Fall.

- 1.** The whole human race fell as a result of our first parents. 'Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned - for before the law was given, sin was in the world.' Rom. 5:12-13a.
 - a.** This means that all born after Adam and Eve inherited the condition of Adam and Eve as they were *after* the Fall (not before).
 - (1)** Man has never been born as Adam was - in his unfallen state.
 - (2)** He inherits Adam's death, shame, self-righteousness and fear.
 - b.** In a word: we are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are born sinners.
 - (1)** 'Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.' Ps. 51:5.
 - (2)** 'Even from birth the wicked to astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.' Ps. 58:3.
- 2.** The image of God is defaced, or marred.
 - a.** Not totally obliterated but seriously damaged.
 - b.** This means there is a vestige (a trace) of what the image of God in man was but hardly as it was before the Fall.
 - (1)** Man still has a conscience; there is a 'God-shaped blank' in every man (Pascal).
 - (2)** Man is still illuminated to some extent by Christ. John 1:9.
 - (3)** But man's conscience is unable to save.
- 3.** Free will, as Adam once had, is forfeited. Is man a free moral agent?
 - a.** Man is in dominion to sin; he is hardly free. Eph. 2:1.
 - b.** Man is not moral; he is 'full of cursing and bitterness'. Rom. 3:14.
 - c.** Man is not the agent in his salvation; the Holy Spirit - God's drawing power - is the agent. John 6:44.
 - d.** Note: as if to drive this point home, God 'drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.' Gen. 3:24.

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- e. In a word, man was 'not able not to sin'.

III SALVATION

A. The first promise of salvation is Genesis 3:15: ``And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.'

1. This word was addressed to the serpent.
2. It was the promise that Jesus would die on a cross.

a. God could have:

- (1) Let man perish.
- (2) Utterly destroyed the devil then and there.

b. Instead he chose:

- (1) To send a redeemer.
- (2) To deal with evil in stages.

3. The first hint of God's love and the way he would save us was when he 'made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them'. Gen. 3:21.

a. The garments of skin meant:

- (1) Sacrifice of a substitute.
- (2) Shedding of blood.

b. The clothing pointed to the covering of righteousness that would be needed.

B. The history of redemption in the Old Testament.

1. Abel. Heb. 11:4.
2. Abraham.
 - a. The gospel was preached to Abraham. Gal. 3:8.
 - b. Abraham saw Jesus' day and was glad. John 8:56.
3. The Law. Rom. 5:20.

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- a. The sacrificial system was explicitly introduced. Heb. 10:1.
 - b. This pointed to its fulfilment in Christ. Gal. 3:24.
- C.** The coming of the redeemer. Gal. 4:4ff.
- 1. Jesus was born of a virgin.
 - a. He was man as though he were not God. Heb. 5:8.
 - b. He was God as though he were not man. John 1:1.
 - 2. Jesus promised to fulfil the Law. Matt. 5:17.
 - a. This meant he would be the first person who never sinned.
 - (1) For no-one had kept the Law. Acts 15:10; Rom. 3:23.
 - (2) Jesus never sinned. Heb. 4:15; II Cor. 5:21.
 - b. He said on the cross, 'It is finished'. John 19:30.
 - (1) This meant he succeeded in what he came to do.
 - (2) It meant our debt was paid by him.
 - 3. Three things were needed to save mankind.
 - a. Sacrifice: the shedding of blood.
 - (1) This meant that salvation lay outside of man's hands.
 - (2) This meant the 'types' of sacrifice under the Law must have their ultimate fulfilment.
 - (3) The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished all the above.
 - b. Substitution: to take man's place.
 - (1) This required a perfect, sinless life.
 - (2) This required a perfect sacrifice in death.
 - (3) The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled all the above.
 - c. Satisfaction: to appease God.
 - (1) This required that a holy God be satisfied in terms of his justice.

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(2) This required that a holy God be no longer angry.

(3) The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled all the above.

D. The need for faith. Rom. 3:22.

1. We might well wish that Romans 1:17 had said that the righteousness of God is revealed by faith - full stop.

a. Had this been the case, then the very person and work of Jesus Christ would have guaranteed salvation for all.

(1) Jesus died for all. Heb. 2:9; II Cor. 5:15.

(2) But we know that not all are saved.

b. This is because the righteousness (justice) is revealed 'from faith to faith' (Rom. 1:17 AV - which is what the Greek says).

(1) This means that what Jesus Christ did was not sufficient to save in and by itself - by God's own decree.

(2) Our faith must be joined to what he did - or we will not be saved.

2. But the righteousness of God comes only 'to all who believe'. Rom. 3:22; John 3:16.

a. If we believe, we are saved. John 5:24.

b. If we do not believe, we are condemned. John 3:36.

E. The need for preaching. I Cor. 1:21.

1. No-one believes without being witnessed to. Rom. 10:14.

2. We are commanded to witness to all. Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 5:20.

a. If our view of salvation does not lead us to witness to the lost, we are disobedient to Christ.

b. If we are balanced theologians it will be impossible to tell which we emphasise more:

(1) Being sound in our theology.

(2) Being obedient in our witnessing.

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- F.** The need for faith to be imparted. Eph. 2:8.
1. Man cannot, in and of himself, believe.
 - a. He is born `dead'. Eph. 2:1-5.
 - b. Jesus said, `No-one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him'. John 6:44.
 2. What is required: regeneration (being born again).
 - a. We were powerless and passive in our natural birth.
 - b. We are likewise powerless and passive in our spiritual birth. John 1:13.
 - c. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) It is what God must `begin' Phil. 1:6.
 - (2) It is effectual by the Spirit alone. I Thess. 2:13; II Thess. 2:13.
 - d. In a word: faith is the gift of God.
 3. Who believes?
 - a. Those given to Jesus by the Father. John 6:37.
 - b. Those who were appointed to eternal life. Acts 13:48.
 - c. Those who were predestined and called. Rom. 8:30.
 4. What happens to believers?
 - a. They are given an `imputed' righteousness. Rom. 4:1-12.
 - b. They are kept. John 6:37,44; 10:28.
 - c. They are given power not to sin. Rom. 6:1-22. `Able not to sin'.
- G.** The need for glorification. Rom. 8:30.
1. God might have decreed that all who are saved are not only sanctified but also simultaneously glorified.
 2. But he designed that redemption be completed in two stages.
 - a. Satan's defeat is in two stages:

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(1) At the cross. Gen. 3:15.

(2) Final doom. Rev. 20:10.

b. Our redemption is in two stages:

(1) By faith. Rom. 5:1.

(2) By glorification - when Jesus comes. I John 3:2. 'Not able to sin'.

CONCLUSION

A. This is a mere outline of the history of redemption.

B. May God help us to fill in the details to his glory!